

PRESS DIGESTMain News

Soviet Union told to get out of Azerbaijan in 48 hours after impressive display of mourning and nationalism at funeral of those killed in Baku.

Threat to secede from USSR unless Soviet troops leave; want state of emergency lifted.

Iran tells USSR it is playing with fire sending troops to Azerbaijan and killing Muslims.

Foreign Secy, in East Germany, announces extension of know-how aid to whole of Eastern Europe. Warns East Germans of need to conduct fair elections.

East German premier, Modrow, agrees to give Opposition groups places in Cabinet.

Bonn Govt urgently drawing up plans to make West Germany a less attractive haven for ethnic Germans from throughout Soviet bloc, but particularly to stop exodus of East Germans who are needed to rebuild their own country (Times).

Czechoslovakia likely to become member of IMF by the summer (FT).

Yugoslav Communist Party in disarray after Slovenes walk out of congress.

Times leader says that Gorbachev's apparent ability to work political miracles was useful to the reformists as long as the Ceausescus and Honeckers, the Husaks and the Zhivkovs were in charge. As his reputation is eclipsed by insurgent subject nations, his patronage has become insufficient to inspire respect. Gorbachev's liberal Leninism is no longer the standard by which Eastern Europe nations judge themselves.

Mail and Independent turn attention to prospects for disarmament with Soviet Union in retreat.

Mail says we shall have radically to refashion our defences. The challenge will be to cut the army burden while continuing sensibly to modernise our capability.

An Independent editorial says you are right to insist there should be no early unilateral cuts in Britain's defence budget, while holding open the possibility of deep reduction next year following an agreement in Vienna. The new British army should be smaller

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but better equipped, its primary goal to guard western and northern approaches and capable of delivering a substrategic nuclear deterrent - possibly in co-operation with the French.

US Congress looks for big defence cuts to fund civil projects - but the "peach dividend" may be disappointingly small (Independent).

Mail draws attention to arrival of 45 Vietnamese boat people at Heathrow - among first of 2,000 to arrive.

US indicates willingness to soften position over involuntary repatriation of boat people (Independent).

Under the heading "Racist populism? I believe in honouring our pledge" Norman Tebbit in the Times says the most remarkable aspect of the proposal to give a quarter of a million Hong Kong Chinese the right of abode in Britain is that ministers seem surprised it caused a controversy. He concludes that it is true the Govt accepted that Hong Kong's problems can be solved only in China and not by unilateral British action.

Labour Party orders inquiry into de-selection of Frank Field who submits a 150-page account of Militant activities in Wirral.

Mirror says Militant remains strong around Liverpool.

Independent says Labour scent victory in Mid-Staffs seat left vacant by death of John Heddle. Constituency Tories are unprepared for election.

Express says Labour plans for replacing community charge with tax based on property values and related to income sounds like a disaster but as an idea for making community charge seem better it sounds terrific.

Times leader says Labour will not advance its own cause with this plan. The outcome would be a bureaucratic process which would make for an accountant's dream and a citizen's nightmare.

Manchester's community charge could be pushed up to £733 (Times).

Times says that the meeting between you and Tory MEPs tomorrow is being turned into a peach convention with the focus on the future of Eastern Europe.

Sun backs Norman Tebbit for attacking Tory MEPs - by and large, it says, they are politicians who have failed to make it to Westminster.

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FT leader on Pohl's speech on the prospective European monetary order says his suggestions, some of which you will consider outrageous will focus consideration on whether politically managed money - a euphemism for its debasement - is an essential democratic principle. He has brought the constitutional issue into the open.

10% increase in company failures in 1989 as production falls.

Stock Exchange wipes £7.5 billion off shares as profits slump.

CBI calls for tax incentives to investment.

Fears of higher mortgage charges as building society takings fall.

Sun says you are right in wanting to raise mortgage tax relief above £30,000.

Abbey National pays £41 million to buy French mortgage firm (Independent).

Pressure for strike ballot as ambulance shop stewards meet in London today.

Kenneth Clarke, in interview with Telegraph, which leads with it, tries to break ambulance deadlock by offering the prospect of better pay in future through locally negotiated productivity deals.

Ford sending leaflet to 33,000 workers explaining benefits of its pay offer in effort to avoid all-out strike; company warns of job losses if strike goes ahead.

College employers say many lecturers are anxious to accept a new pay offer which has been rejected by their unions (Times).

Ferranti wins £2 billion order to build radar systems for new European Fighter Aircraft.

Whitehall officials believe BAe will be forced by Ec to repay all or part of £38 million inducements used in Rover deal (Independent).

Govt likely to allow electricity supply industry to drop plans to complete a £2 billion investment programme to cut acid rain pollution because national Power and PowerGen claim they will be more difficult to privatise if their prospectuses commit them to

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completing the programme (FT).

BaE preparing a £1.2 billion plan to develop Speke into an international airport (Times).

Glass found in Mr Kipling pies - 250,000 packs withdrawn. Not know whether deliberately spiked.

20p cheaper jars of coffee forecast after fall in world price of beans.

Showdown looming with West Germany over its ban on British beef because of BSE.

Bar backs amendments to the courts and legal services Bill to strengthen the role of judges in determining the extent to which solicitors will be allowed to take cases in the higher courts (Times).

Govt's initiative to cut hospital waiting lists has failed. £55 million special fund offset by cuts elsewhere (Independent).

Plans to regulate every aspect of NHS Consultants' work to be unveiled soon (Independent).

Teachers' opposition grows to plans for teaching geography in national curriculum. Claims that plan means return to learning facts by rote (Independent).

Express praises Michael Howard for putting his weight behind calls for employers to provide better child care facilities for female employees.

Today highlights case of mother who has won a legal battle to secure a child minder allowance so that she could go to college only to discover that Govt has changed rules allowing only unmarried mothers to claim allowance.

Times says that as a result Govt may soon find itself in the European Court to answer charges that it discriminates against married people who want to enter the job market.

Home Secy rejects calls for inquiry into Stalker/Taylor affair; Stalker says he will this week hand in document which he says proves decision to remove him from inquiry was political.

Telegraph leader says Ministers would do well to resolve the matter one way or another as quickly as possible.

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Select Cttee plans to question Sir Robin Butler role of Cabinet Office in Stalker affair.

Cardinal O'Fee says Pope would visit Northern Ireland if IRA ended violence.

Unionists disappointed by Haughey's continuing commitment to Anglo/Irish agreement. Paisley and Molyneaux still pressing for suspension (Independent).

Ulster Unionists deeply split by Haughey's offer to renegotiate Anglo-Irish agreement.

Dr Brian Mawhinney says he believes Ulster will stay the same constitutionally for 50-60 years (Mail).

RUC inspector shotdead in his home last night.

Malcolm Rifkind refuses to change system for selecting Scottish judges and says there is no legal bar to homosexual judges.

Probation officers call for national council to bring consistency in Crown Court sentencing (Independent).

First case of racial discrimination to be brought against Army by black ex-Guardsman (Independent).

Case of two senior policemen who drove at up to 60mph on hard shoulder of M1 in unmarked car to catch Heathrow flight - each find £400 with £200 costs.

Scotland Yard scrapping minimum height requirement for police to encourage more ethnic minorities to join police (FT).

Three Labour MPs - John Prescott, Frank Cook and David Marshall - surcharged (press say fined) on video-cameras brought in from Far East trip. Cost: £770 each.

Channel 4 decides to go for more quality minority programmes in bid to protect its market in the new broadcasting regime. Rejects idea of cheap game shows (Independent).

Home Office studying Express evidence of £550million soft porn industry in Britain.

Paul Johnson, in Mail, says Rushdie should take the opportunity of a lecture he is to give to announce he will forego his right to

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put his book into paperback and to express his regret for the distress he has caused the Moslem community. There is a strong chance that this would end the row.

Independent on Sunday sued before its launch (FT).

Much anticipation of your visit to Coronation Street.

Feature on the John Majors in Today.

Anthony Bevens, in the Independent, sees distinct signs of dampness in John Major's political record. Before becoming a Whip in 1987, he was a known liberal on immigration and hanging, and supported full EMS membership.

Criticism of Sebastian Coe for denouncing cricketers who have gone to play in South Africa; Sun points out he rejected your request to boycott Moscow Olympics over Afghanistan. Today says it has not taken Coe long to learn the first sordid lesson of politics: hypocrisy. Mail doubts whether, as Coe says, most British people are ashamed of the cricketers.

Japanese general election on February 18.

Californian police fear arrival of a new drug scourge as they discover laboratory making "ice", for smokeable methamphetamine (Independent).

Kashmir upheaval threatens relations between India and Pakistan. Muslim militants spread anti-Indian feeling as Indian accuse Pakistan of aiding extremists (Independent).

India has filed preliminary charges against Bofors over bribes allegedly paid by the company to secure a large arms contract (FT).

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DH: Mr Clarke attends an informal editorial conference, The Guardian
- WO: Mr Walker performs topping-out ceremony at Cardiff World Trade Centre, Cardiff; also attends private construction industry lunch, Cardiff and visits West Leigh Windows Ltd, Caerphilly
- DEM: Mr Eggar addresses the Federation of Master Builders dinner about the Unified Business Rate
- DEM: Lord Strathclyde addresses All-Party Tourism Committee, London
- DEM: Mr Howard visits the North East
- DES: Mrs Rumbold visits Southwark ILEA
- DH: Lady Hooper meets Mr Hunter of the Association of Optometrists
- DTI: Lord Trefgarne addresses CBI conference on Trade and Investment in Tunisia; later hosts Lancaster House reception on launch of BOTB's forward plan; Mr Ridley and Mr Redwood also attend
- DTI: Mr Forth launches new EUREKA project on the environment; later addresses "How to manage your corporate and marketing strategy in a greener world" conference
- DTp: Mr Atkins visits Eastern Region and Cardington Training Centre
- MAFF: Baroness Trumpington attends BP Past, Present and Future reception
- MAFF: Mr Maclean addresses National Association of Catering Butchers annual lunch, London

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MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- DTI: Mr Ridley addresses British-American Chamber of Commerce, New York, USA

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MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

- DES: Mr MacGregor interviewed by John O'Leary of The Times
- LPC: Sir Geoffrey Howe interviewed by BBC Northern Ireland's Spotlight programme

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TV AND RADIO

"Viewpoint '90" ITV (10.35)  
Looks at war being waged against Colombian drug barons

"News-Swap" ITV (11.35pm)  
Moscow and London use latest technology to swap clips from each country's news bulletins and to review the week's events

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