

LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 11.00 date: 6/11/79

PRIME MINISTER'S ENGAGEMENTS

PM working at Downing Street this morning; PQs this afternoon; Audience of The Queen this evening; Three-line whip on Industry Bill at 2200 hours.

PRESS NOTICES

Lady Pamela Hartwell: trustee of the British Museum
Rev Alfred Newsum: Vicar of Stockland Green, West Midlands
Rev Anthony Durrans: Vicar of All Saints and Martyrs, Langley, Manchester

ACARD REPORT

Published 1000 hrs; press conference 1500 hrs.

RHODESIA

We indicated that enabling legislation, to appoint Governor and move towards an independent and democratically governed Zimbabwe Rhodesia, was imminent. We did not expect the Bill, or a statement from the Leader of the House, today. We left the Lobby with the clear impression that the Bill could appear this week and that "debates" (ie 2nd Reading ?) could be this week.

We emphasised that any enabling legislation had nothing to do with sanctions and that a number of options were open to HMG up to midnight, 15 November. It did not mean the end of sanctions if Section 2 of the 1965 Act was not renewed: a very substantial area of sanctions would remain. We offered no guidance on this issue: the options were open. But we pointed out that Section 2 covers 40% of trade; that the exchange control regulations etc would still be in place; and we agreed Section 2 could not be renewed for less than 12 months. We also agreed that all things were possible, in answer to the question about whether there could be a Constitutional Bill that involved sanctions.

We agreed that HMG wanted to get through its legislation "abnormally quickly" and we placed this in the context of the 15 November deadline by which time we hoped that the rebellion would be at an end. We reminded the Lobby that Lord Carrington had indicated last Friday that he hoped to move very quickly.

DARRYN CLARKE

CFRs ~~Wednesday~~ publication Thursday 1430 hrs.

Thurs 10.30 am;

PRIME MINISTER'S ENGAGEMENTS/PRESS NOTICES

The morning Lobby was repeated.

RHODESIA

In answer to additional questions we said we did not know if the PM was planning to go to the UN; presumably we could work through the Ambassador. And we did not know if we could expect news from Lancaster House today; but obviously we wanted to move quickly. We had no guidance to offer on who might be Governor.

POLARIS ETC

In answer to an open-ended series of questions we said that no decisions had yet been taken about either a new generation of missiles for aircraft or about the successor to Polaris. The Nuclear Planning Group, NATO, was due to meet in the Hague on 13/14 November to discuss TNF; there was a NATO Council meeting due on 10 December. HMG had to take its decisions, by implication, before then. We knew nothing about a possible White Paper on the subject. But obviously announcements would have to be made.

BBC

We steered people towards the FCO, pointing out that, subject to public expenditure constraints, there presumably could be some redistribution or reallocation.

BUILDING SOCIETY INTEREST RATES

Following the PM's answer in the House ("Very little hope" of avoiding an increase next January), we indicated that the PM would not have said that without consideration/investigation (by other Ministers).

BROADCASTING BILL (4TH CHANNEL)

We were not expecting it next week. Hoped it would appear before Christmas.

CFRs ETC

There was some complaint about the short time-lag between CFRs and publication; and against the weekly White Paper List which contained only "routine stuff" while the interesting material just "popped up". We undertook to make the White Paper List as useful as possible and we believed in giving CFRs, where possible, 24 hours in advance. The Lobby recognised the need to preserve the embargo.