

PRIME MINISTER

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MISSING
(PRESS)

13

Press Conference

- We have arranged the press conference for 8.15 p.m. and expect about 15 or so to attend. The Embassy would like to bring in journalists of other nationalities - notably American and a few European - with whom they have close relations. I have agreed. The list of those invited is at Annex I.
- Afterwards, I have arranged for you to give short 4-5 minute interviews with British broadcasters. As ITN have no crew here, it looks like 3 interviews -

BBC Radio (Peter Ruff); BBC TV (if they can sort out their crew problems; and IRN (interviewer, Martin Walker, of The Guardian).
- At this time of night, the media will not be looking for a long press conference. I suggest we allow 20-25 minutes. This means you should be away from the Embassy at 9.15-9.30.

Substance

The media believes that you have the inside track with Gorbachev as a result of his visit to Chequers and that you consequently are not merely the most senior but the most important visitor.

Consequently, they will concentrate on your meeting with the new Soviet leader, and your further impressions of him, virtually to the exclusion of all else.

This approach can be summarised as follows: Do you think you can still do business with him?

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And the strongest reply to that would be to say, if an invitation materialises, that Gorbachev has invited you to visit the Soviet Union at an early date, and you have agreed to do so. I am sure the media will be looking for a further visit by you, as evidence of your developing relationship with Gorbachev, and news of one would be a major story overnight, overshadowed only by any news, hint or sign of a Reagan-Gorbachev Summit.

I would add that the Opposition leaders travelling with you will be seeking every bit of publicity they can get. News of a visit by you would put them in their place - and in the shade.

For the rest I think the main points to get over are:

- your desire for a developing dialogue with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe - and (implicitly) your value in such an exercise in view of your close relations with Reagan;
- your concern to assure the Russians of the West's (and not least America's) sincerity in wanting much lower levels of arms of all kinds on a balanced and verifiable basis;
- your position on SDI (which is particularly important both to American and Russian opinion, as well as your domestic audience); and
- your concern to develop economic and trade relations with the Soviet Union as further tangible evidence of your belief that you can do business with Gorbachev's Russia.

I attach at Annex II a draft opening statement for the press conference, the outline of which you may care to give to Mr. Gorbachev.

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The media will, of course, film and record your press conference. There is therefore much to be said for getting a crisp controlled statement on the record.

We shall, of course, keep you posted on events at home.

BERNARD INGHAM

13 March, 1985

MR POWELL

ANNEX I

PRIME MINISTER'S PRESS BRIEFING: 13 MARCH, 20.15

List of Correspondents Attending

British

Reuters (Charles Bremner)
Times (Richard Owen)
Sunday Times (Edmund Stevens)
Guardian (Martin Walker)
Daily Telegraph (Nigel Wade)
Observer (Mark Frankland)
Financial Times (Patrick Cockburn)
Daily Express (Louise Branson)
Morning Star (Kate Clark)
Anglo-Soviet Journal (Robert Daglish)
BBC (Radio - Peter Ruff, John Osman; TV - Tim Sebastian)

Others

US

ABC (Walt Rodgers)
CNN (Geoff Martino)
NBC (Steve Hurst)
CBS (Mark Phillips)

AP (Alison Smale)
UPI (Barry James)

France

AFP (Pierre Bocev)

FRG

DPA (Nikolaus Prede)

Copied to: Ambassador
H of C
Mr Carr
Miss Heaton

PS/PM
PS/S of S
Mr Ingham

DRAFT OPENING STATEMENT - PRESS CONFERENCE

I have, of course, today been paying my respects to the late President Chernenko and his family, and I am pleased that I was able to express my sympathy personally to Mrs. Chernenko this morning.

I have just returned from a meeting this evening with Mr. Gorbachev with whom, as you know, I had about 5 hours of talks at Chequers in December.

I congratulated him on his election to the leadership of the Soviet Union and then I had a very good and useful talk with him on the major issues confronting the world.

We could, of course, have only a short time together - about half an hour - because he is seeing a large number of world leaders who are here for the funeral. But in that time we were able to pick up some of the threads of our discussions three months ago.

In doing so, I was able to give him my impressions of my two meetings with President Reagan just before Christmas and last month. I sought to explain the West's - and President Reagan's - deep and genuine desire to achieve security at a much lower level of armaments.

/ More specifically,

More specifically, we discussed the American Strategic Defence Initiative - the SDI. On this, I emphasised that President Reagan did not see the concept, to the extent it proves to be feasible, as a way of achieving advantage or superiority over the Soviet Union.

I also drew attention to the points of agreement which arose from my meeting with President Reagan at Camp David. Research into the possibility of a ballistic missile system in space is permitted by the ABM Treaty. But if that research led to the conclusion that an effective system could be deployed, any deployment would have to be negotiated under the terms of that Treaty. I told Mr. Gorbachev that that point was explicitly reaffirmed by President Reagan when I saw him in February.

Overall, I stressed to Mr. Gorbachev this evening my hope - and the hope of the British people - that the opportunity which the US/Soviet arms control talks present in Geneva will be seized. I believe the whole world would dearly love to see security maintained at a lower level of weaponry.

We briefly touched upon relations between our two countries and our wish to do more business with the Soviet Union. And also the need for us to develop our contacts in a wide variety of fields and at many different levels so that our two nations can achieve a better understanding.

/In this

In this context we look forward to a visit to Britain by Mr. Gromyko.

[I am also delighted to say that Mr. Gorbachev extended to me an invitation to visit the Soviet Union at an early date. I indicated I would do so as soon as I was able. We shall be in touch shortly about dates.]

Finally, as you are probably aware, I have had most useful bilateral discussions today with President Zia of Pakistan; Prime Minister Gonzalez of Spain; the new Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Mulroney - my first meeting with him as Prime Minister though not as Party leader - and Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India whom I last saw on the sad occasion of his mother's funeral in New Delhi.

A great deal has happened - and much of it tragic - in the 12 months or so since I was in Moscow. But I now look forward to building on my frank and friendly relationship with Mr. Gorbachev with the aim of achieving a safer and securer world.

ZZ MOSCOW

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TO FLASH MOSCOW

TELEGRAM NUMBER 272 OF 13 MARCH

FOLLOWING FOR TURNBULL, PM'S PARTY FROM FLESHER, NO 10

1. THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE FOLLOWING FOR HER PRESS CONFERENCE.
2. THE FOREIGN EXCHANGE MARKETS HAVE BEEN LARGELY QUIET, ALTHOUGH NERVOUS, THIS MORNING. THE DOLLAR HAS STRENGTHENED AGAINST THE DEUTSCHMARK TO 3.35 BUT STERLING HAS HELD ITS OWN, TRADING AT ABOUT 1.0850 DOLLARS. IT HAS ALSO STRENGTHENED marginally AGAINST THE DEUTSCHMARK TO JUST OVER 3.64. THE STERLING INDEX IS LEVEL ON THE DAY AT 71.7. IN THE DOMESTIC MONEY MARKETS, INTEREST RATES HAVE BEEN SLIGHTLY FIRMER TODAY AND THE THREE MONTH RATE IS AT ABOUT 13 AND THREE-QUARTERS. HOPES OF A CUT IN INTEREST RATES IN THE IMMEDIATE SHORT TERM SEEM TO HAVE BEEN DISPELLED.
3. THE MAJOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL NEWS HAS REMAINED THE INTERCEPTION BILL. IN THE HOUSE THE BILL HAD A RELATIVELY QUIET PASSAGE. PRESS COMMENT WAS NOT EXTENSIVE AND CONCENTRATED ON THE TWO ANNOUNCEMENTS MADE IN THE DEBATE. THE HOME SECRETARY ANNOUNCED THAT THE DPP HAD ASKED THE POLICE TO INVESTIGATE ALLEGATIONS OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES MADE IN THE RECENT CHANNEL 4 PROGRAMME AND DAVID WADDINGTON IN SUMMING UP ANNOUNCED THAT A NEW DIRECTOR GENERAL HAD BEEN APPOINTED FROM OUTSIDE THE RANKS OF THE SECURITY SERVICE, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT NAME HIM. HOSTILE SPEECHES WERE MADE IN THE DEBATE BY MR KAUFMAN AND MR BENN WHOSE MAIN TARGET WAS THE ADMINISTRATION OF LORD WILSON. MORE CONCILIATORY SPEECHES WERE MADE BY MR REES AND MR CALLAGHAN. THE GOVERNMENT HAD A MAJORITY OF 103 AGAINST THE OPPOSITION AMENDMENT AND THE SECOND READING WAS UNOPPOSED.
4. THERE WILL BE SOME PRESS INTEREST IN MR PONTING'S BOOK QUOTE THE RIGHT TO KNOW UNQUOTE WHICH IS BEING PUBLISHED THIS AFTERNOON. FROM A PRE-PUBLICATION INTERVIEW HE GAVE FOR THE TODAY PROGRAMME THIS MORNING IT IS CLEAR THAT THE TONE OF HIS BOOK WILL BE VERY CRITICAL OF BOTH MINISTERS AND THE CIVIL SERVICE.
5. SOME PRESS ATTENTION HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON YESTERDAY'S SPEECH BY MR HEATH ON THE STRATEGIC DEFENCE INITIATIVE. SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS ARE CARRYING HIS ALTERNATIVE BUDGET TODAY: THIS ADVOCATES PUBLIC INVESTMENT AND BORROWING RATHER THAN TAX CUTS.
6. OTHER STORIES IN THE NEWS TODAY INCLUDE THE DISAPPOINTING CRIME FIGURES: THE REFURBISHMENT OF THE ROYAL TRAIN AT A COST OF POUNDS 7.5 MILLION, WHICH HAS BEEN CRITICISED IN SEVERAL OF THE PAPERS; AND THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE TITLE OF THE CIVIL COMMISSIONER IN THE FALKLANDS IS TO REVERT TO THAT OF GOVERNOR. THE PURCHASE OF HARRODS REMAINS IN THE NEWS BUT NO ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT ANY REFERENCE TO THE MONOPOLIES AND MERGERS COMMISSION WILL BE MADE BEFORE FRIDAY.
7. PARLIAMENTARY DEVELOPMENTS TODAY INCLUDE A STATEMENT BY MR BUCHANAN SMITH ON THE FUTURE OF BNO AND A DEBATE ON LOCAL AUTHORITY CAPITAL EXPENDITURE. I UNDERSTAND FROM THE CHIEF WHIP THAT THE POSITION ON THE LATTER REMAINS AS HE REPORTED IT TO THE PRIME MINISTER ON MONDAY.

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