
FOREWORD

A critical element in the government of any modern democracy is the working relationship between two groups of people: politicians and senior civil servants. The composition of each group, and the location of the interface between them, varies between countries. But in even the most politicised, or the most corrupt, a distinction can be seen, even if only at the margins, between those who are elected and those who are appointed. Getting the relationship right is vital for effective government.

In Britain there are two main reasons for concern about this relationship. First, the civil service as a whole is in a state of crisis unprecedented in its history. Disoriented and destabilised by a decade of almost continuous change, many civil servants are now uncertain about what the future may hold both for themselves and for their profession - if profession, in the strict sense, it be. Fifteen years ago the importance of the civil service would have seemed self-evident and beyond question. Today, one of the main problems faced by civil servants is that the government in power does not regard them as indispensable. In making and implementing policies government increasingly draws on the services not of professional government servants but of other specialists - lawyers, accountants, economists, policy analysts - operating in a free market and contracting with government as one among a range of customers. A debatable question is whether in future civil servants will be able to bring any unique skills to their relationship with Ministers.

The second reason for concern is that there are all too many signs that, in some cases, something is going wrong with the relationship. A significant number of senior officials feel that their professional skills are being ignored or abused. At the same time, a number of episodes, of which 'Matrix-Churchill' is the latest, most prolonged and most dramatic, have led outsiders to fear that civil servants have been colluding with Ministers in improper behaviour - in effect, that they have allowed their professional skills to be misused. Civil servants, too, are understandably anxious both about public perceptions and about the reality.

Some people welcome the spread of markets and of contracts, and the consequent disappearance of professional government bureaucracies of any kind. Others will feel that the British senior civil service, in its existing form, has outlived its usefulness. But others yet will want to be sure that from such changes we should not be losing more than we might gain. They will also wonder whether these changes would address the real weaknesses of British government, and whether they would help or hinder future administrations of a different party in planning and implementing national policies. Meanwhile, uncertainty about the roles of civil servants and about the status of their 'profession', and doubts about their ethical standards, can only weaken the civil service as an instrument of government today and deter good people from wanting to work in it tomorrow.

This brief study focuses on the senior civil service. Its basic assumption - which should be stated clearly at the outset - is that a civil service is an essential element in good government. There is a limit to what can be bought in from outside. Government is different from business. It needs a solid core of staff who understand this. The quality of a civil service is therefore critical to the quality of government. The study reviews recent and current changes in the civil service, and others in prospect. It also considers the links between some of these developments. The links are important and not fully understood: who senior civil servants are, what skills they possess, their attitudes and values, are bound to influence the ways they are regarded and used by ministers. Conversely, how ministers regard and use civil servants will influence the latter's behaviour and attitudes - including their attitudes towards attempts to change the civil service.

Note: throughout this document the term 'Whitehall' is frequently used, for convenience, in its journalistic sense as an alternative to 'the civil service'. It is also a useful way of indicating a single culture common to most senior officials. However, though convenient, it is literally inaccurate, even when applied to the senior civil service, a growing number of whose members work outside London altogether. This common culture may well become much less significant, particularly if there is only limited movement between London and the regions, or between the 'core' departments and agencies.

INTRODUCTION

The senior civil service is taken here to mean the 3000 or so men and women, mainly university graduates, who occupy the key advisory and top managerial posts. From their ranks are drawn almost all the few hundred very senior civil servants who work most closely with Ministers.

These are the people who plan and supervise the services operated by tens of thousands of their subordinates, or, increasingly, by contractors in the private sector. Senior officials - or Ministers advised by them - determine their subordinates' terms and conditions of service. The quality of leadership provided by those at the very top can fundamentally affect the character of the civil service as a profession, its values and its morale. Leadership embraces not only their ability to communicate, explain, motivate from the top downwards to the lowest levels. It also means their ability to protect and promote the interests of the civil service, as one among many other groups competing for resources, in relation to ministers, Parliament and public.

Some senior civil servants also advise, or try to advise, Ministers on major policy issues, and implement or oversee the implementation of Ministers' decisions. The competence of these relatively few people, and their working relationships with Ministers, can greatly affect the ability of any administration to carry out its electoral promises and to devise feasible new policies. This will be especially true of any future administration which believes in public services and which takes a positive view of the role of government.

It is worth stating clearly at the outset that the British senior civil service is among the best in the world. It is, rightly, an institution of interest to overseas visitors. Its characteristics are marketed abroad through technical assistance programmes. (See, for example, recent publications and memoranda by former senior official Sir Kenneth Stowe - Stowe, 1992.) It has several features in common with other government bureaucracies. As in France, Germany, Canada, Scandinavia, it is a high-status, lifetime career profession.

As in Japan, its members come from a very limited range of university backgrounds. As in other Westminster-type parliamentary systems, the public accountability of civil servants is primarily through Ministers to Parliament; the result is that civil servants are relatively well-shielded from external scrutiny. However, as in New Zealand or Denmark, the parliament has been trying actively to get behind this shield. As in France, the most basic political and constitutional relationships between the civil service and other institutions have changed little in recent years. In general, the contemporary British senior civil service has many of the characteristics of a relatively newly-minted concept, the 'senior executive service': as identified in the United States and various Commonwealth countries, this has been described as being

"about introducing flexibility, improving management, increasing the mobility of senior executives and establishing and cultivating the idea of a coherent and clearly identifiable group of senior executives for various purposes." (Halligan, 1990)

But in other respects the British senior civil service is an exceptional case. Virtually all the posts which are key to its operating style and continuing development are in the hands of well-educated but largely untrained 'generalists'. Appointments and movements within it are almost uniquely impervious to political influence. It has preserved for itself the privilege of self-regulation common to many professions but unusual in the field of democratic government; despite this, the government of the day has almost unlimited power to change the rules if it wishes.

In the last decade the British civil service has been under great pressure. First, it has been subject to a sustained series of attempted changes on a scale equalled only in New Zealand.

Secondly, it has been centrally involved in the longest continuous period of government in Britain by the same party in modern times. For most of this period, there has been no realistic prospect of another party taking power and thus requiring the support of the

civil service. In addition, the leaders of the government party have, in a way unprecedented in Britain for politicians in office, made clear their disdain for the civil service and its established values; reducing its size and influence have been official government policy. Finally, civil servants have been party to a series of incidents in which the behaviour of ministers has been strongly criticised on ethical grounds.

The senior civil service is not the only profession which has come under attack in Britain. In several countries other than Britain neo-liberal governments have challenged what they see as the obstructive self-interest of the professions - lawyers, doctors, academics and others. But the cost, the reach and the competence of government has been central to the neo-liberal agenda everywhere. The long tenure of the Conservatives in Britain has therefore meant that the pressure on the civil service has been unusually sustained.

Social democrats commenting on the senior civil service in the early 1990s face one difficulty in particular. They are likely to have two rather different agendas. On the one hand they recognise and deplore the damage done to every part of the public sector by the indiscriminate onslaughts of the Thatcher and Major governments, and by what one official interviewed for this study described as their "patent hatred of the civil service".

On the other hand, the social democrat should neither ignore nor reject all the changes of the past decade. If many of them were politically motivated, others (sometimes the same ones) made good managerial and political sense. The "New Public Management" has addressed real weaknesses in many parts of the public sector. Too many services, for too long, were run in the interests of the providers, individual and organised. The NPM raised basic questions which needed asking: why should government be performing this activity? If it is necessary at all, could it not be done better elsewhere? If it must be done by government, could it be done more efficiently? (Whether it could be done more *effectively* is a much more complex question, the answer to which could well mean devoting *more*, not less resources to it. For these reasons it has

attracted far less attention.) The civil service has undeniably made progress in the past decade both in modernising itself and, more recently, in becoming more 'customer-friendly'. Anyone dealing regularly with Whitehall can notice the difference.

But resisting indiscriminate attacks should not mean uncritically defending the status quo. In many crucial respects the senior civil service has changed little, if at all, since 1945. As Peter Hennessy constantly reminds us, one of the main changes since then has been retrograde - the slow disappearance, without replacement, of the gifted outsiders brought in during the war. (Hennessy, 1989). Senior career patterns have changed hardly at all in the last 45 years. Most senior officials know little of the world outside Whitehall. The Central Policy Review Staff was set up by Edward Heath in 1970 to supply the Cabinet with non-departmental, relatively long-term advice. It was abolished by Mrs Thatcher because it did not fit with her own idiosyncratic style of government; but the need for it remains as great as ever. The number of external special advisers to Ministers has never risen above low double figures. The practices and cultures of different departments are still disturbingly varied. A well-informed and basically sympathetic critic can still describe senior administrators, in general, as non-numerate. More broadly, less sympathetic critics might observe at these levels a mindset blending self-interest, conservatism and cynicism - hardly the most constructive posture in which to confront our perilous future.

Many objections to the current changes may well be unjustified. But if civil servants, wrongly or rightly, believe that their profession is being dismantled it will be harder to persuade the next generation to join it. Officials visiting universities as recruiting agents may do more harm than good. Throughout the 1980s the civil service failed to fill its quotas for graduate recruits. It is likely to face major problems as soon as the graduate job market starts to pick up. As a private employer volunteered to the House of Commons Treasury and Civil Service Committee (hereafter TCSC), how existing employees are treated is "far more influential over the career choices of slightly younger people" than brochures, presentations and entries in career publications (TCSC, 1993). At the same time, good people

in the service still young enough to move will leave prematurely, as hundreds did during the 1980s. One of the major questions of today is whether the civil service will still be an effective instrument for a future non-Conservative government.

Another equally important question concerns the constitutional position of the bureaucracy, in the sense of its role and power in relation to other political institutions and to citizens. In Britain, issues of this kind are usually treated as academic, literally and figuratively. This is partly because we are not very comfortable with this kind of discourse, partly because in altering the procedures of government the administration of the day normally has almost total discretion. Governments have been able to tinker with the structure and working of the civil service with little outside intervention. Today, however, public interest in constitutional issues has reached levels unknown for many years. There is a widespread discontent not only with the performance but also with the style and ethos of government. Developments such as Charter 88, and the publication of a draft constitution for the UK by IPPR, have alerted citizens to the need to take less on trust in the exercise of governmental power. To put it simply, and as surveys show, they no longer trust either politicians or civil servants. (Bevins, 1993)

5. CONCLUSION

An informed public debate has yet to begin about the civil service in general. At present there are few signs that any of the opposition parties have any views, let alone any policies, relating to the civil service. A recent major study of the changing attitudes of the Labour party to the civil service concluded that

"the Labour party, as it enters the 1990s, does not possess a detailed and coherent plan for Whitehall reform... Rather than bringing forward well-thought-out proposals of its own, Labour, when it has paid any attention at all, has in many respects simply been reacting to the initiatives and actions of the Conservative government..." (Theakston, 1992)

Remarkably, the Labour party has so far had nothing to say to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee (although Mr Kimock's former adviser Charles Clarke offered some comments on a personal basis). The Liberal Democrats had a section called "Reforming Westminster and Whitehall" in their autumn policy document *Here We Stand: Proposals for Modernising Britain's Democracy*, but this fell far short of a worked-out programme either for changing or sustaining the civil service.

The lack of effective critiques by opposition parties may perhaps relate to one of the main points made by Mr Clarke in his evidence: that Her Majesty's Opposition has no access to or knowledge of developments in government superior to those of ordinary citizens. This matters all the more as the number diminishes, outside the government party, of people with earlier first-hand experience of Whitehall. Such people are likely to have a much fuller understanding of the kind of issues discussed in this study. They will have an important role in both helping to articulate objections to destructive changes and maintaining outside pressure for constructive ones. The issues are too important, not only for those who are governed, but also for those who hope to govern them, to be neglected.

The primary issue is the importance of preserving a professional civil service. This does not mean a 'permanent' civil service, nor one in which people are expected to spend a working lifetime. It does mean an institution whose values and standards are appropriate to the tasks it has to perform, are clearly articulated and are subscribed to by those who work in or with it, even if only temporarily. The skills required in government often do not differ from those required in business. The main differences lie in the ways those skills are used and the values that underlie them.

A professional civil service needs the expertise and the self-confidence to give Ministers the advice they require (even if they do not always welcome such advice). It has to accept that the final authority is with Ministers. But although its duties are to the government of the day, it should not ignore the longer term - by when that government may be out of office - nor its own professional standards.

Reciprocally, an effective civil service in a democracy needs knowledge and understanding both of other organisations and of the people whom it is helping to govern. It must not be a monastic order.

In the past decade the British civil service has been subject to many changes. The immediate point is not whether any of them are welcome or not. It is that, taken together, they put enormous pressure, external and internal, on the senior civil service. They affect the environment in which senior civil servants ply their trade, the nature of that trade, the pattern and indeed the concept of careers in it.

Some developments are certainly undesirable. Chief among these are the attitudes struck and language used from the first days of the Thatcher administration, which have soured relations, and damaged the working relationships, between Ministers and civil servants. In the climate thus created, it is not surprising if many officials are less than enthusiastic in their responses to government initiatives.

Some developments are at best questionable. The fragmentation of the civil service, and a growing tendency to think of government as no more than a bundle of loosely linked contract-based services, could dissipate the capacity to think in terms of the public interest broadly conceived.

There has been a loss of mutual confidence and respect between Conservative ministers and many officials. This has gone so far that it is hard to see how an effective working relationship can be rebuilt without a change of government. A new, non-Conservative government ought very early on to decide and to make explicit its policy towards the senior civil service which it inherits. For a start, it should make clear that there has been a radical change in the climate, and the assumptions, underlying policy towards the civil service. The climate should be supportive, the assumptions positive. Sir Robin Butler, and any future head of the civil service, should maintain the high public profile which he has rightly set. But not only he should make speeches about the merits of a civil service career, the worth of the civil service profession or the need for enlightened personnel management. Ministers too must show that they think these things important.

Ministers will also need to make clear that they respect the professionalism of civil servants, in a double sense. Civil servants, as experts, have reliable advice to offer about policies and their implementation; as professionals, they also have obligations to do or not to do certain things, including offering advice which Ministers may find uncongenial. Ministers should understand the difference between their partisan supporters and their neutral officials. Officials do not and cannot share all ministerial objectives, eg winning the next general or by-election. Ministers can ignore civil servants' advice, but they should not try to suppress it nor put pressure on civil servants to give different advice. (None of this is new. It ought not to need saying. Unfortunately, it does.)

Unless ministers take civil servants seriously, able people will have little interest in joining the civil service. If they want to be managers, they will have much more scope for learning and

practising their skills in the private sector. If they want to influence public policy, they have wider opportunities - as journalists, policy analysts, lobbyists, academics or even as MPs.

One specific step in recognising the professionalism of the civil service would be to recreate a separate post for head of the profession. In the present climate, the efforts of the head of the civil service to articulate the interests and concerns of his colleagues are bound to be compromised by his dual role as cabinet secretary. It is a nice question whether the service gains - because its titular head is also the most powerful single official - or loses by this combination. A senior colleague as permanent secretary of OPSS and head of the civil service would be equally bound to implement the government's policies towards the civil service. But his or her independent existence would at least symbolise the likelihood that the government would get frank (and possibly uncongenial) advice about implementing those policies. On balance, and in present circumstances, the change seems worth making.

But it will not be enough for civil servants simply to assert their right to be respected as professionals. They will have to earn that respect by making a number of other changes. Some of these have long been familiar to would-be reformers. More movement between Whitehall and other occupations, greater political influence on senior appointments, more training, greater specialisation, have been proposed from all parts of the political spectrum many times during the past seventy years. Even the notion of competition and limited-term contracts for senior posts has been in circulation for at least a decade (Plowden, 1985a). The Oughton report could be the springboard for many of these changes, if implemented with conviction. It could also go a long way to quell the suspicion that the senior mandarinates are preserving their own central sandcastle while allowing the waves to wash away everyone else's.

Movement in and out would dilute the lifetime career element at the top of the civil service and would enrich their collective understanding of the world. A future government could have more confidence in the advice it received from its civil servants. Without

this, the slimmed-down centre, with many functions lost to agencies or the private sector, would be at real risk of becoming a college of academics.

Not every development should simply be left to take its own course. Unrestricted competition could have damaging side effects. It could destroy the professional civil service, with its manifest strengths as well as its weaknesses, without putting anything satisfactory in its place. To guard against this, it would need to be treated as part of a package. The other components in this package would be the creation of a genuinely open structure at the top; much freer movement within this would allow career civil servants to specialise, while freer movement out of (and back into it) would allow them to develop their specialisms in other sectors if need be. (Greater specialisation would also require different ways of working, in particular more team-work.) More systematic career development, and more training, would be necessary.

Realism is needed about the effects of some of these changes. In one sense the civil service is undoubtedly breaking up. Agencies may or may not survive, but while they do it has to be recognised that in most cases they do imply a separation of management from policy advice (which is not to say of management from policy). Agencies will also become increasingly separate from each other. Specialisation should therefore include specialisation in many aspects of management; managers would make most of their careers in agencies and related organisations outside central government altogether. Different kinds of specialist would make their careers in the by then greatly-diminished centre.

If the career element in the centre is significantly tempered by people brought in from outside, it will be important to avoid the "government of strangers" syndrome which Hugh Heclo identified in Washington DC (Heclo, 1977). Many at the top of the future civil service might have been in Whitehall for only fifteen, ten, five years or less; they would not have gradually come to know each other, and the system, in the established manner through service in the Cabinet Office, Treasury, Ministers' private offices or inter-

departmental meetings. Much more would need to be done deliberately to foster a corporate spirit, by developing a systematic training regime for senior people. Much more would also need to be done, through the same means, to preserve an ethic appropriate to government service. More intensive training for the senior civil service is in general one of the needs most familiar and now most overdue. Secondments, whatever their merits, are not an adequate substitute. (The suggestion of more training is likely to be greeted with great scepticism by senior officials, because the idea of formal training is so deeply counter-cultural: all the more reason for acting on it.)

These changes themselves, plus the fluidity which they would introduce into the system, would be additional reasons for strengthening the framework by two means which are needed in any case. First is a single consolidated code of behaviour, setting out the respective obligations of civil servants and ministers. Secondly, this should be set in a context of legislation; this could be as broad as a constitution for the United Kingdom or as specialised as a Civil Service Act. Neither should try to prescribe in detail for every possibility. But either should provide some certainty and some limits to acceptable behaviour, both for individual officials and for government.

Neither a code nor an act could regulate every detail of working relationships between civil servants and ministers. But they would at least clarify their outlines. They would recognise and express the necessary tension that ought to exist between these two groups: one, whose time-horizon and ambitions are defined by the next general election; the other, who know that whatever the election result most of them will still be in government. Clearer relationships should contribute to better policy outcomes. They would reduce the chance that ministers might require civil servants to act improperly or in ways that might make them unacceptable to future governments. They would remind civil servants, and Ministers, of their obligation to offer unpopular advice when necessary. They would help to clarify accountability issues. Questions of how to make the executive as a whole more accountable are beyond the scope of this

study. But it has to be said that as long as governments can shelter behind the broad shield of ministerial accountability to Parliament, there will remain enormous grey areas in which, when things go wrong, the respective responsibilities of officials and their ministers will remain quite obscure.

Few of the changes suggested in this essay seem likely to occur before a new government replaces the present one. An incoming government might be tempted to strengthen its hand by at least a selective cull in the senior ranks. It might need to do so. If, hypothetically, it proposed to take back prisons into the public sector it would be wise to consider replacing the director of the Prisons Service. If it wished to reverse the centralising trend of the past fifteen years, and to recreate a system of genuine local government, such a policy to be credible would probably need some changes in critical positions at the Department of the Environment. Other examples can be found. As the basis for these, and more generally, any government should follow the lead set by the Conservatives and should take an active and intelligent interest in the qualities of its senior officials. Such an interest can and should start in opposition, for example by scrutinising the public performances of the now large number of officials appearing before select committees - though this would be a better test if MPs could improve the quality of cross-examination.

But in general it should not be assumed that the senior civil service as a whole, even now, would not work as effectively for a non-Conservative as for a Conservative government. A new government, purposeful but non-dogmatic, would almost certainly be welcomed by Whitehall after years during which thinking about public policy has been crabbed and distorted by ideological strait-jackets. As a matter of historical fact, elsewhere in the world even regimes radically different from their predecessors have rarely found it necessary totally to replace the bureaucracies which they inherited.

"Within relatively short periods..., bureaucracies once identified with an earlier regime have become identified with its successor to the point that a new counter-elite views it with suspicion... The increased scale and complexity of government makes it even less plausible than in the past to pull up a bureaucracy by the roots and plant a new one." (Wilson, 1993)

This is especially true in the case of Britain. The undeniable strengths of the senior civil service, and its relatively non-partisan character, make it an asset which any government should value and build on.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Selection

- the continuing over-representation of Oxbridge in the fast-stream entry competition is not in itself a serious problem. But Whitehall's failure to reduce this to 'normal' levels looks ridiculous. A target should be set for increasing the share of other universities to, say, 75 per cent by the year 2000.
- the fast-stream entry competition should be reviewed, as recommended in the Oughton report. In particular, the question should be asked how far a high (or low) mark in the competition affects subsequent careers.
- Whitehall should develop some internal capacity for research into all aspects of the management of government. If this is not in the Civil Service College, it should be in OPSS. It could be partly staffed by social scientists on inward secondments.

Careers

- senior officials collectively still have far too little first-hand experience of the world outside Whitehall. There should be more movement between 'advisory' positions and other parts of the public and private sectors
- despite this, the hopes of mobility between senior posts in departments and in agencies are almost certainly misplaced. Personnel policy should recognise that the characteristics of agency 'managers' and of departmental 'advisers' will continue to differ and that their careers are likely to develop along different lines.
- the number of senior posts in central departments will continue to decline. The 'open structure' should become more genuinely open so that career officials can seek job opportunities wherever they occur.

- the processes for senior appointments are still too private and too informal. Many of the characteristics of permanent secretaries have not changed this century. Selective internal advertisement of vacant posts is not enough.
- some senior officials will continue to spend virtually all their careers in Whitehall. But the unbroken lifetime career should no longer be regarded as the norm.
- senior officials still receive too little formal training. The OPSS should ensure that it has full information about the quantity and type of such training and should intervene if necessary to ensure that training targets are met by departments.
- there are fewer women in senior posts in Whitehall than in the United States, Australia or Canada. The degree of variation between departments in this respect is indefensible. The Oughton report's proposed target of doubling the total figure by the year 2000 should be accepted.
- many very senior officials still lack, and are seen by their colleagues to lack, leadership qualities. This should be taken into account in recruitment, training and promotion policies.

Filling Top Posts

- the Oughton report on Career Management accepts that future career patterns will be more varied and recognises the need for more public advertisement of top jobs. Though it is timid in its suggestion that less than 20 per cent of top jobs should be filled from outside, its recommendation that the case should be considered for advertising every top post has potentially radical consequences. It should be accepted. The test will be in its implementation. If too few appointments are made from outside these will have no impact. The aim should be to advertise the *majority* of jobs in the Senior Open Structure.

- the case for *not* advertising any Grade 3 post should be made, in writing, to SASC; if approved by SASC, it should be submitted to the Civil Service Commission. The case for *not* advertising Grade 2 and Grade 1 posts should be made, in writing, by SASC to the Civil Service Commission. The Commission should have complete freedom to refuse permission in any case.
- however many posts are advertised, the processes for making appointments following advertisement need clarifying and opening up. People with experience of other parts of the public sector should be represented on SASC (in addition to business, as proposed by Oughton). So should the Civil Service Commission.
- departmental Ministers, and the Prime Minister, should be entitled to decline any nomination made by SASC, whether or not following advertisement. Their reasons for doing so should be set out in writing and reported to the Civil Service Commission and to the relevant select committee. The same procedure should apply where Ministers wish to nominate a candidate of their own.
- individual Ministers should be able to secure the removal and replacement of senior civil service advisers with whom they do not wish to work. The procedures for doing so should be agreed and published. Well-established arrangements in Germany may provide a model. Any Ministerial intervention of this kind should be reported to the Civil Service Commission and published.
- the head of the Civil Service Commission should be appointed on terms similar to those of the Comptroller and Auditor General. As with the C and AG, the holder should not normally expect to return to a further post in Whitehall.

- arrangements should be made to enable sub-standard performers, those who have reached their career ceilings or for whom there is no longer suitable employment, to retire prematurely from the service. More care should be given to 'managing' such departures.
- senior officials should be appointed
 - (1) on short-term contracts: these would be normally renewed except where appropriate posts were no longer available or when an official's performance was well below standard; or
 - (2) subject to a specific period of notice, as recommended by Oughton.
- if more posts are to be opened up to outside competition serving civil servants must be equipped to compete on equal terms. This may require different, possibly more specialised, career patterns and more intensive training. Special weight should normally be given to the experience of former officials applying to return to Whitehall.
- Ministers should be allowed, and encouraged, to employ more outside policy advisers
- Parliament should exercise its right to scrutinise any senior civil service appointment through the relevant select committee of the House of Commons

Remuneration

- pay levels may need to be adjusted upwards to compensate for diminished job security. Officials appointed to agency posts should be on the same terms as outsiders. But in general it should be acknowledged that the total remuneration of senior civil servants is, by all relevant standards, generous.

- performance pay seems unlikely to have much relevance to the effectiveness of senior civil servants.

The Rights and Obligations of Civil Servants

- official guidance on the rights and obligations of civil servants is inadequate. Such guidance should be consolidated in a single published Code of Behaviour. The Code should provide for appeals to a suitable external authority.
- the Code should remind officials and ministers that it is the duty of officials to offer the advice that they think appropriate, not the advice that ministers want to hear, and that ministers have at least a moral obligation to take such advice seriously, even if they do not follow it
- a statutory basis for the Code should be provided by a Civil Service Law (which among other matters could provide for the appointment of the head of the Civil Service Commission)
- the position of Head of the Civil Service should be separate from that of Cabinet Secretary.

Accountability

- even Whitehall now accepts that Ministers cannot be accountable to Parliament for everything. But the demise of one constitutional principle has not been matched by the development of another. Whether in relation to service delivery by agencies, or to advising Ministers and implementing their instructions, new ways are needed whereby officials can be called to account. Major constitutional issues would be involved. There has been little sign of serious thinking about these questions by the government. It should now set up an enquiry to do such thinking. If it will not, some independent body should take on the task.