

PRIME MINISTER'S ENGAGEMENTS

The Prime Minister is working at No 10 this morning. She meets President Giscard (Kensington Palace helipad) at 1225. Fourth in annual Summit series, last one in UK: Chequers, December 1977. Programme: small working lunch No 10; tete-a-tete; enlarged session 1600 (including Foreign Secretary, Lord President of Council, M. Francois Poncet and M. Monory). M. Barre, French Prime Minister, not attending because of urgent Parliamentary business. Dinner at Downing Street this evening. Briefing at No 12 Downing Street at 1800.

BLUNT

Points on Blunt included:

- i HMG will probably offer to initiate a Debate on Wednesday in HMG time. PM to open, Attorney General probably to wind-up. Business statement later today should clarify.
- ii Written PQs on Order Paper for PM tomorrow: Answers not likely to be as substantial as last Thursday's.
- iii On Blunt's allegation that statement broke guarantee to him about no publicity, we said that no Government could give such a guarantee. It was a nonsense given a free press. The only guarantee from HMG could be about immunity. The statement was a result of the enormous build-up of speculation about him.
- iv Inquiry: We did not guide the Lobby to expect an inquiry. We realised that last week's statement would produce an enormous number of questions. We were now following through in measured stages. We expected that there would be substantial debate in the H/C which would clarify the major issues. We would then take stock. We had no taste to blacken the dead. It all happened many years ago. It was now more important that the PM should be convinced she knows precisely what is going on and she had been putting herself in that position. We did not want to suffer from the omissions or failures of the past. We did not know if the PM would be seeing Mr Callaghan before the Debate. We thought that previous PMs may in fact want to speak in the Debate.

bc | On the suggestion of an inquiry into procedures, we said that such an inquiry would not be in public; and we suggested that the PM could ~~(satisfy)~~ without an inquiry.

- v Blunt's statement and press conference: We revealed that Blunt's solicitor had asked for a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary which was taking place this morning. We would not be vetting his statement but we would obviously be indicating any elements that might prejudice security. It was obviously hypothetical to speculate about whether or not he might be charged under the OSA if he said anything.
- vi We thought the proposition that the PM could be told "without being told" was very interesting, but we rejected the idea that if the Private Secretary was told, the information necessarily became the property of the PM.
- vii On Young and the OSA, we commented that we were surprised how many people have been talking.
- viii We offered no guidance on whether any more names would be revealed officially.

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- ix We re-emphasised that the PM had been taking a close interest in security since her appointment and reminded the Lobby that she knew about Blunt some time during the summer. Civil servants did not need telling that they would be dismissed if they didn't tell her about matters such as this.
- x [Protection of Information Bill: The Lobby didn't ask: if/when they do we could say that the question if/when/how the Home Office proceeds with the Bill is obviously now part of present discussion and is being considered.]

#### PRESS CONFERENCES

We reminded the Lobby about the Northern Ireland Lobby briefing and the Giscard press conference both at 11.00 tomorrow.

#### PAY FOR COUNCILLORS

There is no truth whatever in the story in the 'Daily Star' that Councillors are to be paid £20 a week salaries. The Government's proposals on Councillors' remuneration will be announced when the Local Government Planning and Land Bill is published - probably within two weeks.

[For your information: There will no salary for Councillors, only slightly increased allowances.]

The morning Lobby was repeated.

MR ANTHONY BLUNT/PROTECTION OF INFORMATION BILL

We said that the Government was considering the implications of the Bill in the context of the Blunt affair. Part of the discussion would be the if/how/when/what of the Bill. The Lobby could expect something to be raised in the Debate on Wednesday. We understood the Home Secretary had been reported as saying that he would consider amendments to the Bill. We understood the Prime Minister would open the Debate and the Attorney General would wind-up. On the question of whether there would be an inquiry, we said this was still being considered; we expected to know on Wednesday after the Debate; the Prime Minister needed to know precisely what was going on; we would need to be precise in any inquiry. We did not know how far the Prime Minister would go in the Debate; what questions would come up; or the depth of the answers to them.

We confirmed that Mr Rubinstein came, at his own request, to see Sir Robert Armstrong this morning. The Lobby could assume that the Prime Minister was aware of Mr Rubinstein's visit to Sir Robert Armstrong. He stayed for about an hour. We understood he wanted to ensure that any statement his client would make would not be prejudicial to national security. We emphasised that we were not clearing any statement; we were not in that position. We could offer no guidance on the statement. On the question of the press conference Mr Blunt was alleged to be giving this week, we said the timing of it was for him.

We could not confirm whether there would be a meeting of Ministers on Wednesday before the Debate. But the Prime Minister was keeping closely in touch with events. We confirmed again that the Prime Minister knew about the events of the Blunt case in the summer. We said that the Lobby could assume that she had taken steps to ensure that she was being kept fully informed on all details. On the question of whether the immunity was limited, we said that we did not know. However, we emphasised the immunity given to Mr Blunt was immunity from prosecution not immunity from publicity. No Government could give a guarantee on the latter in a society which had a free press.

MENUS FOR FISCARD D'ESTAING

We gave the lunch and dinner menus for today's meals.