

PRIME MINISTER'S RESIGNATION, 22 NOVEMBER 1990

This note chronicles the events which immediately preceded the Prime Minister's announcement of her intention not to contest the second ballot of the election for leadership of the Conservative Party and to resign as Prime Minister as soon as a new leader was elected.

Around 1900 on Tuesday 20 November, shortly after the Prime Minister had received the result of the first ballot, she made a statement in the courtyard of the British Embassy in Paris that it was her intention to contest the second ballot. After a number of telephone calls to Downing Street, it was agreed *she attend* the signing ceremony for the Final Document of the Paris CSCE Summit but that she would cut out the previously-planned press conference and return to London around midday the following day. A meeting was arranged for her return with Mr. Tebbit and Mr. Wakeham, which would be joined after a time by Mr. Baker, Mr. Moore, Mr. MacGregor, the Chief Whip and Mr. Onslow. Three separate trawls of opinion were set in hand that night:

- Mr. Tebbit, for the Prime Minister's campaign team, would assess the state of support of the second ballot;
- The Chief Whip would organise a similar trawl for the Party as a whole.
- Mr. MacGregor was to take the views of all members of Cabinet.

The Prime Minister arrived back at No.10 at around noon on Wednesday 21 November and went up to the flat to talk to Mr. Thatcher. Mr. Tebbit arrived around 1230 and met the Prime Minister in the study. They were joined at 1240 by Mr. Wakeham. Mr. Morrison was also present.

Mr. Tebbit said it was difficult to make a clear assessment of how the Prime Minister's vote would go but there were certainly

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many who would fight every inch of the way if the Prime Minister was willing. The biggest area of weakness was amongst Cabinet Ministers. He believed, nevertheless, that the objective had to be to stop Mr. Heseltine and that the Prime Minister had the best chance of achieving it. The Prime Minister said if she could see the Gulf crisis resolved and inflation brought down, she could choose the time of her <sup>departure</sup> ~~Mr. Heseltine~~ and asked whether, if she withdrew, Mr. Major could win. She doubted whether Mr. Hurd would hold to the things she believed in. Mr. Tebbit said Mr. Hurd could not beat Mr. Heseltine. Mr. Morrison said he thought there was a pact between Mr. Major and Mr. Hurd that they would, if allowed, stand against each other and offer a wider choice in an effort to take the election to a third ballot, with the weaker candidate's votes being transferred.

The Prime Minister still felt the best option was for her to carry on and then to depart at a time of her choosing.

Mr. Wakeham then turned the discussion to the meeting which was to follow. A number of arguments would be put to the Prime Minister. One of these was that she would be humiliated if she fought, but he believed one was never humiliated by fighting for what one believed in. This argument should be rejected. If the argument was put forward that it would be better for Party unity if the Prime Minister withdrew, she should test the proposition thoroughly. Could someone other than Mr. Heseltine win? If so, how could it be brought about? There was no point in talking vaguely about Party unity - the issue was how could it be delivered.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Tebbit, Mr. Wakeham and Mr. Morrison then went down to the Cabinet Room at around 1315 where they were joined by Mr. Baker, Mr. MacGregor, the Chief Whip, Mr. Onslow and Mr. Moore.

Mr. Baker opened by saying the issue was to stop Mr. Heseltine and in his view only the Prime Minister could achieve that. Mr. Hurd did not want the job badly enough and in any case represented the old wing of the Party. Mr. Major would get more support; he was closer to the Prime Minister's views, he had few

enemies but he was short of experience.

For the Prime Minister to win through, her campaign needed a major overhaul and the Prime Minister must give an undertaking to look radically at the Community Charge. He advised against a high profile media campaign which would emphasise the differences with Mr. Heseltine rather than the positive aspects of the Prime Minister's programme.

Mr. MacGregor said he had done a trawl of Cabinet Ministers who in turn had consulted their Junior Ministers. He said that there were very few who were proposing to shift their allegiance but the underlying problem was that they had no faith in ultimate success. They were concerned that the Prime Minister's support was eroding. Cabinet colleagues in particular were concerned that the Prime Minister would not win.

Mr. Baker said that those who feared the Prime Minister could not win were her strongest supporters, e.g. Messrs. Lamont, Gummer, Howard and Lilley. They desperately wanted the Prime Minister's philosophies to prevail.

The Chief Whip said the Whips' Office had received many messages from backbenchers and Ministers saying the Prime Minister should withdraw. Many doubted if the Prime Minister would beat Mr. Heseltine; they wanted a candidate for the Party to unite around. There could be losses to Mr. Heseltine both from the abstainers and from the Prime Minister. He assessed the net losses at 25 compared with 12 the previous night, indicating a worsening trend.

The vote, however, was five days away and support could be won back by a better focussed campaign, particularly on the younger Members. It was possible to win them back. He doubted whether another candidate would do any better against Mr. Heseltine than the Prime Minister.

The Chief Whip said Lord Whitelaw had asked to see him. He was worried that the Prime Minister might suffer a humiliation in the

second ballot. Even if she won by a small margin it would be difficult to unite the Party. He did not want to be cast in the role of a "man in a grey suit" but, if asked, he would come in to see the Prime Minister as a friend.

Mr. Onslow said the Executive of the 1922 Committee had met that morning. They expressed frustration and rage at being powerless in the face of the juggernaut represented by the ballot procedure. He thought it was a pity there was no opportunity for a wider choice of candidates. He said the quality of a Heseltine Administration would be inferior to one led by the Prime Minister. He brought no message from the Committee that the Prime Minister should stand down; the reverse if anything was true; nor did they wish to convey any message to Mr. Heseltine. There was, therefore, a free choice for the Prime Minister.

Mr. Onslow did not think Europe was the real issue as it would not be crucial in a General Election. Most people were concerned about domestic issues and in particular about the Community Charge. He hoped that something substantial could be done in that area. The Prime Minister interjected that she could not pull rabbits out of a hat in five days. Mr. MacGregor strongly urged the Prime Minister not to promise a radical overhaul of the Community Charge.

Mr. Wakeham said the big issue was whether there was a candidate with a better chance of beating Mr. Heseltine than the Prime Minister. He saw no sign of it. Everything then hung on the campaign which could succeed only if all the Prime Minister's colleagues fought hard for it. A more professional campaign was essential. The backbenchers did not see major policy differences between Mr. Heseltine and the Prime Minister. The key factor was that a glamorous Heseltine would be seen as bringing victory in a General Election.

Mr. Moore said perceptions would change once the deadline for nominations had passed and it was clear that there was a straight choice between the Prime Minister and Mr. Heseltine. He distinguished between "classic" supporters who strongly backed the Prime Minister but were pessimistic about her chances of

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winning and those who believed she could win but only just. The key weakness in the Prime Minister's campaign was the absence of complete commitment from Ministers, particularly Junior Ministers. It was highly damaging if backbenchers believed the Prime Minister did not have the full backing of colleagues. He agreed that there were no great policy issues but he feared a Heseltine victory would divide the party. He recommended that the campaign should focus on the person who could defend what has been achieved and why over the last eleven years. That person was the Prime Minister.

Mr. Tebbit said that initially there was a great deal of talk about Europe but as the campaign had progressed this had faded as an issue. Nor were there any other major policy issues other than the Community Charge. The promise of action was particularly attractive to MPs from the North West. Mr. Tebbit also believed the Prime Minister would carry more votes against Mr. Heseltine than anyone else, provided a large number of senior colleagues swung behind her. Mr. Heseltine was not loved but was perceived to be an electoral asset. The Prime Minister said she would reflect on what had been said. She said it was surprising that she had never been defeated in a General Election, indeed had three victories; retained the support of the Party in the country; had never lost a vote of censure in the House and had earned the support of a majority of her Party in Parliament. She was inclined to fight on and would make a major effort to rally junior colleagues.

The Prime Minister left the meeting at around 1400 to prepare for her statement to Parliament on the CSCE meeting in Paris.

On her way out of No.10 she conferred with Mr. Ingham and they agreed that, on leaving the door, she should tell the waiting media "I fight on. I fight to win." This she did, and then she went over to the House.

The statement started at 1530 and went on for an hour and a quarter and the Prime Minister therefore returned to her room at the House of Commons at 1645.

The Prime Minister first spoke to Mr. Wakeham and asked him to take charge of her campaign team. He left to set this in train. She then saw Mr. Hurd to ask him if he would nominate her for the second ballot. This he agreed to do. He was not asked for his view on whether she should stand nor did he offer it. The Prime Minister then 'phoned Mr. Major who was at home in Huntingdon recovering from an operation to remove a wisdom tooth. She asked him to second her nomination. This he agreed to do, though from his tone there was a noticeable lack of enthusiasm. He too was not asked for his view on whether the Prime Minister should stand, nor did he give it.

The Prime Minister left the House at around 1720 to attend an Audience at the Palace at which she informed The Queen that she intended to stand in the second ballot. The Prime Minister returned to the House just after 1800 hours. Over the next two hours there followed a series of meetings with Cabinet Ministers individually, each lasting about 5 minutes. Of each she asked how it was that she was being asked to stand down when

- she was undefeated at 3 general elections
- retained the support of the party in the country at large
- had never lost a vote of confidence in the House
- and had won the support of a majority of MPs in the ballot.\*

The first to come in, however, was not a Cabinet Minister but Mr. Maude who had called round on his own initiative.

Maude: "Passionately support the things you believe in and will support you as long as you go on, but do not believe you can win". He left visibly distressed.

\* I can't remember whether she actually used the phrase "It's a funny old world" which the press picked up from the Lobby briefing, but that was certainly the sense.

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Clarke: "The method of changing Prime Ministers is farcical. Personally happy to support you for 5-10 more years. Most of Cabinet think you should stand down as you are not only going to lose but to lose big. The Party will go to Mr. Heseltine and will be split. Admire your courage but convinced you will lose by big margin. Douglas Hurd and John Major should be released from their obligation and allowed to stand, either has a better chance than you. Solid part of the Party can get back together. Would be a terrible end to hand the Party over to Mr. Heseltine."

Lilley: "Will support you if you stand but inconceivable that you will win. Heseltine must not be allowed to win or all your achievements will be threatened. The only way to prevent this is to make way for John Major. The Party is rattled and think you cannot win. A momentum has developed. Human nature, albeit not a nice part."

Rifkind: "You cannot win. John Major or Douglas Hurd can beat him, perhaps both should stand. They would get all your votes and some of Heseltine's. He does not have 152 who actually want him." The Prime Minister asked Mr. Rifkind whether, if she did decide to stand, she would have his support. He said: "I'll have to think about it but I will never campaign against you."

Brooke: "I will fully support you whatever you choose to do. Being in Northern Ireland I am not closely in touch with Parliamentary opinion and cannot offer a view. You could win if you go ahead with all guns ablazing." The Prime Minister added that she could not win if all guns did not blaze.

Howard: "Will support you and will campaign vigorously for you but you cannot win." In tears.

Waldegrave: "I shall vote for you as long as you are a candidate. It would be dishonourable for someone to accept a place in your Cabinet one week and not support you three weeks later. But I have a sense of foreboding about the result. The Party is behaving like headless chickens and there is a movement to Heseltine. There is a feeling of panic. No-one really wants

to go to corporatist policies. There will be a catastrophe if that happens."

At this point a note from Mr. Wakeham was passed in saying he wanted an urgent word with the Prime Minister. The position was much worse than he had thought.

Gummer: "Will support you if you decide to stand but you cannot win. You must let both Major and Hurd stand so that they can get more than 50 per cent of the votes in the second ballot. Either has a real chance. The Party wants to clear the air and unite around a compromise candidate."

Patten: "Will support but you cannot win."

Alan Clark: "You should stay in the ballot and fight on. I do not believe you can win but it is better to go out this way than the other. Also let other candidates in."

At this point Mr. Wakeham returned accompanied by Mr. Baker. He said the conclusion reached at lunchtime was that the best chance was for the Prime Minister to fight on but it was recognised that this could only succeed if she were fully supported by her Cabinet colleagues. He now doubted whether this could be achieved. He had tried to put together a campaign team but was not succeeding. Both Mr. Ryder and Mr. Garel-Jones had refused to serve as his lieutenants as they believed they could not succeed.

Mr. Baker said the position had deteriorated since the morning. 10-12 Cabinet members did not think the Prime Minister could win and that if they thought that there would not be enough enthusiasm to carry the day. He personally still believed she should carry on. He then mentioned Mr. King's suggestion that the Prime Minister might suggest that she would undertake to stand down after Christmas if she won the election. The Prime Minister rejected this - she would have no authority in the meantime, e.g. at the IGC.



Lamont: "I will back you as long as you remain in the contest but you are certain to lose. You had a lead of 52 which means that only a small number need to move. The position is beyond repair. People are slipping away. Everything we have achieved on industry and Europe is being jeopardised. You must free others to run. If John Major and Douglas Hurd run the outcome would be that the vote would be split evenly three ways and Mr. Heseltine would not win by a third ballot when the transferable votes come into play.

MacGregor: "I personally will support you as long as you go on but I don't think you can win nor do most of your Cabinet colleagues. I could not put this opinion to you at lunchtime in front of all the others."

King: "I will support you but do not think you can win. Why not offer to stand down at a specific date in the future."

Waddington: "Want you to win and will support you but cannot guarantee it."

Newton: "Don't think you can win."

Mr. Morrison had spoken earlier in the day to Cecil Parkinson who believed the Prime Minister should fight on.

At the conclusion of these meetings at around 1945 the position was that:

- the views of the Lord Chancellor and Lord Belstead were not sought.
- Mr. Hurd and Mr. Major were not asked for their views as, at that stage, they were being asked to propose and second, but both thought the Prime Minister should not go on.
- Mr. King thought the Prime Minister should go on to offer to stand down at a specific date.

- Mr. Baker and Mr. Parkinson thought the Prime Minister should go on and could prevail.
  
- The remaining 12 did not think the Prime Minister could win and should stand down though all, with the exception of Mr. Rifkind, would support her (albeit without enthusiasm) if she decided to fight on. Mr. Hunt was absent in Tokyo.

Mr. Wakeham then returned, seeking to explain why he had changed his advice. He pointed out that the true feelings of Cabinet had not been brought out at that meeting and that he had discovered the depth of the problem only when he had sought, and failed, to recruit the campaign team.

By now, the Prime Minister realised it was unlikely that she would be able to continue and she dictated the brief statement which was to be read out at Cabinet the following morning. She said she would return to No.10 to talk to Mr. Thatcher before taking a decision.

At this point Mr. Tebbit arrived accompanied by Mr. Portillo and Mr. Gummer. The Prime Minister said she thought she had to open up the choice in the next ballot. Mr. Portillo argued that she still had a better chance than anyone else of beating Mr. Heseltine. He believed Cabinet were misreading the situation. With a vigorous campaign it would still be possible to turn things around.

*and  
Christophe  
Chape* Just as the Prime Minister was leaving a group of about 12 of her strongest supporters from the 92 Group arrived. They included George Gardiner, Vivian Bendall, John Townend, Edward Leigh and Michael Grylls. She listened to what they had to say for about 10 minutes and then returned to No.10 at about 2010.

After talking to Mr. Thatcher in the flat, the Prime Minister came down to the Cabinet Room around 2030 to start work on the speech. Norman Tebbit and John Gummer joined the No.10 team. Although the time available for the speech was very short excellent progress was made.

At around 2300 Frank Field arrived at No.10. He said he wanted to see the Prime Minister and would stay as long as it was necessary for this to be possible. It was explained that she might be working on her speech for some hours yet and he was invited to send her a note. This he declined to do and he sat in the Waiting Room working on a speech of his own. At around 2130 the Prime Minister went out to see him. He said he had come as he felt he had to report to the Prime Minister what was happening at the House. Mr. Heseltine was "hoovering up votes"; it was as though there was a virus spreading through the House. The Prime Minister returned to the Cabinet Room to report on this conversation. She thought Mr. Heseltine was exercising a strange witchlike quality over the Party.

Drafting on the speech finished at around 0030 and Mr. Portillo arrived and he and Mr. Tebbit stayed behind to talk to the Prime Minister, again urging her to fight on. Mr. Forsyth and Mr. Hamilton then joined the meeting, also urging her to stay in the contest. She said she would sleep on the matter but it would be very difficult to prevail if Cabinet did not have their hearts in the campaign.

After they left Mr. Morrison and I talked to the Prime Minister about the nature of the statement she would issue if she did decide to stand down. I also showed her a note on the steps which would need to be taken. At around 0045 she went up to the flat saying she would inform me of her decision in the morning after she had reflected on the matter.

After she had gone there was a discussion with Michael Forsyth, Michael Fallon, Edward Leigh, Neil Hamilton and Ian Twinn, all of whom wanted the Prime Minister to continue. Mr. Fallon argued that one should focus on the third ballot. His plan was for the Prime Minister to stay in the second ballot but to be accompanied by a stalking horse, in his view Mr. Clarke. Their combined votes would hold Mr. Heseltine below the 187 he needed. In the third ballot Mr. Clarke's votes could go to the Prime Minister and produce victory. Michael Fallon and Dominic Morris wrote

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this up in a note which was put under the Prime Minister's door for her to read in the morning. The discussion broke up just after 0200.

At 0630 on Thursday morning Michael Brown and Edward Leigh arrived at No.10 hoping to see the Prime Minister to urge her to fight on. They left at 1100 without having seen her.

At 0730 the Prime Minister 'phoned me to tell me to go ahead with the plan I had put to her for the announcement of her intention to resign. I asked her if she had read Michael Fallon's note and she asked me to go up to the flat. We were joined by Mr. Morrison. We discussed the Fallon option briefly, but she concluded that it would not work. I returned to the Private Office and set the processes in motion. I telephoned Sir Robert Fellowes at Buckingham palace at 0740 and he informed The Queen. (The possibility that this might happen had been discussed with him the night before and an action plan had been agreed.) He put in hand the arrangements for an Audience at 1245. I then phoned Sir Robin Butler and also warned the Treasury. Peter Morrison rang Douglas Hurd and John Major to inform them of the Prime Minister's decision, thereby releasing them from their undertaking not to stand against her. John Wakeham had arrived at No.10 and was told of the decision. Kenneth Baker telephoned at around 0820 and was also told. At 0830 the Prime Minister came down to the Study for Questions Briefing and at 0900 she went downstairs for the Cabinet meeting.

Normally, as the Prime Minister approaches the Cabinet Room, Ministers are milling around in the ante room and there is a hubbub of conversation. As she came down the stairs no one could be seen and there was no noise. For a minute it seemed the meeting might have been arranged for the wrong time. Then, as she came past the Macmillan portrait, one could see the Cabinet standing silently, pushed back against the walls of the ante-room, trying to look as invisible as possible. By then they had realised the full significance of what was about to happen. There was a short delay as Mr MacGregor was held up in traffic. The Cabinet then filed silently and sheepishly into the Cabinet Room.

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The Prime Minister said that she had consulted all her colleagues. While they had said they would support her if she continued, nearly all urged her not to contest the second ballot. She had decided therefore that she would not and would resign as Prime Minister as soon as a new leader was elected. She had informed The Queen and would be seeking an Audience to convey her decision formally.

The Prime Minister then read out the statement setting out her reasons:

"Having consulted widely among colleagues, I have concluded that the unity of the Party and the prospects of victory in a General Election would be better served if I stood down to enable Cabinet colleagues to enter the ballot for the leadership. I should like to thank all those in Cabinet and outside who have given me such dedicated support".

The Lord Chancellor then made a statement of tribute to the Prime Minister which it was agreed should be written into the Cabinet minutes. Copies of these statements are attached.

The Prime Minister said it was vital for Cabinet to stand together. It was vital to win to safeguard all she and colleagues believed in. That was why she was standing down. She could not bear it if all they believed in were not to continue. The Cabinet should stand together to back the person most likely to beat Mr Heseltine: it was as if there was a cult out there. By standing down she was allowing others to come forward who did not have the handicap of the bitterness of ex ministers. The unity of the party was vital. Whether one or two or three colleagues stood it was essential that Cabinet worked together.

Mr Baker then made a tribute on behalf of the Party who loved the Prime Minister and remained loyal to her.

Mr Hurd said it was a dismal and desperately bad situation, but on behalf of colleagues he wanted to say they were enormously proud of the way she had carried herself in the last few days.

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The Prime Minister concluded this part of the discussion at around 0915, expressing the hope that she would be able to offer the new leader total and devoted support.

After allowing ten minutes to make courtesy calls to the offices of Mr. Speaker, Mr. Kinnock and Mr. Ashdown (Mr. Molyneux could not be contacted) the statement was issued at 0925.

The Cabinet meeting then reverted to the normal business. This ranged from matters of the greatest triviality - an unsuccessful Fisheries Council which was ruined by incompetent Italian chairmanship - to matters of the highest importance, the decision to increase the deployment of forces in the Gulf by sending a second brigade. The formal Cabinet ended at about 1015. The Prime Minister invited colleagues to stay. Over coffee there was informal discussion and Mr. Hurd and Mr. Major began to organise their candidacies.

Colleagues left around 1045 and the Prime Minister then signed a number of messages to Heads of State and Government and a message of thanks to staff at No.10 and Chequers. At around 1130 the Prime Minister went through her speech for the No Confidence Debate. At 1230 she went upstairs to change and left at 1235 for the Audience, returning to No.10 at 1315.

She then resumed briefing for Questions, before leaving for the House at 1430.

At Questions the Prime Minister gave a spirited performance to resounding cheers from her own Backbenchers, who inevitably included many who had voted against her. This was but a foretaste of her performance in the subsequent speech.

After listening to Mr. King's statement on the deployment of additional troops in the Gulf the Prime Minister returned to her room to finalise her speech.

Mr. Kinnock opened for the Opposition. His opening ten minutes, in which he concentrated on a political attack on the Government,

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went quite well but he collapsed badly in the middle when challenged on the substance of two central issues; his attitude to the nuclear deterrent and his attitude to a single currency. His long winded replies brought laughter from the Government benches.

At 1650 the Prime Minister rose to give her final speech as Prime Minister. Contemporary reports will record it as an astonishing occasion - a "bravura" performance made under the greatest pressure. At its conclusion the Conservative Backbenchers rose to their feet waving their Order Papers. Many left the Chamber shaking their heads wondering how they could, only 48 hours earlier, have turned their backs on one capable of showing such strength and spirit.

AT

ANDREW TURNBULL  
24 November 1990

SECRET

RESIGNATION ACTION PLAN: 22 NOVEMBER 1990

0730 Prime Minister conveys her decision to AT and PHM  
0735 Prime Minister clears press statement  
0740 AT informs Palace, agrees statement and time for  
Audience  
0740 PHM tells Mr. Hurd and Mr. Major of her decision  
0745 AT warns Treasury and Bank  
0830-0900 Questions briefing  
0900 Cabinet  
Prime Minister informs Cabinet of her decision  
Telephone messages from Private Office to inform  
- Mr. Speaker  
- Mr. Kinnock  
- Mr. Ashdown  
- Mr. Molyneaux  
shortly before statement issued  
Political office informs Mr. Onslow  
0930c Statement issued  
1015 Cabinet concludes  
1015 Sign personal messages to President Bush,  
President Gorbachev, EC and G7 leaders plus Gulf  
leaders  
1030-12~~30~~ Speechwriting  
[1200 Nominations close]  
1235 Depart for Audience  
1245 Audience  
1300 Return to No. 10.

SECRET





10 DOWNING STREET

## Press Notice

The Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Margaret Thatcher FRS MP has informed The Queen that she does not intend to contest the second ballot of the election for leadership of the Conservative Party and intends to resign as Prime Minister as soon as a new leader of the Conservative Party has been elected. The Prime Minister will seek an Audience of The Queen later this morning to convey her decision formally.

The Prime Minister has issued the following statement:

"Having consulted widely among colleagues, I have concluded that the unity of the Party and the prospects of victory in a General Election would be better served if I stood down to enable Cabinet colleagues to enter the ballot for the leadership. I should like to thank all those in Cabinet and outside who have given me such dedicated support".

22 November 1990

Telephone 071-930 4433



10 DOWNING STREET

## Press Notice

After the Prime Minister had informed Cabinet of her intention to resign the Lord Chancellor made the following statement which has been recorded in the Cabinet Minutes:

"May I express on behalf of the whole Cabinet what we will all be feeling, namely our profound sadness at this moment.

"You have served as Leader of the Conservative Party for nearly 16 years and as Prime Minister for the past 11 years, the longest serving Prime Minister this century. You led the Government through a time of severe economic difficulty in the early years of the decade to a period of sustained economic growth unparalleled since the Second World War. Your fortitude sustained the effort to recover the Falkland Islands and showed a resolve which many thought had been lost to Britain. You have changed attitudes throughout industry and commerce so that enterprise and initiatives flourish and are respected again. Your strength and clear-sightedness in international affairs have made you a figure of huge international stature and have contributed in no small way to the ending of the cold war and it was therefore most fitting that you signed on behalf of the United Kingdom the momentous agreements concluded in Paris at the beginning of this week.

" Your place in our country's history is already assured. It has been for us your colleagues a true privilege to have served under you. We thank you most warmly for your leadership and we extend to both you and your husband, who has supported you so marvellously, all our best wishes for the future."

22 November 1990

Telephone 071-930 4433