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NOTE OF LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETING ON 10 FEBRUARY 1982

Present: Prime Minister  
Lord President of the Council  
Chairman of the Party  
Secretary of State for Scotland  
Chief Secretary  
Secretary of State for Employment  
Mr Wakeham (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
for Industry)  
Mr Cropper (Conservative Research Department)  
Prime Minister's Chief Press Secretary  
Mr Ward (Lord President of the Council's Office)

It was agreed that the Committee's main focus must be on the long term and that it should commission work on specific policy areas likely to be of special political importance. The aim, in each case, should be the production of a paper for the Committee which would set out the public perception, the facts, and the policies; and illustrate the best presentational approach. Each paper should especially focus on the likely developments over the next year. It was important that the Government and the Party machines worked closely together in this exercise both in the preparation of the material and in its subsequent deployment.

2. The exercise must concentrate on those policy issues most relevant to the run up to an election. At the same time it had to be recognised that many such issues had significance in the short term as well as the long term. The areas selected for study were as follows:

a) The economy; with the broad theme of industrial and employment strategy. It would be important to construct the right presentational approach in advance of the 1982 Budget so that eventual Budget decisions could be presented in a broad strategic context. The Secretary of State for Employment was invited to convene a group to prepare this paper which would also comprise the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Industry (Mr Wakeham). They would be supported by the Conservative Central Office (Mr Lilley). This paper should be available within two weeks.





b) Law and order. The paper should address the theme in its broadest terms including inner city problems. The Prime Minister would speak to the Home Secretary with a view to commissioning a paper. The work should be undertaken by a group comprising the Secretary of State for Scotland, a Home Office Minister, a Ministerial representative of the Department of the Environment, and possibly a Law Officer (perhaps Mr Fraser) with support from Conservative Central Office (Mr True). This paper should be available within three weeks.

c) The broad theme of a Capital Owning Democracy with particular emphasis on housing. The Prime Minister would speak to Mr Stanley in the first instance. This paper too should be commissioned immediately.

Further studies, to be commissioned later, would address:

d) The role of the Social Services; where it would be important in presentational terms to re-define the broader policy aims.

e) Education, with particular emphasis on the relevance of the educational curriculum to employment and vocational training.

f) Defence, with particular emphasis on nuclear aspects and the unilateralist lobby.

g) Overseas affairs, including the European Community.

h) Scotland, embracing all relevant policy issues.

3. A number of other points were also discussed and the following decisions taken:

a) It was important for Ministers generally to achieve a higher level of visibility in the media, and Chief Information Officers must be encouraged to devote greater efforts in this direction. The Prime Minister herself would attend an early meeting of MIO to this end.





b) As well as seeking to set the tone for general political discussion, the Government must in particular anticipate major outside events likely to generate political comment, eg trade union conferences. To assist in this process there should be prepared both a fortnightly and an annual calendar of all such events. (Secretary's note: the mechanics will be discussed by Mr Ingham and Mr Cropper.)

c) The Committee would wish regularly to discuss the theme to be selected for Central Office's weekly briefing note. To some extent this would depend on the turn of outside events but there would be occasions when the Committee would wish itself to initiate the theme. It would be valuable now to commission a briefing note on the subject of rates, where there were important facts to present; this was to be prepared on a contingency basis for the Committee's consideration.

d) Although in the past the Committee had not circulated papers in advance, because of the sensitivity of its proceedings, the major work now in hand made it necessary for members to have time to consider papers in advance of meetings. Great care must be taken to preserve their confidentiality and the Party Chairman would distribute them personally. As business got under way it would probably be desirable for the Prime Minister and the Lord President of the Council to agree an agenda in advance of each meeting.

4. The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 24th February at 11.00 am in No. 10. The main item of business would be consideration of the paper to be prepared on industrial and employment strategy.

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ANDREW WARD  
Lord President of the Council's Office

12 February 1982