

**From:** "PETER MANDELSON"

**To:** "jeevacation@gmail.com" <jeevacation@gmail.com>

**Subject:** Fw:

**Date:** Sun, 20 Dec 2009 12:24:24 +0000

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--- On Sun, 20/12/09, PETER MANDELSON <[REDACTED]> wrote:

THE STRATEGY YOU HAVE SAID YOU WANT IS ONE THAT MOVES FROM REFERENDUM TO CHOICE. THIS IS RIGHT. WE WANT TO GET PEOPLE TO THE POINT OF FEELING THAT, AT HEART, LABOUR IS MORE IN THEIR INTERESTS; THE TORIES ARE A RISK; AND THAT DESPITE THEIR MISGIVINGS ABOUT VOTING BACK A GOVT THAT HAS BEEN IN OFFICE FOR THIRTEEN YEARS, THEY ARE MORE AT EASE WITH THE PRESENT TEAM THAN ONE THAT IS UNTESTED AND UNCERTAIN.

WE HAVE TO RECOGNISE WE ARE A LONG WAY FROM ACHIEVING THIS ELECTORAL JUDGEMENT.

I CANNOT SAY FOR SURE WHERE THE POLLS WILL GO IN COMING WEEKS BUT MY HUNCH IS THAT THE MORE THE TORIES FIRM UP ON THEIR POLICY OFFER (WHICH THEY ARE LIKELY TO DO IN LIGHT OF OUR "POLICY-FREE" TAUNTS OF THEM) THE MORE VOTERS WILL FIRM UP THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE ALTERNATIVE (UNLESS CAMERON DOES SOMETHING VERY STUPID ON POLICY WHICH IS UNLIKELY). TORY SPLITS ON POLICY ARE UNLIKELY TO OCCUR. INSTEAD THEY WILL RIDE THE MOOD FOR CHANGE, SHARPENING IT AS THEY GO, PLAYING DOWN THE MISTAKE THEY MADE AT THEIR CONFERENCE OF TELLING PEOPLE HOW AUSTERE TORY GOVT WILL BE.

AGAINST THIS, WE WILL HOPE FOR BRIGHTENING ECONOMIC PROSPECTS AS WE PICK UP POSITIVE GROWTH AND THE CHANCE OF A 'BETTER THE DEVIL YOU KNOW' CONCLUSION.

AS THINGS STAND NOW, HOWEVER, I DO NOT BELIEVE THIS WILL BRING US BACK OUR LOST 'NEW LABOUR' COALITION VOTERS. OUR 'CORE' VOTE WILL FIRM UP AND BRING US TO A STEADY 30% BUT THIS WILL NOT BE NEARLY ENOUGH IN OUR MARGINALS WHERE OUR SUPPORT HAS ERODED MORE THAN THE NATIONAL POLLS INDICATE.

THERE IS A FURTHER DANGER. THIS IS THAT OUR 'DIVIDING LINES' MINDSET AND RHETORIC ALIENATES OUR LOST VOTERS EVEN MORE BECAUSE IT IS TOO CRUDE, TOO POPULIST, TOO ANTI-WEALTHY AND THEREFORE COMES ACROSS AS POPULIST AND ANTI-ASPIRATIONAL. I BELIEVE THAT 'FAIRNESS AGAINST PRIVILEGE' IS A STRONG LABOUR TEMPLATE. BUT IT IS NOT ENOUGH AND IF

APPLIED TOO UNTHINKINGLY, OR IN ISOLATION, CAN BACKFIRE BECAUSE IT STARTS TO SOUND A BIT DESPERATE.

SINCE OUR PARTY CONFERENCE WE HAVE STRENGTHENED AS ECONOMIC CONFIDENCE HAS GROWN AND BECAUSE CAMERON MISFIRED. BUT HE DID SO NOT BECAUSE HIS STRATEGY WAS WRONG BUT BECAUSE IT WAS INSUFFICIENTLY NUANCED. HIS MESSAGE OF 'TOUGH TIMES AHEAD' IS RIGHT BECAUSE IT IS WHERE THE PUBLIC'S OWN PERCEPTIONS ARE AND IT SHOWS LEADERSHIP ON HIS PART. THEY KNOW BRITAIN HAS TAKEN A BEATING AND THAT RECOVERY IS GOING TO BE LONG IN COMING. IN THE PBR, WE CHOSE TO FIGHT AGAINST THESE PERCEPTIONS. I DO NOT BELIEVE WE WON THIS FIGHT. WE PUT OURSELVES ON THE SIDE OF 'PROTECTING PEOPLE' BUT AT THE EXPENSE OF CREDIBILITY. I FELT AND SAID THIS BEFOREHAND BUT I SHOULD HAVE SPOKEN UP MORE FIRMLY. BUT YOU WERE NOT IN THE MOOD TO HEAR THIS. AND THIS IS A PROBLEM. WE DO NOT HAVE A PROPER AND OPEN STRATEGIC DIALOGUE AMONGST US. ONCE YOU HAVE MADE UP YOUR MIND IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DISCUSS THINGS FRANKLY AND COLLECTIVELY.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE ? HOW DO WE GET TO A CHOICE BETWEEN THE PARTIES THAT FAVOURS US ?

WE CANNOT DO THIS WITHOUT RECLAIMING LEADERSHIP AS WELL AS FUTURE, ALONGSIDE FAIRNESS.

AND THERE IS ONLY ONE REAL LEADERSHIP/FUTURE GAME IN TOWN AND THAT IS THE ECONOMY. GROWTH IS CENTRAL TO THIS BUT AT PRESENT OUR GROWTH OFFER IS IMPAIRED BY OUR APPARENT UNREALISM ABOUT THE PUBLIC FINANCES. PEOPLE WILL NOT ACCEPT OUR COMMITMENT AND POLICIES ON GROWTH WITHOUT COHERENCE ON THE FINANCES. WE STARTED TO TAKE TOUGHER ACTION IN THE PBR BUT SIMULTANEOUSLY APPEARED TO DENY WE WERE DOING SO. YOU AND ALISTAIR WERE IN DIFFERENT PLACES AND THE RESULT WAS COMMUNICATIONS FUDGE AND WEAKENED PERCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP, BOOSTING 'TIME FOR A CHANGE'. THIS IS GOING TO HAPPEN EVERYTIME WE DON'T GET IT RIGHT.

WE CANNOT POWER OUR CAMPAIGN WHILST BEING UNCLEAR ON STRATEGY AND THEREFORE IN MESSAGE. IF THIS CONTINUES THE APPEARANCE OF LACK OF IDEAS AND ENERGY WILL GROW, AND WE WILL FAIL TO RE-CONNECT. ABOVE ALL, IT IS HAMPERING YOU BECAUSE IT MUFFLES YOUR VOICE.

OUR TASK IS TO CONTINUE TO BUILD CORE VOTE WHILE REGAINING OUR 'NEW LABOUR' SUPPORT. WE CANNOT DO THIS WITHOUT BEING SERIOUS ON DEBT AND PUBLIC FINANCES AND WITHOUT DOING AND SAYING MORE ON ASPIRATION. WE HAVE TO BE CAREFUL THAT OUR DIVIDING LINES DO NOT UNWITTINGLY COME ACROSS AS ANTI-ASPIRATIONAL AND 'SECTIONAL' RATHER THAN 'NATIONAL'. UNLESS WE ARE MANIFESTLY WORKING IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST, AS OPPOSED TO APPEARING TO WORK IN OUR PARTY INTEREST, WE WILL NOT ADVANCE. THIS

DOES NOT MEAN STOPPING TO EXPLOIT LACK OF TRUST IN THE TORIES. IN PARTICULAR, WE HAVE TO WIN THE ARGUMENT THAT THEY HAVE NOT CHANGED SUFFICIENTLY. BUT ALONE, WE HAVE TO RECOGNISE THIS IS NOT ENOUGH FOR US. WE HAVE TO DEMONSTRATE CONVINCINGLY THAT WE UNDERSTAND THE VOTERS' DESIRE FOR CHANGE AND THAT WE OFFER CHANGE FROM THE PRESENT. SIMPLY OFFERING REASSURANCE AND SECURITY (AS THE PBR TRIED TO DO IMPLICITLY) IS NOT ENOUGH. NOR IS MAKING PEOPLE FEARFUL OF TORY CHANGE ENOUGH. WE HAVE TO MAKE A FUTURE OFFER OF OUR OWN THAT SHOWS BOLDNESS AND LEADERSHIP.

WE HAVE TO FRAME OUR CAMPAIGN AS THE PARTY THAT CAN BUILD ON EXPERIENCE AND VALUES TO OFFER BOTH RECOVERY AND FAIRNESS, TAKING HARD AND HONEST DECISIONS IN THE PROCESS. YOU ARE RIGHT THAT THE GROWTH PRIORITY AND STRONG COMMUNITIES ARE KEY TO THIS. BUT VOTERS SEE AND HEAR OUR POLICIES FOR BOTH ONLY WEAKLY AND INTERMITTENTLY, AND IN ANY CASE WILL DOUBT OUR DELIVERY OF THEM WHEN THEY CANNOT SEE HOW WE ARE SORTING OUT THE PUBLIC FINANCES.

IF WE CANNOT ACHIEVE THIS WE CANNOT FIGHT A CAMPAIGN ON CHOICE. WE WILL BE LEFT WITH CONTINUITY - AND AN ATTEMPT TO OFFER SECURITY - BECAUSE WE HAVE NOT GOT ENOUGH 'CHANGE' TO MAKE A STRONG ENOUGH - AND CREDIBLE ENOUGH - OFFER ON FUTURE.

AS THINGS STAND AT THE MOMENT, THE PUBLIC ARE NOT IN THE MOOD TO CARRY OUT THE RE-ASSESSMENT OF US WE URGENTLY NEED. WE HAVE TO JOLT THEM INTO DOING SO. WE CANNOT DO THIS WITHOUT STRONG, TOUGH, UNITED COMMUNICATIONS. WE DO NOT HAVE THIS AT THE MOMENT, I BELIEVE FOR THE REASONS I AM ARGUING.

IT IS NEVER TOO LATE. THE PUBLIC ARE NOT YET FULLY SIGNED UP TO THE TORIES. BUT THE LATER IT GOES, THE HARDER IT BECOMES TO FORCE THE RE-ASSESSMENT WE WANT.