

PRIME MINISTER

*Euro-Council
London - Lancaster Hs.
Nov. 1991*

Euro Council : Press Conference

The Press Conference, as you know, will be held in the Grand Hall of the Connaught Rooms. We shall need to give journalists time to get over there. It would therefore be sensible to have a briefing meeting here in Lancaster House before you leave for the Press Conference.

Immediately after the Press Conference (which will be televised and recorded) you have agreed to do radio and television interviews (BBC Radio and TV, ITN and IRN) in a small ante room there.

If you agree I will select the questions at the Press Conference so that you can concentrate on the Q and A.

Background

The Council is dominated by one issue - the Mandate. So far there has been little interest in other matters, though I am being asked about the EMS, especially in view of the rising value of the pound. We also have the usual Arab/Israeli lobbies who will no doubt ask questions on the Middle East.

I would also expect you to be asked to react to Crosby. You may think it would be sensible to give a short comment. The text of your overnight statement is at Annex A.

I am sure that the broadcasters will also ask about Crosby. I think it is reasonable for you to suggest they use any comment you give in the Press Conference rather than go over it again in interviews. Agree?

Presentational Problem

Your presentational problem, assuming no progress on the Mandate, is to come out of the Council looking positive. In

all our briefing yesterday we were probably more cautious about the prospects of progress than most other countries. There was however an air of hope, if not real expectation, around overnight. This morning we have dispelled that by reporting frankly that officials had really got nowhere by 6 a.m.

But we have sought all the time to portray you and your officials as labouring long and hard as Presidents to make progress; and that it will not be for want of trying on your part if the London Council does not move it forward. In short the media are prepared for a disappointment.

Your line might therefore be, in sorrow rather than anger: a missed opportunity, but the problem won't go away and will have to be faced soon.

You may also feel it would help briefly to indicate the wide range of topics covered by the Council to demonstrate that it was not a total waste of time. A speaking note is at Annex B.

Press Conference Itself

This will be a Presidency Press Conference and M. Thorn will join you. It is customary to invite him to say a few words about the Council's outcome after your introductory remarks.

In giving this Press Conference as President of the Council it is important for you to say in answering questions where you are making solely UK national points.

The media are, of course, likely to look for a scapegoat, but they will also be concerned to take the Mandate forward and to gauge your resolve:

Is there any real prospect of a deal?

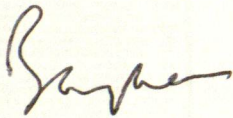
When do you see it being settled?

What are the deadlines?

/Will

Will there have to be another big row?

No doubt you will agree that this is not the time to raise the temperature. But I believe it is very important for you, tactically and politically at home, to demonstrate your utter resolve to get a fairer and better balanced financial structure in the Community.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'B. G. ...', written in a cursive style.

27 November 1981