

April 20, 1990

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

Prime Minister sees Singaporean Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Goh Chok Tong; Dr Viljoen, South African Minister for Constitutional Development; and the Irish Taoiseach, Mr Haughey
EC: Informal meeting of Environment Council, Ireland (to April 22)

PUBLICATIONS

PCA: Annual Report for 1989 - published at noon

NAO: Sale of Herstmonceux Castle

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Business: PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS
Licensing (Low Alcohol Drinks) Bill: (Sir Peter Emery)
Licensing Bill: 2nd Reading: (Mr Edward Leigh)
Coalmining Subsidence (Damage, Arbitration, Prevention and Public Awareness Bill: 2nd Reading: (Mr A Meale)

Adjournment Debates: Closure of hospital facilities on the Isle of Sheppey (Mr R Moate)

Lords: Starred Questions
Social Security Bill: Second Reading
UQ to ask HMG what are their plans for the future of the Arts Council, and in particular whether they intend that it should continue to enjoy independence under its Charter

PRESS DIGESTMain News

Norman Tebbit crushed in Hong Kong vote; rebellion collapses.
Express - "Walk over on Hong Kong".

Tebbit is felt to have gone over the top with a racist speech and to have probably irreparably damaged his leadership chances. Blames Labour for defeat.

In interview with Los Angeles Times he says Asian immigrants fail cricket test - ie they don't support England team.

Today leader says that beneath Tebbit's harmless sounding "cricket test" lies a deep and hateful prejudice. The question for the Tories is whether such a person should survive at the top of their party. Tebbit should remember Enoch Powell ended up in the wilderness.

Express says honour is now satisfied over Hong Kong. The Bill is an honourable attempt to deal with a difficult and delicate problem. Opposition's cheap and shallow opportunism did not deserve to be crowned with success.

You place the onus for securing export licences on firms in Iraqi gun case - Sun headline: Maggie gives Iraq gun firms a rocket. Mail says you have shifted the entire blame to firms.

Independent says Iraq's "supergun" was a £4million ballistics test-bed designed to enable Iraqi scientists to learn the technology of ballistics within a barrel, and to help realise the country's long term ambition to launch a small satellite by rocket. SRC "led to understand" Whitehall had been told by both British companies involved of the so-called "Babylon" project.

Hal Miller writes to you over the "supergun". Telegraph leader says that on the available evidence Govt Depts failed to pool knowledge quickly enough.

Independent editorial says the latest developments in the 'pipes for Iraq' story make the Govt's claims of ignorance look ever less credible, raising the question: Why was the Govt turning a blind eye to an export which could eventually have given Iraq a new form of military capability. Concluding the Govt has been shown to have contravened its own policy on arms exports during the Iran-Iraq war, but for a tip-off Iraq might have got away with the whole inglorious exercise.

PRESS DIGEST

Gorbachev now cuts supplies of gas to Lithuania which remains defiant. He also issues a warning to Estonia if it goes the same way. He attempts to buy off a similar declaration of independence by Latvia.

Times leader says that not only does the attempt to isolate Lithuania from the rest of the Soviet economy appear to have been carried out by bunglers; the design itself - for which President Gorbachev cannot escape responsibility - must surely prove counter-productive, as is the norm with economic sanctions.

President Bush councils caution over Baltic boycott. Meanwhile British Govt appears embarrassed and uncertain how to react over Lithuania (times).

Lithuania delegation - an embarrassment to Norwegian govt - kept at arms length (FT).

Independent concludes that EC foreign ministers should devise a graduated series of penalties co-ordinated with the Americans, to reasonably include the prospect of restrictions on trade credits and joint ventures, but with the object of not having to impose penalties. Such penalties should be seen as bargaining counters in a diplomatic game which needs to be played long and cool.

You and President Bush agreed in Bermuda to prevent USSR from raising question of East Germany's membership of NATO at 2 + 4 meeting next month (Independent).

US and Britain have agreed to take a far tougher line than expected with the Soviet Union over the question of whether a reunified Germany should belong to NATO (times).

France and Germany call for political and economic union in Europe by 1993. Today leader says this is a crucial challenge to you. You reflect the doubts of most British people but the danger is you are trying to steer Britain through the Nineties on an Eighties' timetable. Europe is where our future lies.

Mail says you are set for a new Euro showdown.

Times says the Mitterrand/Kohl joint statement is intended to signal that France and West Germany are back working together as the powerhouses of the Community.

PRESS DIGEST

Mail leader says there is surely more than meets the eye in the Mitterrand/Kohl call. It is doubtless part of an attempt to rejig the Franco/German entente. There may also be a wish to create a diversion from German unification over which Kohl feels to some extent in the dock. It looks almost designed to provoke you. But you should not take the bait. The French and Germans are in tune with the times. You must spell out an alternative to federalist schemes.

FT- You make it plain you do not want to see next week's Dublin meeting become preoccupied with proposals for political union - far better to concentrate on practical issues such as German unification than on more esoteric things (FT).

FT leader on Mitterrand/Kohl initiative says it could not have come at a more significant moment. By proposing a political and security dimension for the EC the aim of both leaders is to make sure West Germany will not abandon its Western European partners in favour of eastern ventures. Timetable may well be over-ambitious and is open for discussion. What is important is that Britain should be present from the very beginning - the UK's absence from the discussion table would do little or nothing to halt development. Its participation would ensure a British stance of the share of a European political union.

FT leader claims that Mitterrand not yourself deserves the monetarist palm for being prepared to accept high unemployment in order to rid the country of the scourge of inflation. It speculates the main policy legacy of the 1980s may be "Mitterrandism" rather than "Thatcherism" or "Reaganism".

East German Prime Minister says negotiations on German monetary, economic and social unification should be concluded within next 10 weeks, but insists on parity for the exchange rate between the two currencies (Independent).

Coverage of the "seige scum" of Strangeways with criminal records of the 7 still holding out.

A review of the Irish Republic's extradition laws to be carried out after UK pressure during Anglo/Irish talks yesterday (Independent).

Labour will let unions stage lightning strikes without a ballot, according to Tony Blair (Sun).

PRESS DIGEST

Sun leader on John Smith's visit to USA, says Uncle Sam should not be fooled by his blarney. Labour is not a changed beast when it comes to spending and taxation.

Star leads with Andrew Hunter MP's allegations that two of Mandela's men met the IRA in County Down.

Star says many well-meaning, decent people have been drawn to the Mandela bandwagon. They are misguided. For Mandela and his ANC are terrorists, hell bent on violence. If Kinnock wants to be Prime Minister he should choose his bedfellows more carefully.

Victims say that five ANC torturers are still in power, holding high ranking posts within the ANC leadership (Times).

George Gale, in Mail, says it was a dangerously unstable (Kinnock) man who clenched his fist and punched the air at the Mandela concert. He knows an incompetent and dangerous buffoon when he sees one. A man in search of a pulpit but not a man fit to govern a nation.

de Klerk pledges to bring down pillars of apartheid paving the way for a peaceful transition (Independent).

Graham Mather, director, Institute of Economic Affairs, says personal job contracts are increasingly popular in public as well as private industry.

Chief Fire Officers want to take over emergency ambulance service, much to the distress of Roger Poole, NUPE, who says they are empire building. D/Health reject the proposals for fire service to take over.

NAS/UWT teachers' strikes over jobs could start next week (Times).

Post Office investors lose £25million contract with Freemans, mail order firm, because they refuse to sign a no-strike deal.

More than 600 miners in Blaenant lose the battle to save their pit which cannot meet production targets (Times).

Germans bring the so-called trouble free Cologne car plant to a standstill over pay.

British arm of Peugeot is booming - record pre-tax profit of £135million last year.

PRESS DIGEST

Tory and Labour MPs react with anger and dismay to Select Committee Report saying MOD failed to safeguard reliability of weapons, and cost of that unreliability costing £1 billion a year (Independent).

Eric Forth announces much tougher rules for estate agents with power to ban them. Today says that while its campaign has paid off the new regime does not go far enough because it doesn't deal with gazumping.

Express welcomes the new powers and wants the Govt to monitor their operation and toughen them if necessary.

Community Charge

21 Labour councils taking Govt to court for charge capping them.

Full page Conservative Party adverts explaining charge.

Hackney Council staff threaten to strike if council does not lift the suspension of Andy Murphy a member of the Class War group involved in the Trafalgar Square community charge riots (Times).

Star says Labour-controlled Newcastle upon Tyne Council gives £1,000 to lesbian group but refuses to contribute to a charity run by Simon Weston, Falklands hero, in aid of inner city children.

Sun says painting manager for Hackney Council, sent home after an inquiry by the finance dept, has been paid £80,000 over 4 years, including £2,700 car allowance, for doing nothing. Tories attack Council's "incredible inefficiency".

Times leader is critical of Lady Porter's suggestion that there should be a Minister for London saying that Ministers appointed for cosmetic purposes tend to intervene cosmetically. They meddle rather than help. It recognises that the abolition of the GLC has left certain problems in the air, saying London is poorer for the lack of a strategic regional authority. But the answer is to consider what form a (modest) authority might take, not to run crying to the nursemaids of Whitehall and Westminster.

Writer in Mail urges drug tests in schools as the effective way of fighting them.

PRESS DIGEST

World Health Organisation say young homosexuals may be abandoning safe sexual practices. Such a development, it confirmed, would be a blow to AIDS health campaigns (Independent).

Allegations that DSS provided money for a homeless mother with three children to buy a tent and utensils - some £260 - in St Albans.

Expert report says the recently introduced national breast cancer screening programme is endangering the lives of many of the women it is meant to protect (Times).

D/Health initiative to reduce hours worked by junior doctors ineffective, says study by Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh; doctors are now working even longer hours (Independent).

EUFA president says he wants Liverpool back in European football next season. But retiring president says it would be foolish for English clubs to celebrate prematurely; it would be suicide to allow them to take part without Govt guarantees.

Thousands of tonnes of contaminated waste from Austria and Switzerland being dumped in a quarry in South Wales (Independent).

World Bank and European Investment Bank have proposed big increases in loans for projects to improve the environment in the Mediterranean region (FT).

Nations divided on global warming cure - 34 countries will seek to agree targets for reducing greenhouse gases which cause global warming at a conference on Action for a Common Future in Bergen next month (FT).

Sun takes Jeremy Isaacs ("as boring as 8 hours of Wagner") to task for once more rattling the begging bowl for taxpayers' subsidies for the Royal Opera House. He should charge economic prices for seats.

Joe Haines, in Mirror, says that while the Mirror supports the Press Council its chairman, Louis Blom-Cooper, is a blithering ass and likely to do more harm than good to press freedom.

Release of American hostage in Beirut held up by pro-Iranian Group because US Administration refused to send an envoy to Syria.

3 Soviet diplomats at UN in Geneva unmasked as spies and not permitted to re-enter Switzerland. Said to have been collecting scientific and technical information (FT).

PRESS DIGEST

Basque separatists thought to be responsible for parcel bomb which blew off a woman's hand at office of the Seville Expo-92 World Fair yesterday (FT).

Indian troops massed on Pakistan border adds to atmosphere of tension over disputed Kashmir territory (Independent).

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- HMT: Mr Major addresses Huntingdon Enterprise Agency, London
- SO: Mr Rifkind opens Aberdeen Business Centre, Aberdeen University
- DEM: Lord Strathclyde visits East Anglia to meet Tourist Board members
- DH: Lady Hooper addresses the British Society for General Dental Surgery Spring Scientific meeting; later addresses the Business and Professional Women's annual conference
- DOE: Mr Heathcoat-Amory visits the Countryside Commission's headquarters in Cheltenham
- MAFF: Baroness Trumpington visits Slough and Worplesdon Laboratories
- MAFF: Mr Maclean attends Association of Public Analysts conference, Glasgow
- WO: Mr Roberts opens Rank Motorway Service Area, Junction 33, M4 Motorway
- WO: Mr Grist attends British Aggregates Construction Materials Industries lunch, Cardiff

MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- DOE: Mr Trippier attends informal Environment Council, Ireland
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