

PRIME MINISTER

PRESS DIGEST

WESTLAND

- Westland's decision to go for Sikorsky after meeting Euro-consortium overshadowed by Solicitor General's letter seeking correction by Mr Heseltine "with your approval" - which is mysteriously leaked.
- Westland takes adverts to present its recommendation.
- Mr Heseltine says his answer needs no correction and would be supplying evidence to prove it. Wants a leak inquiry.
- Now Defence Secretary seen to be at bay, fighting for his political life.
- Kinnoek to demand full explanation (of Ministers "fighting like ferrets in a sack") in Commons next week. Alan Williams, Opposition spokesman says you are trying to shove Defence Secretary into resigning.
- Meanwhile Commissioner Narjes claims Westland would be frozen out of European contracts if it joins up with Sikorsky.

Treatment

- D/Star - Tarzan on the ropes: Maggie orders public rebuke. Says you took your revenge last night giving the go ahead for him to be publicly censured.
- Sun leads with "You liar" - Tarzan gets rocket from top law man. Fighting for survival.
- Mirror P1 lead - "Whirlybirds! Tarzan puts Government in a big spin." Government in an astonishing state of disarray. Nothing like it since the dying days of the Attlee Government, says Joe Haines [overlooking a lot in his time]. Mr Heseltine has now gone far beyond what any previous Prime Minister would have accepted in defying Cabinet.
- Express P1 lead: "Maggie's men put the boot in - Heseltine under fire as 'copter row rages".
- Mail P1 - The Great Cabinet Shambles - open war as Ministers attack Heseltine" who is facing a personal crisis. DTI accused of leaking Solicitor General's letter. Feature describes Cuckney as the calmest man in the Westland whirlwind.

WESTLAND (Cont'd)Treatment (Cont'd)

- Telegraph P1 lead - Heseltine scorns rebuke.
- Guardian P1 lead - Defence Secretary suffers a double attack. Inaccuracy by Heseltine, says Law Officer. Defence Secretary fighting desperately for his credibility against combined wrath of Downing Street, most of his Cabinet colleagues and Government's law officers; Guardian diary says MoD officials regard Mr Heseltine as one of their most unpopular bosses - isn't really interested in defence policy.
- Times P1 lead - Heseltine told by law chief: stick to facts. B/Aerospace and GEC considering making a separate bid for a stake in the company.
- FT P1 lead - Heseltine intends to stay in Government despite challenges but in a politically exposed position.

WESTLAND (Cont'd)Comment

- Sun cartoon showing Mr Tebbit being wheeled into a ward occupied by brawling Ministers - Jopling, Waldegrave, Brittan, Heseltine - over caption "You'll have plenty of company".
- Mirror says the issue is far too serious to be left to Westland shareholders. Our future lies in Europe and we should seek to work with our European partners. It is a vital national interest you show Sikorsky the door.
- Express: A major political mess. But what matters is what is good for Britain. Which deal will produce the best helicopter and secure Westland jobs. These are the only considerations which should be in the minds of the board and shareholders; City Editor says Sikorsky's is a reasonable offer and shareholders should listen to directors.
- Mail: Never in modern times has there been a more venomous and public struggle between members of the same Government. The negation of the spirit of Cabinet Government. You should have encouraged debate around the Cabinet table, not curtailed it. With hindsight that is how the row should have been lanced.
- Telegraph leader says it is more than enough. Mr Heseltine has shown no consistency at all. He must now consider his position. He may well stop short of resignation. If he does, a period of silence would now be in order.
- Guardian leader says the price of Mr Heseltine's failure may be the backbenches and mantle of leadership contender in exile. But in revolt he's surely ended the old game of She Who Must in all Circumstances be Obeyed.
- Hugo Young, in Guardian, says that in meeting Backbenchers last year you understood the pro-Europe solution argument, but thought there was no alternative to Sikorsky.
- Times leader says Mr Heseltine's extraordinary position has raised serious question marks over his capacity for the responsible judgement that would be required of him if he were ever to attain the high office to which he aspires.

ECONOMY

- Living standards 2.5% up on last quarter of 1984.

INDUSTRY

- Andrew Lloyd-Webber said to be set to make an instant £9m next week when he floats his company; but will retain £13m in it.
- Ford sold more cars in Britain last year than any other firm (26.5% of the market).
- Philip Jones, chairman of Electricity Council, says we still pay too much for our coal which is effectively subsidised by electricity consumer.
- US Justice Department starts investigation into Lloyd's dealings in American insurance industry after charges of price raising and manipulation.
- Times leader says the Government should not cramp the potential for the Expressway rail/road tunnel Channel link by artificial deadlines. It will need to explain how any other choice offers a better combination of sound economics and exciting project.

MEDIA

- Sheffield Morning Telegraph to close - a loss maker made worse by transfer of advertising by estate agents to free sheet.
- Telegraph diary says BBC is considering introducing a television programme to defend the Corporation against attacks from the media.

UNIONS

- Sun says the Certification Officer - "Maggie's man" as it calls him - has launched an inquiry into how thousands of votes went missing in TGWU executive elections.
- John Lyons, general secretary of Power Engineers and member of TUC General Council, joins SDP - first union leader recruit.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Bernie Grant, according to Mail, has been accused of racial and sexual discrimination in Haringey against white males.

RATES

- D/Star says the proposed reforms are a complete mish mash which threaten to make the injustices of local taxation even worse. Reintroduction of a poll tax would be a retrograde step.

EDUCATION

- Sun leader attacking teachers for their industrial action, says if Sir Keith, an able and conscientious man, has not the stomach for a fight he should make way for someone who has. It is time to ring the bell on the classroom wreckers.
- Express feature on headmaster leaving to become insurance salesman - an example of "top teachers leaving the profession they love" through frustration, despair and political meddling."
- Telegraph says a ma meeting of parents is being called next week to press the Government for a rapid settlement of teachers' dispute.

HEALTH/WELFARE

- Women injured by the Dalkon shield contraceptive device have been given 16 weeks to file compensation claims.

LAW AND ORDER

- Mystery "sniper" seen waving a rifle with a telescopic sight from a second floor flat in Chelsea's "diplomatic belt".
- George Foulkes MP now wants smoking and driving banned - it induces drowsiness.
- Judge calls for new laws to give courts power to 'seize and freeze fraudsters' profits.
- Mail leader on senior traffic policeman in Dorset given an 28-day suspended sentence and banned for 2 years for being three times over the limit, says the verdict errs on the side of leniency. Sentences should be consistent and deterrent in their severity.

NORTHERN IRELAND

- 3 Republican prisoners reported to have abandoned hunger strike.

PEOPLE

- Anthony Acland to succeed Oliver Wright as our man in Washington.

LIBYA

- Gaddafi claims an American or Israeli raid is imminent and Libya would be prepared to lose half its population in repulsing it.
- Express leader says the widely leaked talks of plans for American or Israeli strikes, with nothing happening, has given Gaddafi a fresh platform and Moscow is quick to spot that the USA has lost the initiative. Americans must learn to keep their mouths shut.
- US to press allies for concerted action against Libya for backing international terrorism (Telegraph).

BERNARD INGHAM