

March 26, 1990

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

Agricultural Intervention Board executive agency status announced

Princess Royal attends the FEI Bureau Meeting and General Assembly, Berne, Switzerland

EC: Agriculture Council, Brussels (to 27 March)

EC: Research Council, Brussels

North Atlantic Assembly Committee on Alliance Strategy and Arms Control visits UK (to 30 March)

French Prime Minister visits UK - and meets Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, Chancellor and Defence Secretary

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STATISTICS

HO: The time taken to process cases in magistrates' courts (October 1989)

HO: The misuse of drugs: Addicts notified to the Home Office: Area tables, UK 1989

MAFF: Food facts (4th Qtr)

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PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Energy; Arts; Civil Service

Business: 10 Minute Rule Bill: Safety in Children's Playgrounds (Mr Robert G Hughes)  
Conclusion of the Budget Debate  
Motions relating to Personal Community Charge (Relief) Regulations. Details will be given in the Official Report

Adjournment Debates: Second report of the Defence Committee, HC41, on supplementary estimate class 1, vote 2: Payment to Harland and Wolff (Mr F Field)

Lords: Starred Questions  
Education (Student Loans) Bill: Report  
British Railways (No 3)(HL): Second Reading

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PRESS DIGESTMain News

Gorbachev's troops take over Kremlin - loyal Communist Party buildings in Vilnius. Talks to be held with Soviet Generals today on independence.

Estonia follows Lithuania in voting to break away from Soviet Communist Party.

Express says our instinctive sympathy as free peoples belongs first with the Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians. It would do no harm if we quietly and gently reminded Gorbachev of this.

Independent editorial looks at the dilemma for Gorbachev, either to be a liberator or another tyrant, over what to do about Lithuania. It concludes that there is real hope Gorbachev realises that the Soviet economy cannot be liberalised without a degree of political liberty, and will act accordingly, doing what he can to drive a hard bargain with the Lithuanians without opening fire. The West should lend moral support while admitting we are almost powerless to affect the outcome.

Telegraph says both Gorbachev and Landsbergis are playing with fire in their brinkmanship.

Outcome of Hungarian General Election a bit of a mystery because computers break down but Communist and Left felt to have done badly.

TASS reports that Armenian nationalists have killed nine people in attacks in Azerbaijan (Independent).

US likely to join EBRD although it is taking a tough line on limiting borrowing by the Soviet Union in order to obtain compromises from Moscow and win Congressional support.

Britain softens attitude on a German treaty, and is expected to argue for a series of individual treaties and agreements rather than a global peace treaty (Independent).

Hard-pressed home-owners and businessmen were offered the prospect of some welcome relief yesterday by John Major when he said he expected interest rates to be materially lower by the beginning of next year (Times).

FT says Chancellor saw encouraging progress towards meeting the conditions for joining ERM.

PRESS DIGEST

In FT interview Geoffrey Howe says the prospect of German unification should not be used as an excuse to delay full British participation in EMS (FT).

Mitterrand has said that next month's Dublin summit must set a timetable to accelerate political and economic union (FT).

FT leader says there is a particular need for Britain to act as a counterpoint to France and Germany with all the developments currently taking place. But we need to break free from the parochial conservatism of our present world outlook.

Nicholas Ridley, in radio interview, promises voters "a quieter time" under Tories in future - most of the important changes have been made.

Some of Heseltine's backers, led by Barney Heyhoe, call for him to replace Kenneth Baker. Today says no plausible rival to you exists.

Times says there are too many questions hovering over Heseltine's head. He has shown himself uncertain and disloyal under pressure.

Meanwhile, Times says senior Ministers rallied to your side yesterday as you face one of the toughest weeks of your 11 years in power.

Mirror features you being "floored" by weekend polls and Malcolm Rifkind who put the boot in "over his poll tax triumph". He claims you "fell in line with his better judgement".

Labour accuses the Govt of planning to reduce the £1billion youth training budget by more than 30% over the next 3 years (Independent).

Kinnock tells Labour Party staff that if they want to fight a seat they will have to resign jobs.

Archbishop Runcie to retire in January 10 months early. Mail presents it as Battle of the Bishops.

Express says whoever succeeds Runcie needs to be a saint to restore confidence in a truly spiritual church.

Three Tory MPs seem to be glad to see the back of him - Harry Greenway, Geoffrey Dickens and Anthony Beaumont-Dark.

PRESS DIGEST

Sun says the Archbishop is doing the best thing he has done in the last 10 years. All it asks of his successor is that he should believe in Christ. In a feature it describes Runcie as "the priest who wouldn't keep out of politics".

Mirror says Runcie rendered a signal service to the C of E by announcing early retirement.

Today says his resignation puts an opportunity into your hands you must find difficult to resist. But you should resist it. Your power to appoint is a hangover from ancient days and in today's multi-faith Britain no church of religion should enjoy the special status of being the State church.

Times p1 lead - "Church faces battle after Runcie goes". His retirement launches the Church of England into a period of intense in-fighting and uncertainty, with its whole future at stake. The battle for the succession is likely to be the most divisive this century and you will find yourself having to arbitrate between factions who regard the possession of the church's leadership by their camp as vital. Leader says the cosiness of the church-state relationship over the appointment of bishops and archbishops belongs to the pre-1980s world of consensus politics. Both you and Dr Runcie have played their part in bringing the contradictions of that era to a head - you by your aversion to any consensus, he by adhering to it and thus making adherence seem almost a party political position.

Runcie's retirement marks the end of a controversial decade - successor must satisfy theology and you (Independent).

Mail leader, beside an article in which Bishop Westwood of Peterborough says "put faith first, forget the politics", says Runcie is more of a compromiser than a crusader. He has failed adequately to personify the authority of the church. He mans well but has seldom inspired.

Telegraph leader says the retirement is the starting signal for the most serious debate on its future that the CofE has engaged in in its 1400 years. The crisis brewing in the Church is a fundamental one. It needs a man with spiritual strength and moral resolution, to lead the C of E to the millenium.

Independent editorial says the unravelling of the Establishment of the C of E proceeds thread by thread, with legal and customary ties binding the Church to the Constitution few and fraying. It suggests the next Archbishop's task is to curb the Synod's practice of over-riding the bishops.

PRESS DIGEST

Guardian says you have behaved impeccably in your record of ecclesiastical appointments but ought the State to be so deeply involved in deciding the Church's leadership? And have we reached a time when the Church ought no longer to be intertwined with the State at all?

Hawke may have won a narrow majority in Australian elections.

Violence erupts in the campaign for this week's general election in Zimbabwe (Independent).

Disagreement between Bonn and London over the pace of German unification is expected to be formally resolved this week when Kohl flies to Britain for a summit with you. He now seems to have accepted that unification is likely to be an extended process (Times).

Bradford University defence analysts' report says defence cuts fail to halt arms race, with increasingly lethal weapons being developed and deployed as personnel in reduced (Independent).

Mail says the profit performance of major industries freed from nationalisation is far outstripping that of those still under State control.

British Aerospace will have to pay £33million of sweeteners given by Govt when it bought Rover.

Strathclyde professor given £40,000 to investigate shoppers' habits and behaviour over next three years.

Survey by academics shows that the spirit of enterprise is increasingly absent among early school leavers (times).

Times - Nicholas Ridley has held up publication of the MMC report on the three-way merger of private water companies into Three Valleys Water because of concern in the Govt and the Office of Water Services over a further shrinkage of the number of independent water suppliers.

Guardian says Whitehall is planning to hide from Parliament and public how many of the 72 successful bidders for National Bus made a killing from property after privatisation.

PRESS DIGEST

National Power has already reached the number of contracts permissible in the Manchester area one week before the market is due to come into operation. This could sharply restrict the choice of supplier for industrial customers in the area (FT).

Area electricity board managers to get up to 100% pay rise under privatisation. Opposition protests. Beaumont-Dark says it is another own goal.

Electricity prices likely to be lower in Scotland because of its better distribution system (FT).

Today leads with poor wage paying firms - leading ones are big retailers.

Experimental overspill air track from London to Newcastle and Aberdeen will this week route up to 20 airliners a day through a NATO exercise and into uncontrolled airspace used by military aircraft. Air Traffic Controllers call for the track to be closed (Independent).

Conservation group says much of the EC's expenditure on agriculture is still geared towards boosting unwanted production and is destroying the countryside (Times).

Today says Babcock Electrical Projects and ANZ Grindlays bank are negotiating a £50million deal to log two million acres in Zaire.

GMB to launch campaign to allow union officials the right to bring work to a halt where they consider there is a risk of serious injury (FT).

"Loony Lefties" (Sun) in Liverpool to make Liverpool this week first authority to refuse to set a community charge.

Independent says last minute efforts by Labour to persuade Liverpool councillors to set a poll tax, avoiding embarrassment for the party, seems unlikely to succeed.

Mirror claims that the Sun's attack on Islington "loony" donations to groups has backfired - more than half the projects were set up with Govt money.

Conservative councillors in inner London will shortly bring the Govt yet more community charge embarrassment by making a public declaration against capping their Labour controlled councils (Times).

PRESS DIGEST

Guardian says an all party group of peers backed by governing bodies of Royal Colleges are tomorrow to try to force Govt to introduce NHS reforms slowly by evaluation.

Royal College of Nursing says thousands of nurses failing to get jobs or being made redundant because of NHS cuts (Independent).

Whitehall considering issuing free fridge thermometers in move to prevent food poisoning.

Asthma is killing twice the number of young men it did 10 years ago.

Thousands of teachers to stage a one day strike over pay next month - April 4.

John MacGregor is preparing to take legal powers to regulate 6th form exams in an attempt to end the confusion created by a growing number of courses on offer (Times).

Split looming between state and independent schols over science teaching, following Govt's rejection of a compromise solution (Independent).

100 arrests at Zenith Cup Final at Wembley yesterday between Chelsea v. Middlesbrough.

Police confiscate all alcohol found on coaches and in vehicles taking fans to this Wembley final; coaches stopped and searched after leaving M1.

Govt is to impose a speed limit of 20 mph in urban areas to save children's lives, Mirror says.

Mail wants adjusting the anomaly which charges those elderly who buy their own sheltered accommodation the full TV licences compared with £5 to those living elsewhere.

Sinn Fein leader Adams reaffirms traditional IRA view that British withdrawal essential for a solution to Northern Ireland, and blames mischief making by the media for speculation about a cease-fire. He repeats his call for Mr Brooke to state Govt's response if IRA campaign were to cease (Independent).

PRESS DIGEST

Benn calls on Granada not to name in Wednesday's programme those it claims were responsible for the Birmingham IRA bombings - and not the Birmingham 6 - would prejudice a fair trial and is an abuse of media power.

The Bar Council accuses the Court of Appeal and the Home Secy of excessive caution in remedying suspected miscarriages of justice (Independent).

Terry Wogan's mother dies in Dublin, 80.

Two Britons arrested in Saudi Arabia, accused of "oil spying".

87 dead in illegal club fire in New York City; one man arrested.

Schools apartheid to end in South Africa - although the final decision is to rest with the majority of parents at each school (FT).

POLITICS

Sun, on "The deadly delusions of Kinnock" says we are now told it does not matter that Labour has no defence policy and is led by a virtual pacifist.

Today says nervous Tories have put you on 6 months probation - until October to restore Govt's fortunes. Leader says weekend newspapers with no real stories to report have fuelled a mood of crisis by publishing opinion polls which vie with each other to discredit the Govt. The Govt and its supporters should be bending all their efforts to help people instead of indulging in a purely imaginary leadership when no plausible rival to you exists.

Independent - Tory jitters over polls and poll tax leading to another difficult week in the Commons for the Govt, with the Tory party meeting in Cheltenham next weekend threatening to see further grassroots unrest over the poll tax. Barney Heyhoe causes a ripple by urging you to bring back Heseltine as Party Chairman to heal Conservative divisions.

Times says that Michael Heseltine's shadowy campaign for the Tory Party leadership will take a step forward this week when he rises on Thursday to open Konigswinter conference.



PRESS DIGEST

Times leader under heading "March Hares" says Michael Heseltine's increasingly overt bid to lead the Conservative Party will dominate this week's political debate. The Tory Party must ask itself whether it prefers to leave you in power until 1992, in the hope that you can make your reforms irreversible before a near certain defeat; or would rather opt for a diluted Thatcherism in Heseltine's hand for the next two years, and the chance of victory thereafter. The choice is not unreasonable, but for the time being it can go only one way. There are simply too many questions hovering over Heseltine's head. He has shown himself uncertain and even disloyal under the pressure of high office.

William Rees-Mogg, writing in the Independent, argues that two great world events have occurred in March: the declaration of independence by Lithuania; and the fall of the Tokyo Stock market. They are likely to lead to respectively increasing tension and contracting credit by the time the next election is fought. In this context, calling for a tough minded approach by Govt, we all know whose likeness would come up on the computer screen.

Sam Brittan says its high time to buck up despite Mid-Staffs (FT).

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DEM: Mr Howard speaks at National Council for Vocational Qualifications dinner, London; later gives Adam Smith Institute dinner, London
- DOE: Mr Patten addresses the Financial Times conference on European Water Industry, Intercontinental Hotel, London
- DTI: Mr Ridley and Lord Trefgarne receive courtesy call from Malaysian Minister of Trade
- FCO: Mr Hurd meets Dr Lothar Späth, Prime Minister of Baden Württemberg; later hosts a Japan-2000 Group lunch, both London
- HO: Mr Waddington speaks at joint Equal Opportunities Commission/Metropolitan Police report on equal opportunities, London
- LPC: Sir Geoffrey Howe and Mr Portillo (DTp) visit Canary Wharf, Docklands, London
- SO: Mr Rifkind visits Phoenix Centre, Linwood and Ferguslie Park, Paisley; later attends reception at Bute Hall, Glasgow University to mark the opening of ITN Scottish Bureau
- WO: Mr Walker tours South Wales with Dr Lothar Späth, Prime Minister of Baden Württemberg (to 27 March)
- DEM: Mr Eggar attends Business in the Cities conference, London
- DEM: Lord Strathclyde launches Moët et Chandon scholarship, London; later attends dinner for launch of Acorn Club, London
- DES: Mr Jackson receives courtesy call from Cyprus Minister of Education Andreas Philipor
- DES: Mr Howarth addresses Institute of Careers Officers, Loughborough on "Managing Work Related Activities in the Curriculum 14-19", later visits Limehurst School, Loughborough
- DH: Mrs Bottomley addresses Royal College of Nursing Congress, Brighton; later visits Brighton AIDS services
- DH: Lady Hooper meets Director General of World Health Organisation, London
- DH: Mr Freeman visits Saint Williams Hospital and Kent County Aural and Ophthalmic Hospital
- DOE: Mr Trippier visits Bradford Groundwork Scheme
- DOE: Mr Spicer visits Stonham Housing Association, Stow-on-the-Wold

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC) (Cont'd)

DOE: Mr Heathcoat-Amory attends CPC president's reception  
DTp: Mr Atkins launches Vehicle Excise Duty campaign, Preston,  
Lancashire  
HO: Lord Ferrers visits British Satellite Broadcasting  
HO: Mr Patten visits North Kensington Task Force  
WO: Mr Roberts visits Acorn Business Centre, Flint

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MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

DEM: Mr Nicholls interviewed by Business Sound

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TV AND RADIO

"Horizon" BBC2 (8.10 pm) Cold Fusion  
"World in Action" ITN Part 2 of 'Can you do without your car?'  
"Panorama" BBC1 (9.30 pm) Concrete vs Countryside  
"The Struggle for Democracy" ITV (11.30 pm) Looks at how Gadhafi's  
'democracy' is working in Libya

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