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From: David Lavery  
Principal Private Secretary to the  
First Minister

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Peter May  
Principal Private Secretary to the  
Deputy First Minister

3 December 1999

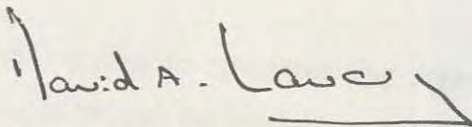
**Georgina Campbell**  
**Private Secretary to**  
**The Speaker**  
**Northern Ireland Assembly**

## **MEDIA MANAGEMENT FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE MEETINGS**

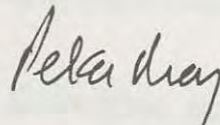
1. You will have seen from the media coverage of Thursday's Executive meeting that events, by and large, went according to plan. However an otherwise successful occasion was unfortunately spoiled by the unruly behaviour of a number of anti-Agreement protesters. Somehow the managed to get into the building and attempted to interrupt the joint press conference which was being given by the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in the Central Hall.
2. The individuals concerned clearly were wearing visitors passes and one in particular (the one waving the banner and installed well in advance of the set-piece) was prominently featured in the BBC Spotlight programme on Tuesday evening when his behaviour was equally distasteful. We appreciate that it is difficult to exercise full control over individuals whom Members sponsor as visitors, but surely the rule governing sponsorship must place a clear responsibility on the Member.



3. We accept fully the technical and operational difficulties associated with conducting press conferences in the Central Hall, but the unfolding fiasco and the lack of immediate action by House Staff to remove them from the scene sent the wrong images to the world's media.
4. We would be grateful if the Speaker could consider whether the current arrangements need any amendment in light of yesterday's incident, and what steps might be taken to ensure that there is no repeat performance after future meetings of the Executive.
5. Finally, following next Tuesday's Executive Committee meeting we are minded to use the Long Gallery for any media briefing. It offers the attraction of easier control as well as scope to provide full media facilities, including media sound feeds and amplification. Could we by way of this letter seek the Speaker's agreement (subject to availability) to use this facility.



**DAVID A LAVERY**  
Principal Private Secretary to the  
First Minister



**PETER MAY**  
Principal Private Secretary to the  
Deputy First Minister

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First Minister  
Deputy First Minister  
PS/Ministers  
**Mr Semple**  
Mr McCusker  
Ms Brown  
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