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CABINET

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH ON THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

Memorandum by the Lord President of the Council

I attach a draft of The Queen's Speech on the Opening of the 1988/89 Session of Parliament in the form in which it has been agreed by The Queen's Speeches and Future Legislation Committee (QL). It takes account of helpful comments by colleagues on earlier versions.

2. The draft is based upon the programme provisionally approved by the Cabinet on 10 March (CC(88) 9.5) to which the following changes have been made since that time:

i. The Home Secretary has withdrawn his bid for a Broadcasting Bill and instead proposes to bid for a Bill for the 1989/90 Session to implement the proposals in the Broadcasting White Paper.

ii. The Secretary of State for Scotland has withdrawn his bid for a Housing (Scotland) Bill in the forthcoming session.

iii. When the Prime Minister and other colleagues saw the football authorities on 6 July it was made clear that the Government would introduce legislation to impose a national membership scheme unless the football authorities came forward with an acceptable scheme of their own. In the absence of such a voluntary scheme, a Bill to deal with the admission of supporters to football grounds has been added to the programme.

iv. The Lord Privy Seal and I were invited by the Cabinet on 10 March to consider whether the Elected Authorities (Northern Ireland) Bill could be extended to make provision for candidates at local elections in Northern Ireland to make a declaration against terrorism. We have agreed that it would be manageable for the Bill to be expanded in this way.

v. QL have agreed that a short and uncontroversial Eurocontrol Bill, to enable Eurocontrol to collect navigation service charges in European Currency Units rather than in United States dollars, should be added to the programme.

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vi. The Home Secretary accepts QL's view that a final decision on whether the Representation of the People Bill can be accommodated in the 1988/89 Session should be deferred until the New Year. Accordingly, no reference has been made to the Bill in The Queen's Speech.

3. In addition to the customary references to foreign affairs, defence, the economy and law and order, paragraphs have been included in this year's Speech on the environment, education and the National Health Service even though there is no legislation specifically on these topics in next Session's programme. I believe that the inclusion of these references would serve to emphasise the importance which the Government attaches to these matters.

4. I invite the Cabinet to approve the attached draft Speech, subject to any revisions which might be required in the light of developments before it is delivered.

J W

Privy Council Office

11 November 1988

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OPENING SPEECH

MY LORDS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

1. I look forward with much pleasure to [receiving the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Mrs Babangida on a State Visit and to] a visit by Her Majesty Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands as part of the celebrations of the William and Mary Tercentenary.

2. I also look forward to [visiting Barbados next March to mark the 350th Anniversary of the House of Assembly there and to] being present next autumn on the occasion of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malaysia.

3. My Government will continue to attach the highest priority to the maintenance of national security and the preservation of peace with freedom and justice. They will maintain strong and effective defences and will stand fully by their obligations to the NATO Alliance.

4. My Government will strive for balanced and verifiable measures of arms control and for a world-wide ban on chemical weapons. They strongly support the United States' proposals for 50 per cent reductions in American and Soviet strategic nuclear weapons. They will work for the elimination of disparities in conventional forces in Europe with the aim of achieving a stable balance at lower levels.

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5. My Government will continue to strive to break down the barriers between East and West and to ensure that the Vienna Review Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe leads to further progress on human rights. They look forward to building further on the improved relationship with the Soviet Union and to a visit to this country by the Soviet leader, Mr Gorbachev.

6. My Government look forward to the completion of the Soviet troop withdrawal from Afghanistan and will continue to work for the restoration of that country's independence and non-aligned status. They will continue to play a full part in the work of the United Nations and to work for peaceful solutions to regional conflicts.

7. My Government will continue to work with our European Community partners to complete the single market, to reinforce budgetary discipline and further to reform the Common Agricultural Policy. They will play a full part in multilateral negotiations designed to liberalise international trade and agriculture.

8. My Government will maintain a substantial aid programme, designed to alleviate poverty and to promote sustainable economic and social progress in developing countries.

9. My Government will continue the fight against international terrorism and against trafficking in drugs.

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10. My Government will honour their commitments to the people of the Falkland Islands while continuing to seek more normal relations with Argentina. They will continue to discharge their responsibilities towards Hong Kong and its people and will work closely with the Chinese Government to implement the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

11. Estimates for the Public Service will be laid before you.

MY LORDS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

12. My Government will continue to pursue firm financial policies designed to bear down on inflation. They will continue to promote enterprise and to foster the conditions necessary for the sustained growth of output and employment.

13. They will maintain firm control of public expenditure so that, while allowing further improvements in priority services, it continues to fall as a proportion of national income, thus providing scope for further reductions in taxation.

14. My Government will continue to attach the highest importance to protecting our environment, both nationally and internationally.

15. A Bill will be brought forward to reform the law on local government capital and housing finance, on home improvement grants, and on the conduct of local authority business.

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16. A Bill will be introduced for England and Wales to establish a National Rivers Authority and to provide for the sale of the utility functions of the water authorities.

17. Legislation will be introduced to provide for the sale of the electricity supply industry in Great Britain.

18. A Bill will be introduced to remove unnecessary obstacles to employment, particularly in relation to women and young people, and to alter training arrangements.

19. My Government will vigorously pursue their policies for reducing crime. A Bill will be introduced to replace the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act. Legislation will be brought forward to provide for a national membership scheme to control admission to football matches.

20. A Bill will be introduced to replace section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911 with provisions prohibiting only disclosures of information which would be harmful to the public interest.

21. A Bill will be introduced to improve and rationalise the law governing the care and protection of children.

22. My Government will continue to take action to raise standards throughout education.

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23. My Government are committed to strengthening the National Health Service and to ensuring that it is developed and improved in an efficient way that offers choice to patients.

24. For Scotland, legislation will be brought forward to enable parents to choose that their children's schools should be managed outside the control of local authorities. A Bill will be introduced to transfer the Scottish Bus Group to the private sector.

25. In Northern Ireland, my Government will continue their efforts to eradicate terrorism, to give elected representatives greater involvement in the affairs of the Province, and to maintain close co-operation with the Republic of Ireland. A Bill will be laid before you to strengthen the law of Northern Ireland on fair employment. Legislation will be introduced to extend the franchise for local elections and to require from candidates a declaration against terrorism.

26. A Bill will be brought forward to amend the law on social security.

27. Legislation will be introduced to reform company law and the law on mergers.

28. A Bill will be brought forward to modify the driver licensing system and to provide for new systems of route guidance for drivers.

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29. Other measures will be laid before you.

MY LORDS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

30. I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your counsels.

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