

PRIME MINISTER

"SAVING THE OZONE LAYER" CONFERENCE

You have agreed to speak at the closing session of the Saving the Ozone Layer Conference on 7 March. We have time in the diary on Monday morning for a first discussion of your speech.

I have put in the folder a draft synopsis provided by the DoE. It is a bit of a muddle.

You speak right at the end of the Conference after Mr. Ridley has delivered his winding-up speech as Conference Chairman and after Tolba's speech. Almost everything then that can be said will have been said! I think your speech will need to be short, broad-brush and political with a clear message about your approach to environmental issues. The sort of points which you could cover are:

- for several centuries we have all worked on the assumption that mankind could pursue the goal of steady economic progress without paying attention to the effect on the fundamental equilibrium of the world's systems and atmosphere;

- in a very short space of time, that comfortable assumption has been changed. We now realise that major changes in the atmosphere's chemistry have taken place, even though we still do not fully understand the scale and nature of them;

- we need to create greater public awareness of the problems and understanding of the need for action, without creating an atmosphere of crisis or panic;

- science has solved many problems in the past and there is every reason to expect it to help us solve these new problems, without sacrificing economic development. You realise how important this last point is for the LDCs;

- the first need is for good science, to understand what is happening to the atmosphere's chemistry and what needs to be done to restore a balance. Britain is contributing in a major way, in particular through the work of the British Antarctic Survey;

- we must avoid hasty solutions which only create new problems in other areas;

- we need to tackle the problems on a global basis. It is not a task for a praetorian guard of privileged countries who arrogate to themselves the duty of laying down rules and regulations. Every country needs to be involved and play its part. The atmosphere belongs to us all;

- we do not need new institutions. We have the international bodies already, above all UNEP. Institution-building only distracts from the real tasks;

- the real priority is to identify specific and practical steps which will slow down the damage to the ozone layer and eventually reverse the trend;

- that has been the purpose of the London Conference. It has increased awareness of the problem. And it has identified a clear course of action - a commitment to a very major reduction in the use of CFCs - which will help deal with it;

- of course it is not the last word. The Conference is just one step in a process which must continue. The next step is the meeting in Helsinki in May where the parties to the Montreal Protocol will have a more detailed discussion of the scientific and technological aspects. We must keep up the momentum;

- but already as a result of this conference we can see that there are technological solutions to ozone depletion that can be brought within the reach of every country, and will not

retard growth;

- the action is not all for governments, there is a role for industry and the private sector in developing new technologies;

- the most important task of all is to change attitudes, to make people realise that simply carrying on as we are is not an option.

C.D.P.

(C. D. POWELL)

10 February 1989

PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH TO THE OZONE CONFERENCE: 7 MARCH

Draft Synopsis

10 years ago ozone depletion was academic hypothesis. Even then we in EC took precautionary action to limit CFC production capacity and reduce aerosol use. Apart from aerosols, CFCs and Halons are used in refrigeration, fire extinguishers and foam production. In the mid-80s British scientists discovered the so-called Antarctic hole. Now whole world is seized of the urgent need for universal action to stop and reverse the process.

Consequences of failure to act. But CFCs important role in quality of life. Not possible to stop all of them overnight. Some technologies more advanced than others. No doubt that the problems can and must be solved and sooner rather than later.

Two important messages from conference: (1) essential that all countries join in; (2) there are technological solutions to ozone depletion that will not retard growth and are within every country's reach. Conference has shown that by joining industry and governments together, no country need feel inhibited about joining the Montreal process.

UK initiative on industry/Government co-operation in tackling CFCs: EPT (Environmental Protection Technology) scheme to promote innovation in CFC recovery from products (eg fridges). Importance of

developed world transferring technology to undeveloped. No need to go through CFC phase if access to alternative substances and technologies facilitated. This is a task and a challenge to industry as well as governments.

This conference a major achievement for the participants. The world working together to solve a common problem. Increasingly we need international co-operation. Global and regional environmental problems rising higher and higher in the agenda. Instances of recent initiatives ozone layer - EC/EFTA scientific co-operation on ozone layer monitoring (to be based at Cambridge); NATO study of military use of halons (UK suggestion); international action to protect North Sea - implementing NSC2 commitments, a blue-print for action on other seas; Climate Change - action in UNEP/WMO and OECD (key roles for UK, USA and USSR).

✓ Climate change above all requires international co-operation. Action on CFCs and halons is doubly important - not only attack ozone layer ✓ but they are powerful greenhouse gases. A major part of greenhouse issue. Science difficult to unravel. Response options of unprecedented magnitude and cost. Just as vital, as with CFCs, that the world acts together. Legal and technological solutions have their forerunner in ozone issue. But fiscal, social and economic solutions: eg Carbon taxes, forestry, are uncharted territory. UK been considering its responses to challenge. Ministerial seminar to be held [other initiatives arising from meeting of 12 January?]

All this takes place against the broader background of Brundtland and sustainable development. UK commitment, rich and poor, east and west. Raises fundamental questions about the structure and philosophy of Government. UK Response Document.

Conference has broader lessons. It shows what is possible through international co-operation. Value of working through existing frameworks (Montreal) and institutions (UNEP). UK will throw its weight behind them [announce doubling of UNEP subscription to £2 $\frac{1}{2}$ million] Danger of proliferating international fora. Talking is important. But it must be focused on action.

And so back to ozone layer. We take away from this meeting a common understanding of a common problem, though seen from our different perspectives, we have seen the practical way forward and shown the collective will to succeed. We move on from here to talk nuts and bolts. In Helsinki, in May the Parties of the Montreal Protocol will meet for the first time to review the science, the technology, the economics. In London next year the review will be translated into practical action to strengthen the protocol to meet fully the challenge of ozone depletion as we now know it. The world counts on us to succeed.