



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

Prime Minister

TUC Delegation

Mr Norman Willes	General Secretary TUC
Mr Jack Eccles	GMBATU & currently Chairman of the TUC
Mr David Barrett	GMBATU
Mr Moss Evans	TGWU
Mr Bill Keys	SOGAT
Mr Ray Buckton	ASLEF
Mr Gerry Russell	AUEW

plus TUC officials

- Mr Cratam
- Mr Manks
- Mr Barber
- Mr Jackson

in last meeting,

SIGNIFICANT Shift:

Have we
? reduced? that

- after considerable
deserve

- 1) To manage activities effectively.
- 2) Control execution - reduced

collaborative review procedure

- 3) N.C.B. responsibility to develop

future.

Deeply committed on me

N.A.C.O.S.

I

Until modified in base
- current with 1984

All current pilot under
modified review procedure.

Joint procedure.

All 3 unions. =

Target date for
modified

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE T.U.C.

1979

31 May

General Secretary of TUC (published in
AQ 12.6.79)

25 June

Economic Committee TUC

29 October

Wales TUC

1980

9 January

NEDC

6 August

Northon Ireland TUC

14 October

General Council

1981

4 February

NEDC

1 September

Inner City Policy

25 November

TUC General Secretary with
representatives of European Trades
Union Confederation.

1981

3 February

NEDC

27 July

'Atlantic Conveyor' - Replacement

1 September

Scottish TUC, Glasgow

14 December

Ravenscraig
Scottish TUC + others.

1983

28 January

Scottish TUC + others
'Timex' at Dundee.

1984

31 January

Scottish TUC .
Scott Lithgow

31 May

International TUC
London Economic Summit.

18 February 1985

PRIME MINISTER

COAL TALKS - PRESENTATION

These notes might be helpful on how we play the media after your meeting with the TUC.

First, there are three important points:

i. the TUC will seize on the slightest sign of softening or weakening to suggest you are moving (and will blame you afterwards if there is a breakdown);

ii. you cannot trust any one of those coming to see you;

iii. you will not be able to control presentation for over two days after your Questions at 3.15.

Second, your main contribution is at Questions and it is important to leave the correct impression - you want a settlement; a settlement is long overdue; but any agreement must deal clearly and unambiguously with the central point of the dispute.

Third, we cannot leave presentation to Questions; it is vital that the Secretary of State for Energy gets on to the mid-day news bulletins with an authorised version, and that Mr Walker and Mr Hunt play the media strongly and firmly subsequently.

Fourth, Michael Eaton must be given a confident line to deploy. (He telephoned me this morning to say that Cowans was preventing him from going on radio and television when, in his judgement, the need was to promote a return to work. I told him I agreed absolutely and that he could operate confidently inside the NCB on that basis.)

Fifth, as you so rightly said at this evening's meeting, the media will be at Downing Street in force tomorrow. We shall pen them behind barriers. But we cannot avoid them, and we should not do so. We must carry our message to them, confidently and firmly. I propose to brief the Lobby afterwards on the lines attached.

Agree?



BERNARD INGHAM

DRAFT STATEMENT TO MEDIA AFTER TUC MEETING

1. The Prime Minister, accompanied by the Lord President and the Secretaries of State for Energy and Employment, met representatives of the TUC, led by their General Secretary, Mr Norman Willis, for ~~an~~ hours today.
2. The TUC reported on their efforts ~~over the previous week~~ to promote a settlement of the coal dispute.
3. The Prime Minister expressed appreciation for the TUC's efforts. She said a settlement was long overdue.
4. The Prime Minister said the views of the TUC would be conveyed to the NCB by the Secretary of State for Energy. The Government wanted an early resolution of the strike but any agreement must deal clearly and unambiguously with the central point of the dispute.

cc Mr Butler
Mr Ingham

PRIME MINISTER

Coal Dispute: Meeting with TUC

I attach:

- (i) a draft speaking note along the lines discussed at this evening's meeting;
- (ii) a note by Bernard on presentation;
- (iii) a chronology of previous meetings with the TUC.

AT

P.S. Mr Macgregor is on his way back and will arrive tomorrow morning not Wednesday morning - so further discussions with Mr Willis could be Wednesday, not Thursday.

Andrew Turnbull
18 February 1985

COAL DISPUTE: MEETING WITH TUC

Speaking Note

- (i) Welcome Mr Willis and fellow members of TUC monitoring group. Express appreciation to Mr Willis for his substantial efforts, particularly over the past week, to secure a resolution of the dispute. Invite Mr Willis to report on the position as he sees it.
- (ii) Mr Willis is likely to give a lengthy account, along the lines indicated by Douglas Smith. Likely to stress following points:
- Does Government recognise the need for a negotiated settlement if relationships in the industry are to be restored?
 - Does Government realise that TUC efforts have helped bring the first shift of opinion in the NUM executive?
 - Does Government realise just how far the NUM has moved in acknowledging:
 - (a) NCB's right to manage;
 - (b) that pits of any description should go through the colliery review procedure;
 - (c) that the Board has the right of final decision?
 - Does Government agree that the gap is small and bridgable and that if only NCB were prepared to negotiate reasonably, particularly on points of text which seemed designed to humiliate the NUM, a settlement can be achieved.
- REPLY (11)
- (iii) In reply, take opportunity to praise TUC's role again and confirm that you have taken note of all the points made.

Disavow any intention of negotiating. ⁽²⁾

- (iv) Set out the Government's objective - to see the strike settled as soon as possible in a manner which allows the damage of the strike to be repaired and the industry to operate successfully. Government as committed as TUC to a prosperous coal industry. ⁽³⁾ ^{(c) management's duty to manage}

- (v) For these objectives to be achieved, there must be a clear resolution of the central issues which have been raised by the dispute. In no-one's interests for strike to be settled in a way which dodges these issues. ⁽⁴⁾

(vi) This requires understandings in the following areas:

⁽⁵⁾ (a) proper procedures for dealing with the issues of the dispute - but here a substantial advance has been made by NUM acceptance of the independent review element first agreed with NACODs;

(b) an acknowledgment of the Board's duty to manage the industry, ^{and make the final decision} subject to adherence to the agreed procedures;

(c) an acknowledgment that in making its decisions on the future of pits the Board must take the economic performance of those pits into account.

⁽⁶⁾ - language - such as is clear to the Ordinary Person - meaning clear or unambiguous
(vii) Invite the TUC to enlarge on why they believe it is possible to bridge the remaining gap, how it could be done and what role the TUC see for themselves in this.

^{Energy Secretary} (viii) After TUC response, give S/S Energy his cue to ask how, if TUC were to come to an understanding with the NCB on a document, the NUM could be prevented from treating it as the basis for further negotiation rather than as resolving the closure issue, with other issues still to be negotiated.

- (ix) Tell TUC that have found their views interesting and helpful. Recognise that still formidable difficulties to be resolved but undertake to convey the points the TUC have made to the NCB, who will consider them carefully.

- (x) Discussion of handling of media - see Bernard's proposed statement. Suggest details be finalised by Mr Walker, Mr Ingham, Mr Willis and his Press Officer.

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MR TURNBULL

COAL: MEETING WITH TUC

In preparation for this evening's briefing meeting I attach:

- a suggested game plan for the Prime Minister's meeting with the TUC at 11.30 am tomorrow;
- a draft press statement for issue immediately afterwards.

Pq
P L GREGSON

18 February 1985

SECRET

SECRET

SUGGESTED GAME PLAN FOR MEETING WITH TUC ON COAL DISPUTE:
TUESDAY 19 FEBRUARY 1985

1. OBJECTIVES

i. To demonstrate the Government's willingness to assist in finding a settlement to the dispute which will provide a clear basis for the successful operation of the coal industry in the future.

ii. To do this without:

a. suggesting any fundamental weakening in the Government's position;

b. undermining the NCB;

c. getting into direct negotiation.

AT d. giving the TUC an excuse to move closer to the NUM

2. STRUCTURE OF THE MEETING

i. Express appreciation of the efforts TUC has been making.

ii. Ask them to report on progress and to identify the remaining points of difficulty. [This should take up the bulk of the meeting.]

iii. Make clear that the Government, like the TUC, wants to see an end to the dispute but that, after everything that has happened, any settlement has to provide a clear basis for the successful future operation of the industry including in particular:

- proper procedures for dealing with the issues which have been at the heart of the dispute;

- an acknowledgement of management's right to manage.

AT - an acknowledgement that in making its decisions on pits, the Board must take the economic performance of those pits into account. 1

SECRET

iv. Undertake to convey to the NCB the views expressed by the TUC.

v. ~~(Depnding on what the TUC actually say) indicate that, if the only points of remaining difficulty about the NCB's text are the reported three points, you would hope that the negotiators would be able to find ways of resolving them.~~

vi. Agree on a brief statement to be given to the media (draft attached).

I am very doubtful whether you should go this far. It risks undermining the NCB, by enabling the TUC to go behind Govan's back.

FERB.

3. TACTICS

i. The main tactic must be to draw out the TUC on what they think they can deliver, and to manoeuvre them, if possible, into a position where, if the Government and NCB respond positively, they are prepared to put effective pressure on the NUM Executive.

ii. The tone of the meeting, both at the time and as perceived afterwards should be:

- firm and consistent with what has been said before;
- constructive;
(dispelling the impression that it is the Government which, for political reasons, is putting obstacles in the way of a negotiated settlement)
- realistic.
(offering a faint glimmer of light - for which the responsibility should be pinned firmly on the TUC, thus increasing the pressure on them - but avoiding arousing excessive expectations)

iii. There must be a clearly identified next step for following up the meeting. (Should the tabling of the amendment on the three points be done by the NCB at a meeting between Mr Willis and Mr MacGregor after the latter returns on Wednesday, or should it be done more quickly and, if so, how?)

DRAFT PRESS STATEMENT

The Prime Minister, accompanied by the Lord President of the Council and the Secretaries of State for Energy and Employment had a meeting this morning with the General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress, and members of the TUC General Council. The TUC representatives reported on the efforts which they had been making over the previous week in discussions with the National Coal Board, the National Union of Mineworkers and the National Association of Colliery Overmen, Deputies and Shotfirers to find a basis for resumption of negotiations to end the coal dispute. [They said that in their view the differences between the NCB and the NUM had been narrowed to only a few points which ought to be capable of early resolution.] [The Prime Minister said that the Government shared the TUC's wish to find a settlement to the dispute which would provide a clear basis for the successful operation of the coal industry in the future. She expressed the Government's appreciation of the TUC's efforts to bring about an early resumption of negotiations, took note of the points made by them, and undertook to convey them to the National Coal Board.

COAL

[See also Peter Walker's Parliamentary Answer today]

Present situation

Nearly 87,000 members of the NUM - over 46% of the total - not on strike. About 40,000 members of the NUM have returned to work since the beginning of the strike, including nearly 18,000 this year. [The number of NUM members on strike fell below 100,000 today for the first time.]

Talks with the TUC (subject to change dependent on the outcome)

I welcomed the efforts of the TUC to find a satisfactory settlement to this dispute. We agreed that such a settlement must provide a basis for the industry to recover from the effects of this dispute and for its future management in line with the statutory duties of the National Coal Board.

Agree with TUC view that gap is bridgeable?

The Government remains of the view that a satisfactory settlement must provide for:

- proper procedures for the examination of the future of individual collieries
- a recognition that economic factors must play a part in decisions on the future of collieries

and

- a recognition of the NCB's right to take the final decision after the review procedures are concluded.

But my meeting with Mr Willis and the TUC was not for the purposes of negotiations. The TUC undertook to consider the

points the Government had made and of course we agreed to convey the points they had made to the NCB.

Is the NCB document negotiable?

Any settlement must include a clear understanding on the central issues of this dispute including the requirement that economic factors must be taken into account in deciding the future of pits and the NCB's right to take the final decision. The latest NCB document sets out those principles.

NACODs say their agreement breached by NCB document

The NCB has made it clear agreement with NACODs remains intact. There is nothing in the document produced following discussions with the TUC which breaches their agreement. NACODs have always made it clear that while they oppose closures on economic grounds, they recognise the right of the management to take the final decision.

Cost of the dispute

The cost of the dispute will need to be assessed once it is over. But I find it extraordinary that the leadership of the NUM should actually boast about the damage they are doing to the economy and about their intention of cutting off heating to people's homes.

Cost of the dispute to miners

The leadership of the NUM have cost each miner on average £8,500 in wages as well as loosing the industry 61 coal faces.

Coal stocks (movement of coal from strikebound collieries)

Coal stocks remain very high. The House will recall that the President of the NUM predicted as long ago as 6 February that there would be power cuts within 8 weeks.

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

Keep?

MS

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

By arrangement, I met David Basnett (GMBTU) with Geoffrey Goodman, Daily Mirror, for an hour (7-8pm) on the evening of Thursday, February 14, 1985.

After I had inquired about his son's health - "all I can say is he is alive" - Mr Basnett came to the point rather abruptly by asking if the Government were going to make another mess of the coal strike. I retorted that the outcome would surely depend on Mr Scargill.

Mr Basnett went on to ask if I knew what was going on and what the prospects were. I replied that my understanding was that after extensive talks Norman Willis and Ian MacGregor had produced a paper which set out a means for resolving the dispute, while retaining the NCB's right to manage and to close uneconomic pits, and a programme for future action.

Throughout the day, however, I had been taking a very cautious line with the press on the prospects for success. I had no reason to suppose that Mr Scargill had changed his approach or that he would feel obliged to bend to pressures within the NUM.

I could however confirm that I had detected no weakening in the resolve of the NCB and Government on the central, crucial issue: the right of the Board to manage and to close uneconomic capacity. This was not to say that the Government did not want a settlement. It most certainly did, but only on the right terms.

Mr Basnett, who seemed very subdued, said this report only made him feel more gloomy. He had received a report that day by telephone on the NCB/TUC discussions from Ken Graham, TUC. He was not however in a position to gauge how far Norman Willis had secured the backing of TUC General Council

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

2.

member (as distinct from the General Council itself), partly because his attentions had been elsewhere (on his son in Sheffield). Willis may have taken Ray Buckton more into his confidence. But he (Basnett) had reached the conclusion that Willis was operating on his own and gambling on a big personal triumph to try to bolster his authority and this inevitably meant that Willis would not be able to bring the full weight of the TUC to bear on the NUM.

Mr Basnett then asked what might happen if the latest round of talks broke down. I said that the return to work would presumably continue, and perhaps even accelerate, though my personal view was that the erosion would remain steady rather than spectacular. There was serious doubt whether Scargill wanted a settlement; consequently only the men themselves could get themselves off the hook on which he had impaled himself and the NUM.

Mr Basnett then canvassed the idea of a private meeting between himself and Ray Buckton and the Prime Minister if the talks broke down again. When I raised my eyebrows at the idea of Buckton joining him, he said it was essential to have a representative of the Left with him. He believed he could secure Buckton's discretion; in any case Buckton would not wish to be seen to be consulting with the Prime Minister.

Mr Basnett seemed to have very little idea as to the purpose of such a meeting with the Prime Minister. His main concern seemed to be to have an opportunity to talk over the problem with her.

I said I would faithfully report this suggestion, but I must say that I was very cautious about the idea of a meeting let alone his being accompanied by Ray Buckton. I assumed that he had no intention of including Norman Willis in any talks,

and he confirmed that this was so. [His relations with and opinion of Willis do not seem to have improved].

In more general conversation Mr Basnett raised two points:

- how did the Prime Minister intend to improve relations with the trade union movement, and encourage moderate trade unionism, once the strike was over? and
- public sector pay.

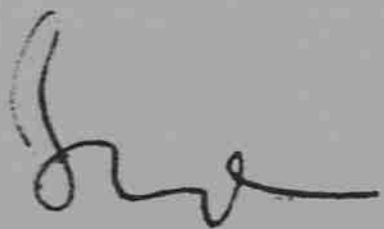
On the former, I said that I had not yet seen any evidence on paper of any plans for improving relations with trade union moderates, but I was sure that the Prime Minister would proceed with caution; she would do nothing to embarrass moderates by dramatic public initiatives. She recognised only too well how carefully she would have to tread. Mr Basnett seemed relieved, and then made a separate bid to see the Prime Minister on this issue when the opportunity arose. I asked him who he would want to bring along. He assured me he would not wish to involve Buckton or Willis. When I inquired whether he might then wish to be accompanied by a fellow moderate or centrist, such as Tony Christopher (IRSF) (with whom he is supposed to be close) he brushed that name aside, too. I reached the conclusion he had not thought very deeply about the idea, but was really angling for a private meeting with the Prime Minister. Again I promised to report his interest.

Mr Basnett's somewhat ominous remark about public sector pay - which I took to cover local authority, Civil Service and NHS workers - came as a throwaway line in a discussion of his continuing distress about GCHQ (on which I told him bluntly I had taken a very hard line) and how this had damaged moderation in the trade union movement. He said the unions were not going to push pay this time round, but I

unions were not going to push pay this time round, but I should be in no doubt that trouble was storing up for next winter. I did not react.

In the car after the meeting, Geoffrey Goodman said Mr Basnett had given an absolutely typical performance. Leaving aside his own family problems, he was in low spirits about the trade union movement, and was continually casting around for ideas. He himself had no clear ideas and this intensified his frustration. While he was intending to retire, he would be around for much of this year and, however lacking in ideas, his concern about the consequences of the trade union movement's isolation from Government was genuine - and would continue to beyond retirement.

Subsequently, Geoffrey Goodman telephoned me at home on the afternoon of Sunday, February 17, 1985 inquiring whether I had anything to report. I said that I had not yet had an opportunity of reporting on my talk with Mr Basnett to the Prime Minister because of her commitments and preparations for the USA visit. I had, however, reported orally on my talks with Mr Basnett to the Prime Minister's private Secretaries. I had no further insights.



BERNARD INGHAM

18 February 1985