

From the Chair



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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You asked for the Committee's advice about writing a weekly column for The Times on current affairs.

When considering your application, the Committee took into account that you are a journalist by profession. You worked for The Times full-time from 1995 to 2005 and wrote a weekly column from 1999 to 2009, prior to becoming a Minister.

The Committee consulted the Permanent Secretary at your last Government department, the Ministry of Justice, who had no concerns about the appointment. He noted that in choosing material for your column you would, of course, keep in mind your continuing duty of confidence to the Crown.

The Committee took into account that, as a former Cabinet Minister, you are subject to a standard three-month waiting period before taking up any outside appointment.

The Committee sees no reason why you should not take up the appointment, subject to the following conditions:

- A three-month waiting period from your last day in Ministerial office;
- You should not draw on any privileged information available to you as a Minister;
- For two years from your last day in service, you should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government on behalf of The Times.

The Business Appointment Rules explain that the restriction on lobbying means that former Ministers should not engage in communication with Government – including Ministers, special advisers and officials – with a view to influencing a Government decision or policy [including applications for awards or grants] in relation to their own interests, or the interests of the organisation by which they are employed, or to whom they are contracted.

I should be grateful if you would inform us as soon as you take up employment with The Times, or if it is announced that you will do so, either by returning the enclosed form or by

emailing the office at the above address. We shall otherwise not be able to deal with any enquiries, since we do not release information about appointments that have not been taken up or announced. This could lead to a false assumption being made about whether you had complied with the Ministerial Code.

Once the appointment has been publicly announced or taken up, we will publish this letter on the Committee's website and include the main details of the application, together with the Advisory Committee's advice, in the regularly updated consolidated list on our website and in the next annual report.

The Baroness Browning

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

cc John Witherow, Editor, The Times