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CC(82) 8th
Conclusions

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CABINET

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet
held at 10 Downing Street on

THURSDAY 4 MARCH 1982

at 10.45 am

PRESENT

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister

The Rt Hon William Whitelaw MP Secretary of State for the Home Department	The Rt Hon Lord Hailsham Lord Chancellor
The Rt Hon Lord Carrington Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs	The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP Chancellor of the Exchequer
The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph MP Secretary of State for Education and Science	The Rt Hon Francis Pym MP Lord President of the Council
The Rt Hon James Prior MP Secretary of State for Northern Ireland	The Rt Hon John Nott MP Secretary of State for Defence
The Rt Hon Peter Walker MP Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	The Rt Hon Michael Heseltine MP Secretary of State for the Environment
The Rt Hon George Younger MP Secretary of State for Scotland	The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP Secretary of State for Wales
The Rt Hon Humphrey Atkins MP Lord Privy Seal	The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP Secretary of State for Industry
The Rt Hon John Biffen MP Secretary of State for Trade	The Rt Hon David Howell MP Secretary of State for Transport
The Rt Hon Norman Fowler MP Secretary of State for Social Services	The Rt Hon Leon Brittan QC MP Chief Secretary, Treasury
The Rt Hon Baroness Young Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	The Rt Hon Nigel Lawson MP Secretary of State for Energy

The Rt Hon Cecil Parkinson MP
Paymaster General

SECRET

ALSO PRESENT

The Rt Hon Michael Jopling MP
Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury

SECRETARIAT

Sir Robert Armstrong
Mr R L Wade-Gery (Items 1, 3 and 4)
Mr D M Elliott (Items 1, 3 and 4)
Mr D H J Hilary (Item 2)
Mr L J Harris (Item 2)

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STANSTED
AIRPORT
OPERATION

1. The Cabinet warmly congratulated the Home Secretary on the successful police operation at Stansted Airport, which had resulted in the release of all the hostages on the hijacked Tanzanian airliner unharmed.

THE HOME SECRETARY said that this was the first such operation that had had to be undertaken by a provincial police force, although there had of course been much advance planning and exercises had been undertaken, some of which had involved the Essex Constabulary. The successful outcome was much to the credit of the Chief Constable of Essex. Five people had now been charged with offences, and would remain in this country to face trial and sentence. The families of two of them had been on the airliner; he had decided that they should be sent back to Tanzania, on the receipt of assurances from the Tanzanian Government that they would be properly treated.

PARLIAMENTARY
AFFAIRS

2. The Cabinet were informed of the business to be taken in the House of Commons during the following week.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL said that he had received a letter from the Speaker drawing attention to the increasing length of Ministerial replies to oral Parliamentary Questions. The Speaker had asked that Ministers should shorten their replies so that a larger number of Questions could be dealt with.

THE PRIME MINISTER said that there would continue to be occasions when a lengthy Ministerial reply was inevitable. The Speaker's attention should be drawn to the tendency for backbench Members to ask long and involved Supplementaries, which themselves absorbed time as well as necessitating long replies.

The Cabinet -

Took note.

FOREIGN
AFFAIRS---
ZimbabwePrevious
Reference:
CC(82) 6th
Conclusions,
Minute 2

3. THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY said that during his recent visit to Zimbabwe he had found the situation less unstable than the media were suggesting. The Prime Minister, Mr Mugabe, was confident that the dismissal and impending trial of his main coalition partner, Mr Nkomo, would not lead to serious trouble. Support for Mr Nkomo had been declining for some time, not least because of his personal reputation for venality. The commander of the Zimbabwean army had found no atmosphere of tension on a recent visit to Mataberland, which had been Mr Nkomo's main power base. It was less clear that trouble could be avoided if Mr Nkomo was convicted and imprisoned; but it was possible that he might be granted a Presidential pardon. Among the white inhabitants of Zimbabwe, the business community were making a determined and sensible effort to come to terms with existing conditions. The skilled white artisan class were worried about their future and were often subject to tempting offers to emigrate to South Africa; but Mr Mugabe was aware of the need to reassure and retain them, so far as possible. Less could be done to reassure white members of the public service, whose salaries were frozen and over whose heads black Zimbabweans were inevitably being promoted. The white Members of the Zimbabwean Parliament had not been making good use of their position. Mr Mugabe's most pressing problem was to find money for his land resettlement programme, in which more than one hundred and fifty thousand families would be involved.

Kenya

THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY said that during his two-day visit to Kenya he had been able to lobby successfully in support of two major contracts being sought by British firms. It was a pity that there had not been more British Ministerial visits there in recent years. He hoped that his colleagues would bear in mind the important role which such visits could play in keeping friendships in repair. They should not be confined to countries where major problems had to be dealt with.

European
Court of
Human Rights

THE LORD CHANCELLOR said that the recent ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of Campbell and Cosans v the United Kingdom, which had dealt with the question of corporal punishment in British schools, was unhelpful at a time of growing disorder in the schools and amounted to interference with the national sovereignty of the United Kingdom. He had been in favour of renewing the right of individual petition, but cases such as this raised the question whether anything could and should be done to limit the scope of the Court's activities.

The Cabinet -

Took note.

COMMUNITY
AFFAIRS

25 February
Textiles
Council

Previous
Reference:
CC(81) 40th
Conclusions,
Minute 3

4. THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE said that a special meeting of the Council of Ministers to deal with outstanding textile problems had taken place on 25 February. Agreement had been reached on a compromise package which would enable the Community to accept the Protocol extending the present Multi-fibre Arrangement and met the United Kingdom's requirement for a tough and effective successor regime. The British textile industry was still unhappy, because they would have preferred the base level for future imports of low cost textiles into the Community to have been the actual level of imports in 1980 rather than the somewhat higher quotas applicable to that year; but this approach had been unacceptable to other member states, and the industry's fears might in any case prove groundless if such major suppliers as India continued to under-utilise their quotas. The Council's decisions had provided an umbrella for the opening of a series of bilateral negotiations with individual suppliers. These negotiations were bound to be difficult, but it was to be hoped that they would not give rise to problems of the kind that had earlier led Indonesia to retaliate against British exports.

French
National Aids

Previous
Reference:
CC(81) 41st
Conclusions,
Minute 3

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE said that the Commission had decided yesterday to initiate action against the recently announced national aids to French agriculture with a view to taking France to the European Court of Justice. This was a welcome development, though it was possible that the President of the European Commission might yet persuade the French Government to produce sufficient additional information about these aids to stop the case going to the Court.

The Cabinet -

Took note.

Cabinet Office

4 March 1982