

PRIME MINISTER

PRESS DIGEST

WESTLAND

- The story off the boil.
- Euro-consortium makes an improved offer and gets backing of largest industrial shareholder, Bristow.
- Michael Heseltine sues the Sun for its "You Liar" headline yesterday.
- Patrick Jenkin at the centre of a new row - he is claimed to have made a blunder, by suggesting on radio that Leon Brittan had put him up to criticise Michael Heseltine and, in the words of the D/Star, to have brought into the open a Cabinet plot to discredit the Defence Secretary
- Sun: "Whoops, Minister - Jenkin drops Brittan in it". Leon Brittan caught with his pants down by Patrick Jenkin's remarks. Leader says the tussle over Westland must be troublesome for the Government but not for the shareholders who stand to gain - capitalism is working.
- John Vincent, in Sun, says helicopters win wars, but Michael Heseltine let Westland go to the wall and then created a hectic hullabaloo.
- Express - Jenkin drops clanger on 'copter wrangle - "Leon asked me to say that". Bid in danger of becoming Whitehall farce.
- Mail: Oh Leon! What a friend you have in Jenkin. Brittan caught using subterfuge tactics to discredit his opponent; leader says "Is there any other man so accident prone that he would rematerialise to haunt the wrong victim?"
- Andrew Alexander, in Mail, says it is not clear why Michael Heseltine should be taking the view that you will lose the next election and that he must show himself as the one man in Cabinet with the nerve to stand up to you. At any rate, the real fight is not about the company but about Heseltine's plans for himself. The affair has demonstrated that you are not a strong leader and probably get your way less than most Prime Ministers in recent years. As for Westlands, on grounds of industrial logic and long term prospects, Sikorsky looks better.
- Telegraph headline: Jenkin bats for Brittan. Also Government registers its surprise and thinly disguised disapproval of Narjes' intervention.
- Guardian P1 lead - Heseltine allies improve offer and regain initiative. But Westland shows no sign of softening its hardline opposition to Euro bid.
- Times says behind the scenes pressure began to break surface with statements by Craxi and French Defence Minister. But an air of relative calm descended on Whitehall; reports Sikorsky man, Bill Paul, as saying their rescue package would be a "springboard for recovery and expansion".
- Times City page piece backs Cuckney and suggests shareholders will.
- FT says both Messrs Brittan and Heseltine tried to cool their public row yesterday, though it was spoiled by Mr Jenkin's embarrassing admission. But Europeans urge Westland holders to bar Sikorsky.

CRIME SUMMIT

- Express - Crime busting Maggie calls in experts.
- Mail leader, taking up a news report on today's meeting, asks what about a no claims bonus for unburgled householders to give them an incentive to take anti-criminal measures.
- In Mail news stories it says Home Secretary has promised a big Government campaign to transform inner city council estates from lawless jungles and that teams of undercover detectives are to be drafted into Brixton for a fresh crackdown on street crime.
- Telegraph - Government launches big drive against crime today.
- Times: Thatcher leads crime fight - unprecedented Downing Street seminar.

LAW AND ORDER

- Mirror and Sun say police armed with machine guns may soon be patrolling Heathrow to foil terrorists.
- Marquis of Blandford jailed for 3 months for breaking a probation order after appearing on burglary and drug charges - Magistrate describes him as reduced to a common criminal.
- Cecil Parkinson will not be prosecuted over alleged breaches of Official Secrets Act during the Keays affair.
- Myra Hindley, mass murderer, said to be writing her autobiography with the advice of Lord Longford.
- Cranada making sex, violence, spy thriller out of Home Secretary's book - Mirror says Home Secretary who has warned television to curb sex and violence will be responsible for a large helping of it later this year.

DRUGS

- Customs and Excise report record seizures of drugs last year but it gets little coverage in "pops".
- Mafia behind gangs smuggling drugs in Britain, according to D/Star.

ECONOMY

- Early rise in interest rates predicted, in spite of better than expected money supply figures, because of weakness of £.
- Andrew Alexander, in Mail, says chances of a 1% rise in interest rates next week are now quite high - but it would be a mistake to raise them to defend sterling.
- Telegraph says sterling jitters return to haunt Chancellor; in another piece it says pressure is growing on Chancellor to abandon cuts in basic rates and raise personal allowances in Budget.

INDUSTRY

- Ford to advertise 250 jobs today because of demand for Sierra - 750 have already applied.
- John Vincent, in Sun, wants Government to modernise Cornish tin mines against the day when tin prices recover.
- British farm incomes fell 17.5% last year.
- Express feature on success of our racing car industry - winning trophies and \$100m a year.
- Telegraph says rail tunnel is favourite for Channel link; Guardian says rail scheme is poised for victory and in another story says Customs and Excise see link as creating enormous drug problems for them

INDUSTRY (Cont'd)

- Guardian leader wants only a decision in principle on January 20 and then a consultative period over Link which it thinks will be a Tunnel.
- FT says a fixed link is not an economic necessity but the political case is strong. Unwise to rule out road link.

- Telegraph leader, turning its guns on critics of Michael Jopling, including Jim Prior, says his attempts to come to terms with surpluses make better sense than the suggestions of his critics; Guardian says paying farmers not to grow sounds daft, but it is not half as silly as paying them unspeakable sums to grow the uneatable.

- A number of papers say William Waldegrave yesterday made it clear he is determined to exercise his responsibilities for the countryside.

- Ministerial difference over a proposed levy on blank audio tapes to be thrashed out in a Cabinet Committee chaired by you.

- John Redwood, in Times, suggests we make Industry Year the year when industry responds more widely to demand.

- MSC says British industry faces growing skill shortages across more and more jobs.

- FT says managers of about 20 National Bus Company subsidiaries are keen to launch buy out schemes.

UNIONS

- TUC says movement could be heading for a massive split over the activities of the EETPU over single union deals and talks with breakaway union.
- All out stoppage by electricians threatens ITV after breakdown of talks.
- NCB says membership of NUM in Notts has dropped to 8-900.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Police to interview Derek Hatton, Liverpool, over his conduct - says he has nothing to fear.
- Express leader on the chance for Liverpool in tomorrow's City Council by-election to "show that ordinary, decent citizens reject the politics, tactics and ethics of the Militant Tendency".
- Tory Councillors in Lambeth going to High Court to try to secure right to attend committee meetings without having to fill in questionnaire about their personal lives.

EDUCATION

- ACAS attempts to set up talks with unions and employers, but NUT goes it alone; to have separate talks at ACAS.
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- Guardian says Government proposals to curtail the rights of students to claim housing and other benefits could cost them up to £1,100 a year.

SPORT

- Canon end sponsorship of Football League. Mirror says that in spite of Canon denials, violence which has ruined soccer's image is the foremost reason for the withdrawal.
- Mail says two multinationals are rivals for sponsorship after Canon.
- A Labour Government would ban cigarette firms sponsoring sport - they are believed to put £10m into it today.

PEOPLE

- Sun leader attacks appointment of Sir Antony Acland as our man in Washington; instead of "an old smoothie" why couldn't we have sent a captain of industry like Weinstock, Conran or Sainsbury?
- Mirror leader parodies a song, in reprisal for the scurrilous French pop song about you, regretting that you will not be able to lunch with Mr Mitterrand on January 20; French pop singer apologises over his rude song, according to Mirror.
- Harold Wilson to play himself in ITV drama about a battle for the control of a Fleet Street newspaper.

LIBYA

- President Reagan cuts all links with Libya; orders all Americans there home or face 10 years jail when they do go back.
- Will seek cooperation of allies in isolating "pariah" regime.
- Telegraph says sanctions are not likely to be backed by Europe.

EC

- We get over £604m rebate for 1984, 18 months late.

NORTHERN IRELAND

- Guardian says Republicans and Unionists are united in believing that the latest hunger strike was ended by an informal deal over early appeal hearings; NIO rejects idea.

NIGERIA

- Guardian says the Government is now prepared to back barter deals with Nigerians.

BERNARD INGHAM