

Starmer's undue haste is hard to justify

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As [The National](#) in Scotland has reported tonight:

KEIR Starmer has given a ministerial position to a close ally in the unelected House of Lords.

It comes after Anneliese Dodds resigned from his Labour Government [over cuts to the international aid budget](#).

The outgoing Labour minister warned that the impacts of the cuts would be “far greater than presented” by the UK Government.

They then noted:

Starmer [has now] appointed his former political secretary Jenny Chapman to fill Dodds’s old position. She will also attend the UK Cabinet.

Chapman had been made a Labour life peer after a nomination from Starmer in December 2020.

She was working as a parliamentary under secretary of state in the Foreign Office before she was elevated on Friday.

My problems are threefold.

First, Starmer and Chapman are reported to be personally close. That does not help political balance. Friendships can undermine objectivity, not least with others who will be involved in managing complex issues.

Second, rumour has always been that Dodds was never meant to have the right to attend Cabinet. She simply claimed it, for which I give her all credit. But now, Starmer has consented to this for someone who is in effect part of his inner circle. That is an uncomfortable concentration of his power.

Third, the undue haste of this suggests a lack of respect for the role of overseas aid.

My difficulties with this administration grows by the day.