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CC(83) 10th
Conclusions

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CABINET

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet
held at 10 Downing Street on
THURSDAY 17 MARCH 1983
at 10.30 am

P R E S E N T

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 Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer

The Rt Hon Francis Pym MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and
Commonwealth Affairs

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph MP
Secretary of State for Education and Science

The Rt Hon James Prior MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

The Rt Hon Peter Walker MP
Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

The Rt Hon Michael Heseltine MP
Secretary of State for Defence

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 Patrick Jenkin MP
Secretary of State for Industry

The Rt Hon John Biffen MP
Lord President of the Council

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
Lord Privy Seal

The Rt Hon Nigel Lawson MP
Secretary of State for Energy

The Rt Hon Norman Tebbit MP
Secretary of State for Employment

The Rt Hon Cecil Parkinson MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and
Paymaster General

The Rt Hon Tom King MP
Secretary of State for the Environment

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ALSO PRESENT

The Rt Hon Michael Jopling MP
Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury

SECRETARIAT

Mr P L Gregson
Mr D J S Hancock (Items 2 and 3)
Mr A D S Goodall (Items 2 and 3)
Mr D H J Hilary (Item 1)
Mr L J Harris (Item 1)

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PARLIAMENTARY
AFFAIRS .

1. The Cabinet were informed of the business to be taken in the House of Commons during the following week. The House would rise for the Easter Adjournment on Thursday 31 March, and return on Monday 11 April.

FOREIGN
AFFAIRS

Gibraltar

Previous
Reference:
CC(83) 7th
Conclusions,
Minute 2

2. THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY said that in the talks he was having in London with the Spanish Foreign Minister, Senor Moran, the latter was seeking to make one-sided changes in the Lisbon Agreement which were unacceptable. If the agreement were not implemented it would have a damaging effect on confidence in Gibraltar and would mean that the United Kingdom would have to provide Gibraltar with additional economic assistance. It would also be bad for relations between Spain and the United Kingdom and would create complications for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. He would be taking a very firm line with Senor Moran, as would the Prime Minister who would be seeing Senor Moran that afternoon. Meanwhile he was continuing to state publicly that Britain adhered to the aim of implementing the Lisbon Agreement.

Middle East

Previous
Reference:
CC(83) 8th
Conclusions,
Minute 2

THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY said that for the first time it appeared likely that the Arab League delegation would be coming to London as planned under the leadership of King Hussein of Jordan. He would be meeting the King that evening. The most useful part of the delegation's visit would probably be King Hussein's meeting with the Prime Minister, which would be an opportunity to establish whether the King thought he could carry Mr Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) with him in the Middle East peace negotiations. The Palestinians' representative on the delegation, Mr Walid Al Khalidi, was an academic who spent much of his time in the United States and had no close connections with the PLO.

Malaysia

THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY said that the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dr Mahathir, had apparently been very pleased with his recent visit to London and his reception by the Prime Minister. It looked as if the visit might mark the start of a welcome thaw in relations between Malaysia and the United Kingdom.

Zimbabwe

Previous
Reference:
CC(83) 8th
Conclusions,
Minute 2

THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY said that Mr Joshua Nkomo, the leader of the Zimbabwe African People's Union who had escaped arrest in Zimbabwe, had been admitted to the United Kingdom on 13 March. He appeared to be relatively inactive and was attracting little public attention. Mr Nkomo himself was appreciative of the way his admission had been handled and the Government of Zimbabwe was also content. Although military activity in Zimbabwe appeared to be at a reduced level, the risk of tribal warfare leading to civil war remained. For the moment the right course was for Britain to continue to give support where appropriate to the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, Mr Mugabe, thereby helping to pre-empt the risk that he might seek support from Communist governments.

CONFIDENTIAL

THE HOME SECRETARY said that Mr Nkomo and the two friends who had accompanied him would be given permission to remain in the United Kingdom for four weeks from 13 March and their passports would be returned to them. Great care would be taken to avoid any action which might give Mr Nkomo any right to remain in the United Kingdom at the expiry of the four-week period. But he had a wide range of influential friends here and the possibility of complications over his departure could not be excluded. Mr Nkomo had declined an offer of security protection while in the United Kingdom and his precise whereabouts were not known. Meanwhile, the former Prime Minister of Rhodesia, Mr Ian Smith, had applied for a British passport.

Romania

THE HOME SECRETARY, commenting on reports that a Romanian national had been denied permission to remain in the United Kingdom as a refugee, said there was no evidence that the person concerned had been involved in any form of political activity in Romania or would be more at risk there than any other returning national of a Communist country. The country would be flooded with refugees if all the many Communist and other foreign nationals who applied for refugee status were granted it uncritically. A difficult judgment had to be made in each individual case and he was satisfied that the decision in this case had been right.

Ireland

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND said that no official representations had been made to discourage the Archbishop of New York, Cardinal Cooke, from attending that day's St Patrick's Day parade in the city since such representations would have been counter-productive. There had however been unofficial approaches to him through Roman Catholic channels. The controversy surrounding this year's parade and the refusal of leading Irish American politicians to attend it had been damaging for the Irish Republican Army's cause in the United States. The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office, Lord Gowrie, would be visiting the United States shortly for talks with political and other leading figures including representatives of the media. This would help to counterbalance the publicity being given in the United States to the Irish Foreign Minister, Mr Barry, and the leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, Mr John Hume.

The Cabinet -

Took note.

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Council of Ministers (Foreign Affairs) 14/15 March

3. THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY said that the Council of Ministers (Foreign Affairs) had adopted the regulations necessary to ensure that the United Kingdom received the refunds due in respect of the 1982 Community budget. The payments should now be made before the end of the United Kingdom's financial year.

Council of Ministers (Agriculture) 14/15 March

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD said that the Council of Ministers (Agriculture) had, at last, adopted the regulation prescribing the butter import quota for New Zealand for 1983.

United States Trade Policy

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD said that he had visited the United States on 9/10 March to warn the United States Administration of the dangers of a trade war with the European Community. He had found that most of the United States Departments were anxious to avoid a trade war; in particular the United States Treasury and the Secretary of State, Mr Shultz, shared this view. The problem was that the President's political advisers in the White House appeared to think that it would be to the advantage of the Republican Party to subsidise agricultural exports in competition with the European Community. This would be a risky course for the United States which exported \$9½ billion of food products to the Community.

Community Expenditure in the United Kingdom

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND said that he had been greatly embarrassed by the statement by Commissioner Tugendhat in support of the allegation that the Government was dragging its feet on proposals for Community expenditure in the Highlands. He understood that the truth of the matter was that the Commission had decided that there was no money in the Community budget for this purpose so that Commissioner Tugendhat's statement had been misleading as well as unhelpful.

In discussion it was pointed out that this was not an isolated incident. Representatives of United Kingdom local authorities were often given the impression by the Commission that the United Kingdom Government was standing in the way of a flow of Community funds to their areas. The Government would need to consider what steps should be taken to put the record straight.

The Cabinet -

Took note.

Cabinet Office

17 March 1983