

November 23, 1990

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

- Queen visits Germany
 - Progress report on equal opportunities for women in Civil Service
 - EC Civil Protection Council, Brussels
 - EC informal Industry/Energy Council, Turin
 - Building societies figures (Oct)
 - Commons: Debate: GATT round
 - Home Secy visits Styal prison; Greater Manchester probation service
 - Lord President: Children in Need Appeal on BBC
 - Chris Patten speaks in Stratford on Avon
 - Kenneth Clarke opens radio telescope, Cambridge
 - Tony Newton addresses Nat Council for One Parent Families AGM
 - John Gummer addresses Rural Conference, RSA
 - Michael Howard visits Folkestone volunteer bureau
 - Cecil Parkinson visits Luton Airport
 - Norman Lamont in Cambridge Union debate
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PRESS DIGESTRESIGNATION TREATMENT

The main news line following your resignation is the battle, as The Guardian puts it, to stop the usurper Heseltine.

Massive tributes to you in the British press - and from statesmen abroad.

Huge supplements on your career.

The honouring of one whose like, so many say, we shall not see again.

Meanwhile, many newspapers say Tory MPs must be wondering what have they done?

Star - True Brit. The world must be wondering what happened to the loyalty of trust for which Great Britain's justly famous. Britain's greatest Prime Minister has been forced out by pygmy politicians who put their own job security before the good of their country. Margaret Thatcher was cruelly betrayed by weak men. The watching world must be wondering whether Britain has gone stark raving mad. Whoever wins leadership, it is unlikely they can ever win the general election because of the backlash in the country.

In the debate you steamrollered Kinnock; game, set and match.

Sun Mrs T-ears. She sobs in front of her Ministers. Commentator says: So the backstabbers have won. What a gutless rabble, spineless saps. Shot themselves in the foot. Handed Kinnock victory at next election.

Cartoonist puts you on a pedestal with Nelson, Wellington, Churchill and Monty.

Leader: When the history of the 1980s is written, the name Margaret Thatcher will appear on every page. Honesty, principle, vision, stubborn courage, sheer guts. We grieve especially at the manner of her going - the cruellest thing. You deserve to be remembered with gratitude, respect and affection in the hearts of the nation.

David Owen writes: A sad day. She has been a towering figure at home and abroad. A Prime Minister among the giants of this century.

PRESS DIGEST

In the debate you rout Kinnock - going out as you came in fighting like a tigress against socialism and handbagging Kinnock.

Mirror - It all ends in tears.

Joe Haines: You were brought down because your Cabinet colleagues panicked and plotted. They, not she, lost their nerve. Leader says what Britain needs now is not Heseltine, Hurd or Major but a general election.

In the debate a command performance. The warrior Queen in blue.

Today - The End. But she goes out fighting and with incredible dignity. Tories have dramatically increased their chances of winning general election.

Leader headed "The bravest act of all" says that in your long and courageous political career your decision to quit yesterday may rank as the bravest act of all. You put the interests of your party and country first. The end of an era. You have restored our nation. We will not soon see her like again.

Express - The big question after brilliant Commons performance: What Have They Done? Nation's sense of outrage and shame.

Leader: History will be kinder than her own party. The rest of the world cannot believe what has happened. The mystery is all the greater for those privileged to watch her remarkable speech. By your deeds you created a safer world. Britain is a sounder and more decent place to live in. A greater nation in the eyes of the world. We will never see her like again.

In the debate - "Marvellous Maggie is magnificent in defeat. Splendid, Triumphant. The stuff of history.

Mail - Too damn good for the lot of them. You gave up power with the magnificent class that she alone of British politicians can produce. Paul Johnson: A woman for all seasons. If any one person can claim to be the liberator of Eastern Europe it is Margaret Thatcher.

In the debate, you defended your record with a speech of a lifetime. An historic, fighting performance which shamed and embarrassed those Tories which brought about her downfall.

PRESS DIGEST

Colin Welch: Your speech was absolutely heart rending. Most of the Tory MPs listening must have been thinking, what on earth have we done? We've made the most frightful mistake. How can we possibly put it right?

Telegraph - Telegraph backs Douglas Hurd. Charles Moore pens a farewell to a great Prime Minister.

Leader: The great mass of the British people recognise her as one of our greatest Prime Ministers whose achievements will now become part of our history. Even your critics and enemies acknowledge your towering dominance for more than a decade. We know that we shall not see her like again. Some of your most intractable opponents will be asking themselves: What have we done?

Of the debate: Final defence a fitting testament.

Guardian leader says with extraordinary good humour and extraordinary adrenalin you departed to the Commons to deliver your valedictory oration. The Tory Party has made a rare spectacle of itself in the struggle to reconcile tribal instincts with the overriding, unappealing instinct of self-preservation.

On the debate "The dying swan gives Commons a command performance". Nothing became Margaret Thatcher's prime ministership as her leaving it. They have loved her never so much as when losing her. You provided an occasion to remember.

Independent - "It's a funny old world". After a night of Cabinet conspiracies, you end your 11 years in power with a combative Commons speech.

Peter Jenkins in Independent says a prime minister remarkable by any standard has been brought down after 11 years in which great and lasting transformations have occurred, more for good than bad. You are the victim of a coup and the country's changing mood.

Under the heading, "A great prime minister" the Independent says let us now praise a famous prime minister. You leave your country much stronger than when you reached the highest office - you deserve our gratitude for having succeeded in arresting Britain's long post-imperial decline. Nevertheless, the paper welcomes your departure, and goes on to conclude that your courage and conviction were not sufficient qualities to see you through the changed circumstances of your third term. As dauntless in defeat as in victory, you take your place among the very greatest of our prime ministers.

PRESS DIGEST

Times - "Defiant PM stands by her record". You fiercely defended your Govt's record in the Commons debate.

Times "Bravura end for Thatcher era". Political era ended yesterday with your resignation. In the debate you were crisp, combative and humorous, winning universal cheers from Tories who could hardly believe that your reign had ended so messily.

Matthew Parris in the Times says in one of your finest parliamentary performances ever, the eagle swept in and scattered the crows.

Times devotes the whole of its leader column to you under the heading "The Thatcher Legacy". It says that your going is monstrous cruel. You tower over your colleagues and your party as a true world statesman. You rank among the most remarkable PMs in modern British history, comparing you with Disraeli. It concludes that your successor must remember your most challenging message, that the task of a democratic leader is to lead, not just to follow, the people. The legacy is an awesome one.

Ronald Butt in the Times says your rejection by your party has been in the more brutal traditions of British politics. Yet you have shown by your demeanour that you feel no sense of humiliation but rather one of triumph in a job so well done that you have changed the course of British political history. He is critical of your failure to see that you could not continue indefinitely to override and bypass your Cabinet. But your faults were really the obverse side of your overriding quality; a genuine belief in what you were doing and your strong convictions.

FT - Resignation shocks MPs. You leave field to Hurd and Major. At 9.33am the end of an era became official. Shock and sadness on the world stage: "I'll miss her" says Bush. Markets react with relief and anxiety. Sterling, equities and gilts first rose then fell back.

FT back page says you gave a commanding performance in the Commons as you made a hard hitting defence of your record.

FT leader - Many will feel your departure was belated; more will regret its manner but nothing can dim the glitter of your career. You have been the most remarkable peace-time Prime Minister since Gladstone, able to transcend the dwindling significance of your country.