

PRIME MINISTER'S ENGAGEMENTS

The Prime Minister received the High Commissioner for St Vincent, Dr Claudius Thomas, at 0930 - a courtesy introductory call. This afternoon the Prime Minister will answer Questions and this evening she hopes to have an Audience of the Queen, after which she will attend the Save the Children Diamond Jubilee Concert at the Albert Hall.

STATEMENTS

Statement on Rhodesia by Lord Carrington and Sir Ian Gilmour at 1530. Correspondents would recall that the Leader of the Opposition asked last week that the Government should keep them informed of developments regarding Rhodesia. This afternoon's statement would contain details of the Government's thinking on the Independence Bill and could possibly contain some information about the movements of Governor Soames. We did not know when Lord Soames would fly to Rhodesia but the FCO would certainly let correspondents know as soon as a firm time was fixed.

It was also possible that there might be a statement on the Bingham Report today but, as far as we knew, no firm decision had yet been taken on the timing of this particular statement.

NORTHERN IRELAND

The Prime Minister had written to John Hume after he had been elected Leader of the SDLP recently to invite him to a meeting with her to discuss the security situation in Northern Ireland. This invitation was in precisely the same terms as those that the Prime Minister had sent to Messrs Paisley, Molyneaux and Fitt several weeks ago. We understood that Mr Hume had accepted the Prime Minister's invitation for a discussion about security but that no definite time had yet been fixed.

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO THE US

The Prime Minister would have a general tour d'horizon across the spectrum of US/UK co-operation with President Carter on the morning of Monday 17 December. Iran was likely to feature strongly in her discussions. In the afternoon of Monday 17 December, the Prime Minister would visit the Pentagon, the Federal Reserve Board as well as meeting with members of Congress and seeing the press.

In New York on Tuesday 18 December the Prime Minister would be paying courtesy calls on the UN Secretary General and the current President of the Security Council, making a speech to the Foreign Policy Association at lunch time, and visiting a major industrial/scientific plant in New Jersey (Exxon Chemicals). In the evening the Prime Minister would be dining with a number of "opinion formers" before flying back to London overnight.

We did not think it likely that the Prime Minister would see candidates running in the next Presidential election apart, of course, from President Carter (although we could not exclude social contact with other candidates during the visit).

This morning's briefing was repeated.

#### GOVERNOR OF ZIMBABWE/RHODESIA

Lord Soames did not see the Prime Minister today but had had a long talk with her last Friday. We were asked whether Mr Callaghan would be seeing the Prime Minister today about Rhodesia, to which we said we did not know.

We were asked for more details about the personnel going out with Lord Soames to protect him, as mentioned by the Lord Privy Seal in the statement. We suggested that correspondents should seek details from the Press Centre at Lancaster House - we were sure that adequate arrangements had been made for Lord Soames's protection and it would be counter-productive to describe the arrangements too precisely.

We said that we did not think that the timing of Lord Soames's departure this afternoon had been advanced - if anything it may have drifted slightly from a possible departure time yesterday evening. Asked whether there were any contingency plans for Lord Soames's plane to be diverted if there was a major adverse development before he actually arrives in Rhodesia tomorrow morning, we said "there is always a contingency plan for everything".

No announcement had yet been made as to who would assume Lord Soames's duties as Lord President.

#### STATEMENTS

We expected Peter Walker to make a statement on the Agricultural Council tomorrow; and Francis Pym to make a statement on the NATO Council Meeting on Thursday.

On a purely operational and tentative basis, we said that the statements on the Bingham Report and on nuclear power might slip until next week.

#### NORTHERN IRELAND

Regarding the Prime Minister's invitation to Mr Hume for a meeting on the security problem in Northern Ireland, we could not rule out a meeting before Christmas although in practical terms it was more likely after Christmas. The same applied to the possible timing of a first session of the Conference on Northern Ireland.

#### DEFENCE/US VISIT

The Government had not yet taken any decision on a replacement for Polaris and we thought it was unlikely to do so before the new year. This subject might be touched on during the Prime Minister's talks with President Carter next week, which would also cover a large number of other topics including Iran, Rhodesia, East-West relations, defence, the EEC and Northern Ireland.