

PRIME MINISTER

SAVING THE OZONE LAYER CONFERENCE

I attach your main speech as it emerged from our discussion this morning. We have now put it on tape and arranged an autocue practice for Monday evening. I suggest we look at the text again on Monday in the light of proceedings at the Conference up to that point to see whether any further amendment is necessary.

C.D.P.

(C. D. POWELL)

3 March 1989

As at 3.3.89

1

SP2AEG

PRIME MINISTER'S CLOSING ADDRESS

TO THE 'SAVING THE OZONE LAYER'

CONFERENCE IN LONDON

ON

TUESDAY 7 MARCH

Chairman, Dr. Tolba, honoured delegates.

I hope you have enjoyed this Conference and
found its deliberations valuable.

I would like to thank you for your ~~many~~
distinguished contributions to its work.

There are many different aspects of the global
environment which demand action: the

tropical rain forests, the food chain in
the sea, the problems of pollution.

But in this Conference we have concentrated on
the single theme of the threat to the
ozone layer, and we have had three aims:

- first to increase public awareness in all
our countries of the threat and of the
consequences for ^{every country in the} ~~the~~ whole world from

failure to act; It's not a case of ~~the~~ some

~~developed~~ ~~order~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~less~~ ~~developed~~ ~~to~~ ~~take~~ ~~action~~,
 asking others to act. It is a case of ^{was} ~~some~~ country's ~~take~~ ~~action~~ to
 protect its own people

- second to commit ourselves to practical steps which will halt the damage being done to the ozone layer, without setting back people's hopes for a better life through steady economic progress;
- and third, to strengthen the existing international organisations which are

already doing such excellent work in this field, above all the United Nations Environment Programme.

I believe we can be well satisfied with the work which we have done.

But we must keep a sense of perspective.

Even if all the chemicals which do damage to the ozone layer were banned tomorrow,

ozone depletion would continue for more than a decade and it would take our planet something like a hundred years to replenish the ozone already lost.

Such is the extent of the damage which we have already done.

Our success will be measured not over months or years but over decades, indeed centuries.

But at least we now have a better understanding
of the problem.

And we have started to take the necessary
action.

~~PD Two things have been done since the
Conference have shown me most clearly
First - the urgency of the matter
and highly - no more ~~to~~ no of course out
The problem~~

Mr. Chairman, for centuries we have all worked
on the assumption that mankind could
pursue the goal of steady economic

and still have used
progress, ~~without changing~~ the fundamental
equilibrium of the world's living systems
and atmosphere.

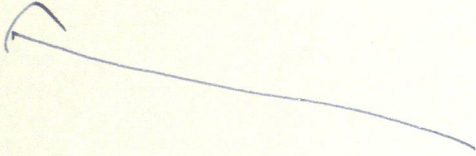
In a very short space of time that comfortable

shattered
assumption has been ~~abruptly~~ changed:

We rightly set out to improve the ~~quality~~ *standard*
of life of the world's peoples.

We have now ~~suddenly~~ realised that we
could be undermining the very systems

needed to maintain life on our planet.



~~We now understand that~~ Major changes in the chemistry of the earth's atmosphere are taking place, with potentially calamitous effects for all mankind.

The destruction of stratospheric ozone is such a problem.

The ozone layer is both ^a protector of life but
also at its mercy.

There are still many uncertainties about it.

For example, we ~~still~~ have ^{a lot more} ~~much~~ to learn
about the mechanisms of ozone creation and
destruction, and about the effects of
increased ultra-violet radiation on living
organisms.

Indeed, I thought a recent article in the

But our knowledge is increasing.

Scarcely a week goes by without reading or hearing of some new discovery.

We learn more about the linkages between

different aspects of atmospheric

chemistry.- *between the ~~CH₄~~ ^{hydrocarbons} & CO₂ and*

the greenhouse effect

For example, the ~~chlorofluorocarbons~~ which

cause the break up of ozone molecules also add to the greenhouse effect and therefore the climatic change which may follow.

In addition to the damage to the ozone layer ~~already identified~~ over the Antarctic a recent expedition to the Arctic has shown that, in the words of the scientists taking part, the region is "primed for ozone destruction".

And especially when we were with
the more legs over the Arctic as well

Their evidence suggests that ozone can be destroyed not just at the top of the stratosphere, as earlier theories have predicted, but also lower down and by a different set of chemical reactions.

The role of science

Mr. Chairman, ~~the scientific~~ good science has to be the

foundation stone of our common efforts to
understand the problems / and to deal with
them.

It was theoretical science by Americans in the
1970s which identified ozone depletion as

a potential problem.

It was practical observation and deduction
by the British Antarctic Survey in the
1980s which established the reality.

We need an international scientific effort to

understand:

Further work which is going on ~~it~~ should be in

- what is happening to the atmosphere's

chemistry;

- what needs to be done to restore and maintain a balance;
- and how much or how little time we have to take the necessary action.

Science holds the key to the solution of the problem as well as to its definition.

The same painstaking scientific method

which has solved so many problems in the past, will solve these new problems of today, without sacrificing the economic progress which is the hope and ambition of so many.

Under
If ~~we fail~~ to base our policies on sound

science we shall try to solve the wrong problems,

or to solve them in the wrong way,

and the solution will itself create
new problems.

We already know that some of the processes which
would reduce consumption of CFCs have the
effect of ^{causing} ~~producing~~ or compounding other
problems.

For instance, CFC substitutes in some
cases will be less energy efficient,
thereby increasing emissions of carbon

dioxide, the main contributor to global warming.

The need for global solutions

Mr. Chairman, there is an irony about the environmental problems which now confront us.

Since the beginning of civilisation, the main damage to our way of life has come from

human malevolence and destructiveness,
from wars, from weapons, from hostility.

Now | the damage to the environment comes from
the actions of millions of people |
conducting their peaceful activities which
are ~~conducive~~ necessary for their health, | their
well-being and their ^{with} agricultural and ^e
economic development - activities in other
^{wildly} words which are perceived as beneficial.

and good, and necessary to produce the
food to sustain an increasing world
population.

Another lesson which this conference has
brought home to us is that we are dealing
with a global problem.

Bar No matter at what degree of latitude we
live, ozone depletion will severely affect
us all, just as will global climate

change.

The conclusion is clear.

It is no good some of us acting to solve the problems, while others go on as before.

~~No one can opt out.~~

The problems will only be solved by common action.

Every country must play its full part.

Every citizen can help.

Indeed, because we have no alternative but to work together on a global basis to solve these problems, ^{Thus} we have a powerful

incentive to strengthen the United Nations and other international bodies - and that ~~in turn could have a much wider and positive effect on international co-operation on many other issues.~~

And when we consider the aid which we give

bilaterally or through the international agencies including the World Bank, we must see that it is given in a way which does not harm, but preserves the world's life support systems.

The Institutions*Institutions*

The ~~instruments~~ to enable us to work together
are already there.

~~We don't need new institutions.~~

There is no place for a praetorian guard of
privileged countries who take it upon
themselves to lay down rules and
regulations for others.

Our success will depend upon co-operation between sovereign countries, coming together with a common purpose and high resolve.

We have the Montreal Protocol as the
framework.

① We have the United Nations Environment
Programme as the main institution.

We have the World Meteorological

Organisation.

We have the Intergovernmental Panel on

Climate Change, which is bringing together in
 shape of us the results of scientific work from
 We should use them. ~~see the~~ parts of the world

Building new institutions would only

distract us from the real tasks.

They are:

- first to see more countries sign the
 Montreal Protocol.

7
Already 33 have done so, others have indicated that they will.

Our goal must be ~~nothing~~ less than to see all countries sign;

- second to strengthen our support for UNEP^{op}

Britain for its part is doubling the financial contribution which it makes each year.

~~I hope this will be matched by others who-~~

~~can afford to do so.~~

Practical steps

And within the institutions we need to put in

hand practical steps to deal with the

problems we have identified:

- steps to slow down the damage to the ozone layer before it is too late;
- steps which will eventually allow it to recover.

We have at this Conference addressed ourselves to how we can eventually eliminate the use of CFCs ~~and Halons.~~

~~To this end~~ many industrialised countries including the United Kingdom and ^{on} ~~its~~ European Community partners, have committed themselves to the goal of ending production and consumption of the CFC's identified in the Montreal Protocol by the

end of this century.

That sounds very ambitious.

It is.

But even with that action, damage already done to the ozone layer will be with us, our children and our grandchildren, throughout the twenty-first century.

One result of this Conference is that we

can see that there are technological solutions to ozone depletion that can be brought within the reach of every country.

Substitute technologies and ^{chemicals} ~~substances~~ are steadily becoming ^{available.} ~~a reality.~~

Let me mention some of the action we are taking in this country.

Refrigeration circuits are being re-designed to reduce the amount of CFCs used ~~as refrigerants.~~

~~Measures being taken in common with~~
~~other~~⁶² EC Member States in this field are expected to reduce the CFCs used by the domestic appliance industry in the ~~Community~~ by 45 per cent by the end of this year.

Looking further ahead ^{may} it might perhaps be
possible to have a solid-state
refrigerator which uses no gases at all.

One of our biggest companies ICI is spending
£100 million in developing and researching
alternatives to CFCs.

~~Our aerosol industry is moving to alternative~~

~~technologies such as pump-action sprays
and compressed air.~~

Indeed ~~our~~ aerosol manufacturers have
agreed to phase out the non-essential use
of CFCs by the end of this year, ~~an~~
~~excellent example.~~

~~Our~~ plastic foam industries ~~are concentrating~~
~~on recycling the CFCs used in the~~
~~manufacturing process.~~

^{have} ^{a recovery plant}
~~A recovery plant has been developed~~ (which
should recycle close to 100 per cent of
the CFCs used.

~~Mr. Chairman, these examples underline the
vitally important role of industry and of
the private sector in developing new
technologies and transferring them across
the world.~~

Dr. Usher

The response of world industry to ~~the~~
~~technological challenge of ozone~~
~~depletion,~~ (exemplified at this Conference,
~~at its surgeries and the exhibition,~~ holds
the promise of effective and economic
measures which will be available to all
countries.

The effects on economic growth

Mr. Chairman, I recognise that some countries

~~which are only now beginning to~~
~~industrialise their economies~~ will want to
be assured that the measures necessary to
halt the damage to the ozone layer will
not place severe limits on their economic
growth.

Clearly it would be intolerable for the
countries which have already
industrialised, and have caused the

greater part of the problems we face, to expect others to pay the price in terms of their people's hopes and well-being.

Our Conference has shown that ^{such lessons are not} ~~this need not be~~

~~so.~~ *justified*

~~It has underlined instead some very~~
~~important lessons.~~

First, the solutions indicated at ~~the~~

~~Conference~~ are compatible with continued and sustainable economic growth.

That is essential if the hopes of Third World countries for higher standards of living are to be met.

That is what we mean by our commitment to the concept of sustainable growth.

Second, the new technologies and substances

which are becoming available should help

^{Others}
~~these countries~~ achieve their objectives
 for economic growth ^{to avoid us} without repeating the
 mistakes which we in the ^{highly} industrialised
 countries have made.

^{They}
~~The Conference has shown us that others~~
 need not go through a CFC phase.

Some delegates have drawn attention to
 other damaging pressing problems, poverty, hunger,
 disease and spreading debts.

~~And third, we need the prosperity of all~~

~~nations to finance the measures necessary~~

~~The world has~~ ^{of some these things}
~~are on the world's agenda.~~ ^{They must be}
43 ~~We have~~

~~I would like to discuss~~ ~~freedom~~ ~~to~~ ~~move~~
But further ~~steps~~ to the down layer
would add to the bill, and make things worse
to safeguard the environment and protect
the balance of nature.

We cannot do it at each other's expense.

We all need to be able to grow and to
prosper - and to pursue the economic and
trade policies which make that possible.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, our most important task of all is
to make people realise that simply to

carry on as we are is not an option.

That is why we are here

~~We need to~~ create greater public knowledge

of the problem and understanding of the

need for action.

The power of the public opinion and of the

consumer is already making itself felt in

many of our countries.

You see it in the sale of ozone-friendly

products in our shops and supermarkets -
an example of how the individual citizen
can make his own contribution.

The scientists, the industrialists, the
politicians have first to find the facts
and then propose the solutions.
But it is only with the understanding and
active cooperation of millions upon
millions of individual people

- people who understand the problem;
- people who see the need to restore the balance of nature before it is too late;
- people who are ready to change their customs and habits in what they buy and what they do,

that we shall overcome one of the greatest challenges which life on earth has yet faced.

We must hand on the title deeds of life to our
grandchildren and beyond.

That is our obligation.

We here resolve to make it our ~~first~~ duty.