

October 25, 1990

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

- Blitz 50th anniversary service, St Paul's
 - NFU lobby Parliament on deepening recession in agriculture
 - Anglo-Irish Inter-Governmental Conference
 - CBI conference on the environment (Chris Patten)
 - Nat Assn of Probation Officers' annual conference
 - Met Office press conference on ozone statistics
 - NAO report on DES accounts
 - Plaid Cymru annual conference (to Sat)
 - Commons: Questions: Treasury; Prime Minister
Debate: Broadcasting Bill, Lords Amendments
 - Lords: Debate: Law Reform (Scotland) Bill, Commons
Amendments
 - Kenneth Clarke presents Nursing Times nursing awards
 - Michael Howard lunches with Retail Consortium; meets NFU; TUC
 - John Gummer attends Paris Food Exhibition
 - John MacGregor on BBC TV's "Cleanslate"
 - BBC Radio 4 Analysis - costs and benefits of Anglo-US special
relationship
 - BBC TV Question Time with Kenneth Clarke, John Smith, Judge
Pickles
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PRESS DIGESTIRA

The press today dominated by outrage over the IRA's "human bombs" attacks in Londonderry and Newry. Six soldiers and one civilian killed.

IRA seen to have sunk to new depths of depravity.

Peter Brooke says it is hard to imagine anything more evil than this.

Star says the attacks were in revenge for the killing of Desmond Grew, IRA gunman, by security forces, a fortnight ago.

Mirror's front page - "Cowardly bastards".

Telegraph reports Peter Brooke believes there is enough common ground between parties in Northern Ireland to start inter-party and inter-governmental negotiations but distrust and lack of confidence are holding up progress.

COMMENT

Star under heading "The enemy of us all" asks how much longer must we suffer IRA atrocities? But we will never give in no matter what the cost. Ireland must act itself to eradicate the cancer which is destroying it.

Sun - Yesterday IRA sank to new depths of wickedness and depravity. The only good that can come from this appalling episode is if it finally convinces misguided individuals that the IRA is a uniquely evil thing that has to be fought.

Today leader headed "Partners in pure evil" says the IRA's latest savagery is an unspeakable horror worthy of Saddam Hussain. But this is probably a compliment to IRA thugs. They score themselves by the size of their body count, not by the success of their political campaign. Having lost all chance of winning by persuasion they know they have only the bomb and the bullet.

Express - "A new depth of depravity" - clearly the terrorists intended their unwilling accomplices to die along with their soldiers. Perhaps we should offer huge rewards for information to break this cycle of death and destruction.

PRESS DIGEST

Mail - So what's new about the depravity of the IRA? Human bombs prove to what icy depths of disregard for human life they have been driven in order to advance their grisly claim that they are still in business.

GULF

David Owen, in Mail, says the stench of appeasement can be sniffed in the air because of hints coming from Saudis. He says he would not have gone to Iraq to negotiate release of hostages because Hussain is manipulating us.

Iraq seeks to isolate Britain and USA from the other Western allies by suggesting that hostages from countries with no hostile intent against Baghdad could be freed Times.

The US is set to send up to another 50,000 troops to Saudi Arabia, enabling it to mount a land assault on Kuwait by the first week in December Times.

Oxford student, 19, killed in car crash on way to join Britons being flown out with Ted Heath; his 18 year old brother seriously injured.

Foreign Secy denounces Saddam Hussain's "grisly and repulsive" tactics in deciding which old and sick British hostages to release.

In a rare agreement, leaders of Germany's four main political parties decide that it is not immediately appropriate to ask Willy Brandt to follow Ted Heath to Iraq Times.

Mirror says Heath was praised on both sides of Commons for his mercy mission. Leader: nothing should diminish the nation's admiration for Edward Heath. But release of hostages does not reduce one jot Hussain's threat to Middle East and world peace. You should be strongly supported in your determination to bring him to book by military means.

Express thinks it a pity Heath returned from his mission calling yet again for negotiations with Iraq. Such calls simply help Saddam Hussain.

Mail Parliamentary sketchwriter wants Govt to spell out what happens if Saddam Hussain suddenly leaves Kuwait and Kuwaiti Govt is restored. Would Hussain retain his weaponry and remain able to threaten Kuwait?

PRESS DIGEST

Telegraph says Heath's trip was undesirable because it contributes to the impression that Western leaders are not indisposed to parley with Saddam Hussain - an impression frankly of Western humanitarian weakness.

Peter Jenkins, in the Independent, says the alliance against Saddam has no clear war aim. Washington's intentions are as difficult to read as Baghdad's. He guesses that compromise and containment are now more likely outcomes than war.

Iraqi information minister, Latif Nassif, has conceded that Baghdad are using Western hostages to drive a wedge through the US led alliance against Iraq in attempt to erode support for military strike against Iraq FT.

Sainsbury follows Tesco in cutting price of unleaded petrol by 13.7p to 185p.

EC

Mail reports Delors as a peacemaker as you head for EC summit clash. He suggests each country could go at its own speed towards a single currency while committing itself to eventual union. He denies this is a 2-speed Europe.

Times leader says the EC's "emergency summit" this weekend deserves to be a shambles. This is a summit without a cause, convened mainly because the French and Irish, when incumbents of the EC's ridiculous six-month rotating presidency, also held two summits rather than one.

British civil servants rapidly being excluded from any voice in the running of the EC in spite of a vigorous govt recruiting campaign Times.

Timothy Garton Ash, in Independent, says that even by the EC's past standards the current gulf between reality and rhetoric is wide. The proposals for "political union" canvassed in European capitals are thin, fragmentary, diffuse and contradictory. Unless clear priorities are set at the outset, the most probable outcome is a piecemeal patchwork, all wrapped up in grandiose language - a mouse dressed as a mountain.

Guardian - Delors warns EC leaders to avoid fight with Thatcher.

You protest to Delors in strongly worded letter that key financial issues are being discussed in Brussels without proper preparation FT.

PRESS DIGEST

Jacques Santer says the EC are morally obliged to aid Soviet Union FT.

Attali expects EBRD to run at a loss for first 2 years FT.

ECONOMY

Rover offers 11% from November 1 and 7.5% in 12 months' time.

Gas workers' 20% claim fuels wage explosion fear times.

CBI says more than one million jobs could be lost unless pay rises are held down.

Cecil Parkinson says myopic post-war new town planning is one of the root causes of congestion on roads and railways today times.

NUM expected to reject industrial action over pay.

INDUSTRY

Polly Peck directors ask for company to be taken over by administrators.

Sun writer calls on you to save the corner shop.

British Telecom aims for lower telephone calls but higher rentals.

Nearly half newly qualified solicitors in England and Wales are women.

About 1,500 farmers expected to gather at Central Hall today to demand action to halt the deepening recession in agriculture.

Telegraph leader says there is a massive crisis in agriculture. Farmers, most of them loyal Conservatives, seem deprived of clear guidance about their future. It is in the countryside's best interests that agricultural subsidies should be shifted away from bulk crop and animal support to income supplements for small farmers.

Young professional women increasingly seeking help for drink problems caused by work pressures Independent.

PRESS DIGEST

Independent editorial says the Govt has got itself into a foolish muddle over nuclear energy. The state-owned nuclear power industry will have to compete against private sector conventional power while locked into expensive contracts for reprocessing which have become anachronistic. The Sellafield reprocessing plant THORP should be mothballed and more storage facilities should be built for spent fuel.

ENVIRONMENT

Martin Parry, of Birmingham University, launching new book says that global warming would reduce food production, increase prices and introduce new uncertainties for food supplies Times.

Times leader asks whether conventional wisdom has got global warming all wrong. The scientists have performed their task by telling the world what the world is like, how it is changing, how it might change if certain conditions obtain. The economists are rightly identifying the costs involved in adjusting this process. The final decision rests, thank goodness, not with either discipline, but with an informed electorate.

Germany becomes first country to pass a law limiting scientists' ability to use genetic engineering and embryo research Independent.

POLITICS

Five Shadow Cabinet rebels who mutinied against Kinnock's defence policy demoted in elections and one removed - Joan Lestor.

Kinnock expected to revamp Shadow Cabinet today.

Could no longer the golden boy - Mail.

Times leader says that Kinnock's particular handicap, sheer lack of track record in the ruling business, will always set him at disadvantage to you. But he must at least be credited with turning some handicaps to gain. No Tory can be in any doubt that he is becoming a formidable opponent.

Sun features one law for rich ... Nigel Lawson, it says, leaves us broke but buys third home for £500,000.

PRESS DIGEST

Today says that by staying as Chancellor until last year responsibility for our economic troubles rests squarely with him. If he couldn't get his way on the ERM in 1985 he should have resigned. He will go down in history as the man who did not have the courage of his convictions.

Times profiles David Mellor saying that the new Arts Minister is under pressure both to milk the Treasury and relinquish central control.

HEALTH

Audit Commission says £31million a year could be saved by releasing patients who have minor operations the same day. Waiting lists could be cut by one-third.

Today leader says defenders of the status quo in the NHS heap all the blame for its shortcomings on Govt stinginess yet the Audit Commission report reveals staggering differences in local efficiency.

AIDS experts say cases in heterosexuals will double every 12 months for next two or three years Independent.

LOCAL GOVT

Telegraph says local councils will be required to employ wardens to round up stray dogs and charge owners up to £5 a night for kennelling them - an attempt to avert a revolt over Govt's rejection of registration.

CHILD BENEFIT

Guardian claims Institute of Fiscal Studies assessment of social security package shows it discriminates against one parent and larger families.

Star - Quids in! mums get a £1 rise.

Sun - We'll dole out £5billion for mums and old.

Mirror - Sick must pay for kids' rise.

Today - a £1,000 boost for working mum-to-be - it features rise in maternity benefits. Feature writer says £8 is too little for the poor and no use to the well off.

PRESS DIGEST

Express - Thatcher pumps in £5 billion to aid families. Leader says the Govt's decision to unfreeze child benefit has quite obviously been helped along by post-Eastbourne panic. But the whole episode reveals the Govt's lack of coherent thinking on the issue of the family. The Govt must go into the next election with a clear, attractive and affordable strategy for family support - not one cobbled together at the last minute in Downing Street.

Mail - Family fortunes rise as Newton dishes out £5 billion. Leader says that whether or not it is due to the mounting heat of the election battle to come, the thaw in this Govt's cold war against child benefit is welcome.

Telegraph - Benefit for eldest child to go up by £1 a week.

Times - Govt seeks to strengthen its family credentials by announcing a £5 billion boost in welfare payments. Labour insists the Govt has broken its manifesto pledge in failing to uprate child benefit across the board. The political finesse of Tony Newton wins plaudits from Tory backbenchers.

Guardian £1 for elder children, but hundreds of thousands are worse off. Experts question value of help for poorest families.

Guardian describes it as a fig leaf - a pound misspent.

FOREIGN

Benazir Bhutto defeated in Pakistan general election.

de Klerk promises one man one vote by 1994.

Russians at last give Eric Hammond, EETPU, a visa.

Israeli war planes bomb Lebanese guerrilla base.

Elizabeth Dole is first member of Bush cabinet to quit. She is to become president of the American Red Cross.

Republican election candidates avoid public appearances with Bush as budget crisis hits his popularity.