

October 31, 1990

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

ms

- Reception at Buckingham Palace for VC and GC holders
 - National Economic Development Council (Michael Howard chairs)
 - Prime Minister at Brit. Assn for Advancement of Science
commitment statement
 - Southwark Cathedral debate - politicians & clergymen on
economic and social policies
 - First annual review, Next Steps
 - First annual report of Veterinary Medicines Directorate
 - Consultation doc. on toxic substances in groundwater
 - Assn of Independent Museums' report
 - Rural Development Commission annual report
 - Customs & Excise information to traders on single market
 - NAO reports on Emp; Tp; Wales; NI; Treasury etc
 - NAO report on British Library
 - British Olympic Assn AGM
 - Road accident stats, 1989
 - Transport statistics, London
 - Travel & tourism (Aug)
 - Commons Statement on RSG etc
 - Commons: Questions: DTI
Debate: Adjournment on noise abatement
Select Cttee: Environment: Friends of the Earth
 - Lords: Debate: ? Environment Protection Bill
 - John MacGregor opens Bradford CTC
 - David Hunt launches Community Devel. Foundation, Llandarcy
 - John MacGregor on BBC, Leeds; visits Bradford school
 - Kenneth Clarke opens NHS Estate Management/Quality Care conf
 - Norman Lamont addresses Non-Resident Indians, UK
 - John Gummer at Dairy Trade Federation lunch
 - Channel 4 looks at alleged racial discrimination within police
-

PRESS DIGESTMain News

Saddam Hussain puts his troops on the alert after James Baker says he must realise there is a limit to international patience.

Congress urges Bush to delay military action in Gulf FT.

You get a good press for your defiant act in the Commons yesterday, though some, notably Mail, wonder whether your opposition to a single currency and single central bank is in British interests.

Conclusion: You are prepared to make Europe an election issue.

Telegraph Gallup Poll finds you command a narrow majority for retaining national currency; one third ready to give up pound.

EC officials balk at plan to pay them in ECU - "The most insane proposal ever; currency does not even exist".

Charles Moore, in Telegraph on your Premiership, says record shows that when you have defied conventional opinion, you have been rewarded.

Italy's Foreign Minister says German scepticism was your last key European ally in your fight to delay the advent of a single European currency, but that ally has now fallen away. You must either fall into line or pull out of the EC Times.

Sun says Sir Geoffrey Howe has lost support of his Cabinet colleagues over his programme on Europe. Express says Ministers are speculating openly that Sir Geoffrey may quit politics at next General Election.

Mail says Sir Geoffrey may have to go for the sake of unity. Some colleagues believe his position has become untenable.

CBI comes up with gloomiest outlook for 10 years; 39% have laid off workers since July and 44% say they will cut jobs in next 4 months. Mail says industry is calling for another interest rate cut.

FT says CBI survey signals full scale recession. With no immediate prospect of improvement up to 30,000 jobs could be lost during next 3 months.

PRESS DIGEST

Mirror calls on Chancellor to present economic policies for national survival. Better to be a former Chancellor who tried to help the country than one who clung on to office and totally failed.

Britain and France linked with breakthrough in Channel Tunnel. Britain no longer an island - Today; Telegraph fixes time: 7.30 pm, October 30.

Sir Peter Imbert improving. Mirror suggests he won't work again.

EC

Star p2 - Maggie vows no surrender on sterling.

Sun p2 - No surrender. Maggie: I'll never give in to Europe and scrap the pound. A blistering Commons performance.

Mirror p2 - Thatcher drops a major clanger - you say hard ECU could lead to a single Euro currency and then you cast doubt on whether it will.

Today p2 - People's poll to decide fate of pound. Sketchwriter says "At last a sterling performance, Mrs T" - when you rose at 3.15pm we had written her off; by the time you finally sat down we had witnessed the greatest resurrection for years.

Express p1 lead - No! No! No! to Europe. Premier wins MPs' backing on EC stand as Kinnock flops. Leader headed "Mrs T is the real visionary over Europe" says you had nothing to apologise for. The glib assertion you are alone in harbouring doubts about European economic and political union is a canard. Those doubts are shared by many in your party, the Opposition, the country and the EC itself. You are the real visionary. You must stick to your guns. Your isolation is more apparent than real.

Mail p1 lead - Maggie plays Britannia. Dangerous election game of Britain versus Europe. You believe you can grab support across party lines. Leader says you hit hypocrites hard yesterday. And you are right on CAP/GATT. But it believes you are wrong in your resistance to a single currency and central bank. The City of London will be both sidelined and subservient. You are being true to yourself but are you being true to the best interests of Britain?

Michael Heseltine, in Mail, says that he can think of no strategy less likely to secure Tory Govt's re-election than an election conducted on issue of who rules Britain - Westminster or Brussels?

PRESS DIGEST

Telegraph p1 lead - Thatcher ready to stand and fight on Europe. "EC trying to extinguish democracy". You step up your fight against a Federal Europe by the back door. You appear to gain a new lease of life.

Telegraph sketchwriter on a strangely enfeebled Leader of the Opposition while you had Europhiles running to all four corners of the field.

Guardian back page - PM takes up cudgels for Europe fight. Sketchwriter says you almost passed off your Dunkirk (in Rome) as Waterloo.

Times p1 - Thatcher rules out further surrender to Europe. MPs regard as significant your emphasis on Britain's refusal to have a single European currency imposed, and note that you fall publicly into line with your Chancellor and Foreign Secy by conceding that Britain's own hard ECU plan could eventually lead from a common currency to a single currency by agreement. Leader says your view of French policy towards Europe as a cocktail of opportunism was richly confirmed by the Rome Summit. It describes Mitterrand's support for Kohl over farm policy as cowardice, concluding that the challenge for British policy in Europe is not to pander to this isolationism, but to work with the grain of French fears for their national identity.

Independent p1 - You draw a line against EC on sovereignty, a single currency, backdoor federalism and the end of democracy. But beneath the hard surface of your Commons onslaught there was a soft-centre expectation of agreement; you believe the IGC will put a brake on the single currency, paving the way for British agreement.

Peter Jenkins, in the Independent, says you will seek agreement with our European partners on a common way forward, but you will never yourself be a party to a further subjugation of national sovereignty. Apres moi, perhaps, but Margaret Thatcher, never! You might be preparing to reach a conditional accommodation with the 11, then throw the question to the country. Let them decide: Maggie Thatcher or Jacques Delors? Pound sterling or ecu? The more you let go yesterday, the more you warmed to the idea. First make diplomatic peace, then declare political war.

PRESS DIGEST

FT pl lead - Thatcher makes sterling an issue of sovereignty. In a passionate parliamentary performance which included attacks on Germany, France and the Commission you repeatedly pledged to defend the pound. Your stance left many MPs speculating you will fight the next election on an uncompromising platform of defending Britain's sovereignty FT.

Guardian leader describes your performance as adrenalin-soaked. but you haven't got a plan or vision.

Matthew Paris, in Times: "A bravura performance and one of Mrs Thatcher's finest". You won the argument by self-assurance.

Michael Howard says EC's proposed employment legislation could cost British employers an extra £3billion and might mean the loss of thousands of jobs Times.

German opinion poll shows falling support for Social Democrats. Fears grow that a big vote for Kohl on December 2 could endanger democratic equilibrium Independent.

Conor Cruise O'Brien in the Times looks at the problems facing Mr Haughey saying that it appears that the fall of the Govt can now be averted only by Mr Lenihan's prompt resignation today.

ECONOMY

Sun leader on CBI review says we all know times are tough but does it do any good to keep on saying so. The CBI is great at producing problems. It will be a day of wine and roses when it starts to offer some answers.

Andrew Alexander, in Mail, says the sad thing is that Treasury policy has landed us in the ERM at too high a rate. ERM should be seen as Exchange Rate Madness.

Independent editorial sets out the perils of the TUC wages policy to be presented to NEDC. The concept of a national economic assessment is disturbing, because it would encourage the setting of a going rate. Union bosses could offer wage restraint - but they would be unable to deliver it. But synchronised wage bargaining, to reduce laeap-frogging, should be looked at sympathetically.

FT leader, on managing the recession, says that it will be the clearest test yet of how far the quality of British management has improved in the 1980s.

PRESS DIGEST

Independent concern in the City that the election timetable will be in disarray if recession turns out to be harsh. Economist Roger Battle says if you were the Chancellor, knowing that you have to go to the country on your economic record, this would scare the life out of you.

POLITICS

Times says the right-wing of the Conservative Party is plotting to strengthen its grip over the executive of the 1922 Cttee.

GULF

Iraqis make propaganda film of Ted Heath's mission to Baghdad.

Sun says at the time of his trip Heath assured everyone it could not conceivably help Hussain but unfortunately no-one seems to have told the Iraqi dictator.

Times says that almost three months after the invasion of Kuwait, Saddam Hussain's strategy of retaining the emirate shows little sign of cracking.

Richard Harris, Bishop of Oxford, says in Independent that war in the Gulf could be morally justified. Although the West has backed Saddam in the past, that should not prevent a military move if necessary. To take historic sinfulness as a reason for refusing to use military force would be to paralyse all human action and hand the world over to total anarchy. But the present course of sanctions is right. We should be resolute on the objective while exploring every possibility of achieving this short of war.

Saudi envoy makes secret trip to Tehran to speed up renewal of ties with the Iranians Independent.

Syrian anger rising against US mid-East policy. While they want Saddam out of Kuwait they will not fight the Iraqis. Syrians angry over US military aid to Israel FT.

US to extradite Palestinian to Israel to face murder charges, despite revenge threats from Abu Nidal Independent.

Malaysian-made "Gulf War" board game could be in half-a-million homes by Christmas Independent.

PRESS DIGESTINDUSTRY

Serious Fraud Office detectives search London HQ of Polly Peck. Asil Nadir says he is innocent and attacks raid.

Household Survey shows big increases in the ownership of video recorders, microwave ovens and home computers Times.

Thames Water pre-tax profits in first half of 1990-91 up 39% to £113million FT.

MEDIA

Surprise, surprise: Christmas TV under threat - this time because Thames TV has announced 300 redundancies.

TRANSPORT

MMC to conduct a survey of London Underground to see if quality of service could be improved.

London Underground finance chief has quit 2 weeks after it emerged a £40million budget shortfall has plunged Underground into crisis FT.

HOUSING

Proportion of home owners reaches peak of 66% in spite of interest rates.

EDUCATION

Every child in England and Wales to be taught a second language by 1997.

But Times says a serious shortage of teachers could threaten introduction of compulsory modern foreign language lessons.

Martin Jacques in the Times says it is hardly surprising that the Conservatives are lagging well behind Labour in the opinion polls over education. The social agenda has always been the Achilles heel of Thatcherism. The latest poll findings, however, indicate something more worrying for the Govt: people are now more concerned about education than any other issue. This suggests that the Conservatives' capacity to command the agenda of the future is on the wane.

PRESS DIGESTLAW & ORDER

Industrial tribunal finds an Asian policeman was prevented from becoming a detective in Notts because of his race. Sun hopes Chief Constable will forgive and forget and keep him on. Today calls for an urgent Govt inquiry into the case.

Foreign airlines who fly illegal immigrants to Britain owe £10.6million in unpaid fines.

Ministers urgently considering moves aimed at stemming a sudden sharp rise in the number of people seeking political asylum after it jumps by 5,000 in a year.

Attempt to compel DPP to bring manslaughter charges over Marchioness tragedy has failed in High Court FT.

COMMUNITY CHARGE

Right-wing Freedom Assn pays one of Dave Nellist's unpaid community charge bills.

Express says community charge increase will be limited to less than £21 on average.

DOGS

Sun says Lords should lay off now. Commons is elected voice of the people.

Today, while disappointed at Commons vote, doesn't want Lords to override Commons.

Times says that if Lord Stanley senses support during the debate in the Lords today on dog registration he intends to provoke a rare conflict between the Lords and Commons and ask peers to vote again for a register.

Telegraph says that in no other country in the world would a Parliament, confronted by a major crisis in Middle East and digesting a serious quarrel with EC, choose to occupy itself by debating dogs. Govt right to say registration would be unworkable.

INTERNATIONAL

At least 6 deaths as Hindus storm mosque in India.

PRESS DIGEST

Times leader discusses the problems facing India and urges that an election should be avoided if possible. This is not the time for India to undergo that divisive agony. The country cannot afford the astonishing £650million that the polls would cost so soon after the last hustings.

Memorial to those killed by KGB unveiled near Lubyanka.

Population of China rises to 1.133 billion.

You are expected to meet Chinese leader when he visits Britain next month Times.

Embassy gives evacuation alert to Britons in Sudan amid deteriorating economic conditions and growing international concern Times.

Phillippines unable to meet IMF targets FT.

Moscow agreement reached to supply Czechoslovakia with adequate oil supplies for 1991. Slight shortfall to be made up with imports from Iran and Venezuela FT.

Mrs Brundtland to form her third govt since 1981 FT

Colombian drug cartel threatened to execute 7 kidnapped journalists if govt launches a new offensive against them FT.