

PRIME MINISTER

SPEECH TO THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

I asked Crispin Tickell to let me have, on an entirely personal basis, some suggestions for domestic actions or initiatives which you could announce or draw attention to in your UN speech.

I attach his reply, which contains a number of ideas. Before pursuing any of them with Whitehall Departments, it would be very helpful to have an indication of which of them you think worth following up.

CDD

C. D. POWELL
25 October 1989

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Some of his ideas
are good e.g. our research
programmes (N.E.R.C. etc) the
Shell scheme (I have read about it)
emission limits (SO₂ for power stations)
Land use - salt-oxide, environmentally
sensitive areas, sites of special scientific
interest etc.

not
Conflicting environmental goals
Sustainable

SECRET

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FOLLOWING PERSONAL FOR CHARLES POWELL, PS/PRIME MINISTER

PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH TO THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY: 8 NOVEMBER

1. WHEN WE SAW EACH OTHER IN LONDON ON 13 OCTOBER, WE DISCUSSED THE PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON 8 NOVEMBER. YOU SAID THAT A DRAFT WAS DUE TO BE SUBMITTED TO NO 10 LAST WEEK FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO LOOK AT DURING THE INTERSTICES OF CHOGM. AS ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS WERE MUCH DISCUSSED THERE, I IMAGINE THAT THE DRAFT IS BEING AMENDED ACCORDINGLY (INCIDENTALLY I THOUGHT THE DECLARATION ON THE SUBJECT PRETTY GOOD IN VIEW OF SOME OF THE THINGS SAID DURING THE DEBATE).

2. I HAVE NOT YET SEEN THE DRAFT, BUT WILL LOOK FORWARD TO DOING SO. IN THE MEANTIME I PROMISED TO LET YOU HAVE SOME THOUGHTS ADDITIONAL TO THOSE I PUT IN THE OUTLINE I SENT DUNCAN SLATER ON 18 SEPTEMBER. THESE THOUGHTS RELATE TO A DIFFICULT BUT CENTRAL ISSUE: THE READINESS OF THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE DOMESTIC ACTIONS TO SUPPORT ITS INTERNATIONAL APPROACH.

3. THESE DOMESTIC ACTIONS OR INITIATIVES FALL INTO THREE MAIN CATEGORIES: ENERGY; LAND USE; AND INDUSTRY, INVESTMENT, TRADE AND TRANSPORT POLICY (SEE PP 5-6 OF MY DRAFT OUTLINE). IT MAY BE THAT YOU ALREADY HAVE IDEAS IN THESE FIELDS AND THAT WHITEHALL DEPARTMENTS HAVE HAD THEIR HEADS SUFFICIENTLY KNOCKED TOGETHER. BUT THE MORE SPECIFIC WE CAN BE, THE MORE CONVICTION WE WILL CARRY BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD. TO THE EXISTING LIST LET ME ADD:

- ENERGY POLICY GENERALLY:

- GREATER ENERGY EFFICIENCY: THE OLD ENERGY EFFICIENCY UNIT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY WAS RUN DOWN UNDER PREVIOUS MANAGEMENT, BUT MIGHT NOW BE VISIBLY RESUSCITATED. THERE IS A RANGE OF IDEAS WHICH COULD BE QUOTED (CF KEN CURRIE'S SPEECH AT THE PRIME MINISTER'S SEMINAR ON 21 APRIL). IT COULD TAKE IN RESEARCH ON NEW METHODS OF CAR PROPULSION (EG SOLAR HYDROGEN).

- INCENTIVES AND DISINCENTIVES: A REFERENCE TO THE NEED TO LOOK AT INCENTIVES AND DISINCENTIVES WOULD BE USEFUL IN ITSELF. IT WOULD CHIME WITH THOSE ALREADY INTRODUCED OVER LEAD-FREE PETROL. THIS IS A BETTER WAY OF PUTTING THE POINT THAN TALKING ABOUT CARBON TAXES.

- RENEWABLE RESOURCES: WE HAVE A GOOD STORY TO TELL ON NUCLEAR POWER, AND MORE COULD BE SAID ON SOLAR POWER (IN PARTICULAR OVER FRENCH EXPERIENCE).

THERE IS A FURTHER ASPECT WHICH MIGHT BE WORTH LOOKING INTO. I CANNOT REMEMBER WHERE I SAW A REPORT ON THE SUBJECT, BUT I BELIEVE THAT SHELL (UK) HAS RECENTLY DEVELOPED A TECHNOLOGY FOR LIQUEFYING THE CARBON DIOXIDE EMITTED WHEN COAL IS CONVERTED INTO ENERGY AND PUTTING IT BACK IN THE GROUND. IF CORRECT THIS COULD BE AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE KIND OF TECHNOLOGY NECESSARY TO MAKE HARMFREE USE OF FOSSIL FUEL RESOURCES.

I don't think we are doing this research

Please research

This is correct - please include this for details



*Can't do that
all the time
to visit people
renewal
P. 2-2-68*

- LAND USE: I EXPECT YOU WILL ALREADY HAVE CONTRIBUTIONS ON NEW AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES (FROM ORGANIC FARMING TO LESS USE OF NITROGEN FERTILIZER), REAFFORESTATION IN THE RIGHT MIX OF CONIFERS AND DECIDUOUS TREES, AND NEW NON-CHEMICAL METHODS OF PEST CONTROL. I THINK IT WOULD ALSO BE USEFUL TO UNDERLINE THAT LAND USES HAVE TO BE SEEN AS A WHOLE IF LAND IS TO BE USED IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE WAY (AS YOU KNOW I HAVE LONG THOUGHT WE SHOULD HAVE A MINISTRY OF LAND USE RATHER THAN A MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND A FORESTRY COMMISSION SOMETIMES PULLING IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS).

*Sub
aside.*

- INDUSTRY, INVESTMENT, TRADE AND TRANSPORT POLICY: THE PRIME MINISTER COULD ANNOUNCE THE INCLUSION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION IN NATIONAL STATISTICS SO THAT ENVIRONMENTAL COSTS COULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT FROM THE BEGINNING. SHE COULD ALSO DO AS ONE OR TWO OTHER GOVERNMENTS HAVE DONE, AND ANNOUNCE THAT WE WERE ESTABLISHING CENTRAL MACHINERY TO MAKE SURE THAT ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS ARE COORDINATED, OR AT LEAST BORNE IN MIND, IN MAJOR DECISION MAKING. THE PRESENT AD HOC ARRANGEMENTS IN THE CABINET OFFICE DO NOT SEEM TO ME ENOUGH. ON THEIR OWN ACCOUNT THE AMERICANS AND RUSSIANS ARE WRESTLING WITH THIS PROBLEM, SO FAR WITHOUT RESULT. HERE IS AN AREA WHERE WE COULD GIVE A LEAD. A GOOD EXAMPLE OF WHAT IS INCREASINGLY NECESSARY, AND WOULD HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH IN THIS WAY, IS THE SETTING OF NEW INDUSTRIAL NORMS AND STANDARDS ON EMISSIONS INTO THE ATMOSPHERE. THESE WOULD SOONER OR LATER AFFECT MOST ASPECTS OF THE ECONOMY.

- RESEARCH PROGRAMMES: THE PRIME MINISTER WILL OBVIOUSLY WANT TO MAKE USE OF THE NEW EMPHASIS ON THE EARTH SCIENCES IN OUR NATIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAMMES. HERE AGAIN THE MORE SPECIFIC WE CAN BE, THE MORE IMPACT WE WILL HAVE.

4. FORGIVE ME SETTING OUT POINTS WHICH ARE PROBABLY IN YOUR MINDS ALREADY, AND PERHAPS IN THE DRAFT ITSELF. IF I CAN GIVE ANY HELP OR POINT TOWARDS AREAS OF BRITISH EXPERTISE WHICH MIGHT BE USEFUL, PLEASE LET ME KNOW. I AM NOT COPYING THIS MESSAGE ELSEWHERE.

TICKELL

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