

SECRET

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PRIME MINISTER'S ELECTION CAMPAIGN

STYLE:

The presentation of the Prime Minister's election campaign would seem to be dictated by recognition of simple political reality rather than any considerations of "packaging" or "image".

The election is about the nation's future and the nation's leadership -- the two are inseparable.

In the Prime Minister the Conservative Party has the only outstanding national leader for many years. The other parties lack such an asset.

Because of this central fact the Conservatives are able with total credibility to offer continued progress on the path towards a radical restoration of Britain's economic strength, pride and traditional values while our rivals can only revive the failed dogmas of the past.

The media will wish to see the campaign as a bitter conflict between the Prime Minister and Michael Foot with the Alliance trying to pick up the pieces.

We will have to judge nearer the time how much attention needs to be concentrated on smashing the Alliance threat but the inevitable personalising of the battle by the Press and TV is to our advantage provided we can maintain the contrast between the sides.

We do not want to be accused of "presidential" campaigning. Nor is this a question of cold-blooded managerial efficiency.

This country is not Great Britain Ltd but 50 million human beings with hopes, fears and ambitions. It is clear that many of them see in the Prime Minister the personification of those concerns.

They see in her someone with the courage to defend the country's values against threats from the Left and the Unions at home as well as from Foreign interests, whether in the EEC or the South Atlantic.

We must be careful of any jingoism but indirect appeals to national pride and self-confidence can do no harm.

But in emphasising courage and determination as aspects of leadership we should not allow our opponents the opportunity to equate resolution with harshness.

The Prime Minister's speeches and TV appearances should provide opportunities for emphasis on the compassionate side of Conservative policies - help for the jobless, the improvement of welfare services both in the public and private sectors and enhanced opportunities in education.

Nor need the emphasis on the Prime Minister's role as national leader prevent her from scoring off her opponents. The rebukes can be magisterial. Harold Macmillan used to ridicule his rivals without in any way seeming to dull his Prime Ministerial sheen.

I am not proposing a Wilson-style "Carry on Governing" campaign of the type tried briefly by Labour in 1970 with the Prime Minister pretending to be above the battle. Our leader should be at the head of her troops.

It is, of course, essential that the Prime Minister be backed at her daily Press conferences by senior Ministers called in to deal with the policy issue of the day. This will demonstrate the breadth of ministerial expertise within the Government and neutralise any "one woman band" charges.

But frequently those presentations will take second place in media coverage to the developing themes of the campaign and it will be the Prime Minister's words which will gain the attention.

The schedule of proposed daily trips already allows for out-of-town press conferences and ample major rallies. It is essential that opportunities for "meet the people" events are exploited within the limits of security.

TV

You will wish to explore this further with Gordon Reece, but the 1979 approach of limiting the number of personal TV appearances by the Prime minister (aside from election broadcasts) to two or three a week seemed to work well.

There are already bids from both BBC and ITV to stage TV debates between the Party Leaders on the American style. The conventional wisdom is that it is always to the advantage of the incumbent Prime Minister to refuse the opposition an opportunity of being presented on "equal terms". There is much validity in this argument but if Mr. Foot is to be Labour's leader, I think it is at least worth discussing whether the usual rule of thumb applies on this occasion.

We would naturally refuse to countenance any involvement of the Alliance and the debates would have to be most carefully structured.

Breakfast TV

This will be a difficulty. Ideally we could do without it and we should certainly not need to involve the Prime Minister in this context.

But the cue for the day, at least as far as the evening papers nationwide are concerned, could be set by breakfast TV and we should have a Minister, fully briefed on the plans for the day assigned to the "dawn patrol" role of being available for Breakfast TV to give a taste of what is to come and defuse any time bombs left over from the morning press.

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THEMES

The broad scope of the election will naturally be the subject of a more general discussion but some fundamental themes seem to me very much part of the style of the Prime Ministerial Campaign.

The idea of leadership has already been encapsulated in the Resolute Approach and a similar concept should underly the key speeches and her Election Broadcasts. At the Press conferences we can rely upon the Prime Minister's instinctive responses to provide the appropriate atmosphere.

The basic leadership theme is that this Government has had the courage to take on the difficult problems even when this could mean unpopularity or a showdown with entrenched and powerful interests such as the Common Market or the trade unions.

And - a point worth stressing - in the case of the unions this has been done without the national conflict or "confrontation" which was the bogey raised at the 1979 election.

[The only confrontation was with the Argentines and our opponents would have ducked that one.]

We have been resolute in dealing with inflation and recovery is now under way -- unemployment, which is the other side of the inflation coin should be dealt with at length early in the campaign.

We have been resolute in tackling union abuse and giving the unions back to their members.

We have been resolute in tackling local council resistance to the sale of council houses.

We have been resolute in raising educational standards and opportunities.

We have been resolute in support of the crime fighters.

We have been resolute against terrorism.

We have been resolute in the defence of our country even to the extent of fighting a war 8,000 miles away.

We have made Britain a country which the world respects and of which its people can be proud.

I attach as appendix "A" proposed details of the Prime Minister's programme which are largely as previously mooted.

A handwritten signature, possibly initials, consisting of a large, stylized 'A' followed by a smaller 'S' and a period.

PRINCIPLES OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S PROGRAMME

The programme has been devised to play to the Prime Minister's personal strengths in meeting the people. At the same time, it is the view that, while not neglecting weaker parts of the country, the Prime Minister's time will be most effectively spent in Conservative areas.

A tour programme has been drafted to ensure:

- 1) Good TV pictures of the Prime Minister in action for the important 5.40 p.m. and 5.45 p.m. bulletins on BBC and ITV. (Audience approx 7.5 - 8 million).
- 2) Material for more substantive reports on BBC 9 o'clock and ITV 10 o'clock bulletins, as well as later comment on current affairs programmes.
- 3) Domination of the Sunday papers front pages each week of the campaign.

Additionally, care must be taken to avoid a constant 'rent-a-mob' domination of coverage of the Prime Minister. To that end we are recommending a shift in election planning: namely, that when visiting the less favourable areas, the Prime Minister concentrates on media engagements, including national media interviews. For example on D-6, to do NATIONWIDE from MANCHESTER, not London, so long as the interviewer is with the Prime Minister in the regional studio.

MAIN ELEMENTS OF PRIME MINISTER'S CAMPAIGN

1. Rallies
2. Use of Media
3. The Tour
4. Briefing
5. Party Election Broadcasts

1. Rallies

We are recommending that from D-19 to D-Day the Prime Minister speaks at six rallies. They are: Edinburgh (D-19); Cardiff (D-17); Leeds (D-14); Manchester (D-5); London (D-2) and a special interest rally on the final Sunday of the campaign (D-4) in Birmingham. At present, the youth vote and the trade unionists are the target ideas being canvassed for that rally.

In addition we propose a series of meetings in areas and a rally in Finchley, apart from adoption meeting and eve-of-poll meeting.

Rallies would be all-ticket to supporters.

2. Media

The recommendation to use regional media centres for national programmes has already been discussed. There are some additional points to be considered.

Local Radio and TV and Local Press: Opportunities to make use of the local media should be accepted when possible.

TV Appearances: They should be 'live' if at all possible. Specific programmes requests and acceptances should be discussed separately closer to the date.

3. The Tour

The election tour (proposed schedule attached with two preliminary options and comparison to 1979) has been designed to accord with principles outlined above. We are playing to our geographical strengths while not neglecting the other areas which would open us up to criticism about 'two-nations' etc.

The following are some explanatory notes:

- 3:1) Each day contains at least one 'picture' story for TV and at least one news story. Timings have been arranged to attract peaktime early evening bulletins for 'picture' stories.
- 3:2) There are more news-story opportunities than in 1979, reflecting the Prime Minister's 'high-ground' and statesmanlike style of campaign.
- 3:3) Schedule allows the Prime Minister the possibility of capturing the front pages of the Sunday papers on each week of the campaign. This did not happen in 1979.
- 3:4) The vital last week of the campaign has been designed (option one) to peak with a major London rally and domination of TV news bulletins. Additionally, the tour programme is flexible enough to accommodate more time in Central Office or Downing Street for preparation of the final PEB.

Other considerations in the final week should be noted are: the final Alliance broadcast on D-3 (hence the Prime Minister's major interviews for ITN and BBC News, which could immediately undo the effect of the Alliance broadcast) the final Labour PEB on D-2 would be countered by coverage of the Prime Minister's London rally speech; D-1 is our final PEB, which we recommend should feature the Prime Minister.

Each particular visit undertaken by the Prime Minister must, as in the past, reflect the themes of the campaign and the major issues. Initial consideration of specific visits which would produce good picture stories include:

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Contact with Service personnel (Aldershot).

Visit to technology based companies who had taken on staff or started up since 1979.

Visit to BL Jaguar or Maestro.

Visit to small business units set up by previously unemployed people with Government help.

Visit to enterprise programme schemes.

Maximum use of contact with owners of council houses.

Visit to NHS children's hospital e.g. Queen Mary's, Carshalton.

Visit to hospital being built.

Visit to voluntary service social or health care e.g. meals on wheels.

Visit to privatised company or privatised local authority service.

An early indication of the approval of such ideas and others in principle would enable work to proceed further to find actual examples. But much depends on final acceptance of target groups and themes.

Travelling Press: The recommendation is that travel arrangements are made so that the touring press accompany the Prime Minister in aircraft etc. as per 1979.

Press Conferences: The tour allows for one major regional press conference in Scotland. If option one is followed it would assume national significance as it would be the first press conference after the manifesto launch. When the Prime Minister is not present at the London press conferences, our recommendation is that it is taken by the Party Chairman.

Press Conferences should start no later than 9.30 a.m., to enable the Prime Minister to travel to location in time for that day's picture story.

Foreign Press should be restricted to the final 10 minutes of the major press conferences.

Priority must be given to regional and local journalists where the Prime Minister meets local reporters on tour.

In addition, the recommendation is that the Prime Minister agrees to meet the travelling Lobby correspondents both at the beginning and near the end of the campaign tour.

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4. Briefing

A schedule of briefing meetings at Central office has been drawn up before the daily press conference. In addition, regular contact with the Party Chairman has been built into the Prime Minister's programme. Work is proceeding to secure the latest equipment to ensure speedy and reliable communication between the Central Office and the Prime Minister's trouing party.

5. Party Election Broadcasts

We shall have during the campaign a minimum of 5, maximum 6, PEBs. The recommendation is that the Prime Minister opens the campaign (D-22) with either a PEB or Ministerial broadcast, and closes it (D-1) with our final PEB.

ends.

G. E . T O U R

D R A F T O U T L I N E

P R O G R A M M E

as dated 22.12.82

DAY	1979	OPTION ONE	OPTION TWO
D-22 WED E	M A E MANIFESTO LAUNCH CANDIDATES CONFERENCE	PROCLAMATION PEB/MINISTERIAL TV	PROCLAMATION PEB/MINISTERIAL TV
D-21 THU E	M A E	MANIFESTO LAUNCH ✓ Finchley Adoption Meeting	MANIFESTO LAUNCH
D-20 FRI E	M A E GOOD FRIDAY	THIS CONTAINS CANDIDATES CONFERENCE Scotland WFS <i>WFS</i> SCOTS NEWS CONFERENCE LONDON MEETINGS	CANDIDATES CONFERENCE
D-19 SAT E	M A E	Scottish Candidates Scottish RALLY <i>WOMEN'S RALLY</i>	Finchley RALLY
D-18 SUN E	M A E Photocall	Photocall with Colleagues Finchley Briefing Lunch	Photocall with Colleagues
D-17 MON E	M A E NEWS CONFERENCE Swansea Cardiff RALLY O/N	<i>P.P.O.</i> NEWS CONFERENCE - London Wales Wales RALLY O/N	NEWS CONFERENCE - London Wales Wales RALLY O/N
D-16 TUE E	M A E Bristol TV ELECTION CALL Gravesend MEETING	West Midlands (South) West Midlands (South) Wessex MEETING (? Oxford) <i>DOVER. BIRMINGHAM</i>	Western London/S.East MEETING
D-15 WED E	M A E NEWS CONFERENCE Eye/Ipswich Nottingham MEETING O/N	NEWS CONFERENCE - London Eastern Eastern MEETING	NEWS CONFERENCE - London Eastern ✓ East Midlands O/N
D-14 THU E	M A E Leicester/Bosworth Loughborough Birmingham RALLY	NEWS CONFERENCE - London Yorkshire Leeds RALLY O/N	East Midlands East Midlands West Midlands RALLY <i>YORKSHIRE</i>

D-13 FRI E	M A E	NEWS CONFERENCE Paddington/Ealing TV NATIONWIDE	BREAKFAST TV - Leeds Yorkshire/Northern	NEWS CONFERENCE - London Greater London Greater London WILTSHIRE DORSET.
D-12 SAT E	M A E	Milton Keynes Finchley	Finchley & Photocall Finchley RALLY	Home Counties Finchley HORN ROSS, OSIRIS THOMAS JOHN GOSS
D-11 SUN E	M A E	Photocall WORLD THIS WEEKEND	Photocall WORLD THIS WEEKEND WOL-0	Photocall WORLD THIS WEEKEND WOL-0
D-10 MON E	M A E	NEWS CONFERENCE Newcastle MEETING Darlington MEETING O/N	NEWS CONFERENCE Western Western MEETING(Heartlands) O/N	NEWS CONFERENCE Northern Yorkshire RALLY O/N
D-9 TUE E	M A E	Yorkshire Whistle Stop Halifax MEETING TV EYE	BREAKFAST TV - Bristol Wessex MEETING-? Aldershot TV EYE - London	Yorkshire SCOTLAND. TV EYE - London NATIONWIDE. POW WOL.
D-8 WED E	M A E	NEWS CONFERENCE RADIO Edinburgh RALLY O/N	NEWS CONFERENCE - London RADIO East Midlands MEETING O/N	NEWS CONFERENCE - London RADIO Scotland RALLY O/N
D-7 THU E	M A E	SCOTS NEWS CONFERENCE Aberdeen Whistle Stop Banff MEETING	East Midlands Finchley/London MEETING	SCOTS NEWS CONFERENCE Scotland EAST MIDLANDS EAST MIDLANDS WILTSHIRE
D-6 FRI E	M A E	NEWS CONFERENCE Putney ITN/PEB	NEWS CONFERENCE North-West TV NATIONWIDE O/N	NEWS CONFERENCE Greater London TV NATIONWIDE O/N
D-5 SAT E	M A E	Enfield Finchley	North-West RALLY Finchley Finchley	Greater London Finchley

D-4	M			
SUN	A	CTU RALLY - Wembley	SPECIAL RALLY - Birmingham	SPECIAL RALLY
	E			
D-3	M	NEWS CONFERENCE	NEWS CONFERENCE	NEWS CONFERENCE
MON	A	Ilford MEETING	Home Counties (Herts)	Greater London
	E	TV BOLTON 500	TV BOLTON 500/ITN/BBC TV	TV BOLTON 500/ITN/BBC TV
D-2	M	NEWS CONFERENCE	NEWS CONFERENCE	NEWS CONFERENCE
TUE	A	Stretford/Prestwich	Home Counties (Kent) PEB ?	North-West
	E	Bolton RALLY	London RALLY	North-West RALLY PEB.
D-1	M	NEWS CONFERENCE	NEWS CONFERENCE	NEWS CONFERENCE
WED	A	London Whistle Stop	Home Counties (GL) PEB?	Greater London
	E	Finchley Public MEETING	Finchley RALLY	Finchley RALLY
D-DAY	M	Finchley	Finchley	Finchley
THU	A	Finchley	Finchley	Finchley
	E	Finchley	Finchley	Finchley

DRAFT OUTLINE PROGRAMME

SAMPLE DAY WHEN TOURING AWAY FROM LONDON

08.15 Arrive Central Office

08.30
09.25 P.M.'s Briefing Meeting

09.30
10.00 Media Conference

10.00
10.20 Private discussion between P.M. and Chairman

10.20 Provision for Media interviews

10.45 Depart Central Office by car for Victoria Station

11.05 Train to Gatwick Airport

12.15 Aircraft take-off for Regional Airport (lunch on board)

13.15 Arrive Regional Airport

13.45
14.30 Visit to Centre for Handicapped Children

14.45
15.45 Visit to local factory

15.50 Leave for City centre Hotel

16.00
16.45 Local Radio Interviews/meet regional Editors

17.40 10 minute telephone talk with the Chairman

18.00 Light meal

18.30 Depart for evening Meeting/Rally

19.00 Evening Meeting/Rally

20.00 Leave for airport

20.45 Arrive airport

21.00 Take off for return flight to Gatwick

22.00 Arrive Gatwick

22.15 Depart Gatwick

23.00 Arrive No.10