

Pl. type draft below

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PRIME MINISTER

c Mr. Ingham

BIRTHDAY HONOURS - EMBARGO

Attached is a letter from the Editors of The Times, Guardian and Daily Telegraph seeking your authority for the release to them of the Birthday Honours List under embargo at noon on polling day (June 9). Our deliberate plan, which you have approved, is to make the lists available under embargo immediately the polls have closed for publication in the morning papers of The Queen's Official Birthday - June 11.

There is no doubt that The Times, Guardian and Telegraph have a serious (and they would say impossible) problem of setting the Birthday Honours List in type at the same time as they have to set the full constituency-by-constituency results of the General Election.

But they are not the only ones. So do those provincial morning newspapers like The Scotsman, Glasgow Herald, Yorkshire Post and Birmingham Post which seek to give comprehensive regional, if not national, coverage.

It is however true that the problem of The Times, Guardian and Telegraph is most acute.

✓ Nonetheless, my advice - and Bernard Ingham strongly agrees - is that you should adhere to your original decision to make the list available under embargo only when the polls have closed.

The three editors admit they cannot fault your original decision. They also pledge the good faith of their newspapers if you agree to release at noon on June 9.

But they cannot deliver their staffs let alone bind other news outlets - e.g. evening newspapers and radio and television.

This is not to say that the embargo would be broken. But you cannot be too careful on this occasion. At the end of the day, if you were to accept this proposal, you would be taking a risk with these

three newspapers which you are not prepared to take with others;
and I do not see how you could defend that.

✓ Agree to stand by release under embargo at 10.00 pm on June 9?
If you do I attach a draft of a sympathetic reply which Bernard
Ingham or I would send to the Editors.

R.R.B.

yes

mf

26 May 1983

CHARLES DOUGLAS - HOME, EDITOR, THE TIMES
DRAFT REPLY TO ~~THE EDITORS OF THE TIMES, THE GUARDIAN AND~~
~~THE DAILY TELEGRAPH~~

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your letter of 24 May and to assure you that she understands what a difficult problem the coincidence of the General Election and the Birthday Honours List creates for you.

The Prime Minister has therefore considered sympathetically the suggestion in your letter, recognising the important service which your newspapers perform in publishing the lists in full. But even so she has concluded, with regret, that it would not be right to adopt the compromise proposed in your letter. Other newspapers, like The Scotsman, Glasgow Herald, Yorkshire Post and Birmingham Post seek to give comprehensive regional coverage; and, even though it can rightly be argued that the problem of your three newspapers is most acute, the Prime Minister does not see how she could answer the argument that it is wrong to take a risk with your newspapers which she ^{is not} ~~has not been~~ prepared to take with others. Having taken the general decision, ~~of which you generously~~ ^{for which you acknowledge} ~~of which~~ ^{you acknowledge the validity,} acknowledge the validity, the Prime Minister has concluded that she must stick to it across the board.

I am copying this letter to the Editor of The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph.



FILE

SH

bcc: Mr. Ingham

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

27 May, 1983

I am enclosing for your information an exchange of correspondence we have had with the Editors of The Times, The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph about the embargo on the Birthday Honours. We did consult the Prime Minister on the compromise suggested by the three Editors, but she decided that on this occasion it would be wrong to take risks, even selectively, and I know from our earlier conversations that you share this view.

LEA BUTLER

The Rt. Hon. Sir Philip Moore, K.C.B., K.C.V.O.,
C.M.G.

Gul



FILE SH
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I am copying this letter to the Editors of The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph.

E.E.R. BUTLER

Charles Douglas-Home, Esq.

From: Editors, The Times, Guardian, Daily Telegraph

May 24th, 1983

Dear Prime Minister

It goes without saying that we would not trouble you at a time like this unless we had a grievous difficulty. Our difficulty springs from what, we have to admit, is an entirely proper decision taken at No. 10 about the issue of the Birthday Honours List.

Because it is obviously imperative that nothing in this List - or not in the List - could be held to influence voting; and because on a previous occasion Fleet Street showed itself to be unreliable (to say the least) on the embargo imposed on such a list, your staff feel that it ought not to be made available to newspapers until the polls close on June 9. In all honesty we cannot fault that decision.

It does, however, put our three newspapers (because we publish the Honours in full) in a quandary. For it means that setting the list cannot begin until an hour or two before election results begin to flow through the night. For those of us with a Manchester end to work in, the timing imposes fearful difficulties.

We think it would be wrong to postpone publication of part or all of the List until Monday. As things stand we would simply have to attempt the nearly impossible. There is, however, one possible compromise which would need your authority.

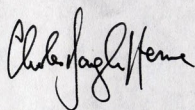
Given a pledge of good faith on behalf of our newspapers would you be willing to authorise the release of this List to us at noon on Thursday June 9? Even those few hours would, technically, make a great difference. Furthermore, an overnight leak would be impossible.

In seeking your consent to this course, we have to weigh whether such a concession might arouse towards No. 10 or ourselves ill will from other newspapers. We seriously think after talking to the Palace about it that it would not. For what we are asking for is not a journalistic favour; it

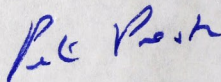
relates solely to the setting problem for three newspapers which habitually carry the lists in full.

We repeat our regret at troubling you with such a matter just now. The objective we all share is doing justice to the Birthday Honours, and the recipients of those honours.

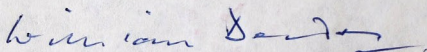
Yours sincerely,



EDITOR, The Times



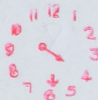
EDITOR, The Guardian



EDITOR, The Daily Telegraph

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher,
10 Downing Street,
SW 1

24 MAY 1983



PRIME MINISTER

DISSOLUTION HONOURS LIST

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Timing

3. On some occasions Dissolution lists have been published between the Dissolution and Polling Day (1945, 1959, 1970); and on others after the Election when the same Government is returned (1950, 1966, 1974); when there is a change of Government, the list after an Election becomes a Resignation Honours List.

4. The decision that Mr Whitelaw should stand again points to having a list of peerages after polling day rather than before. If so, this would remove a complication: it would not have been easy to ask Messrs Foot and Steel to consider nominations at the beginning of a General Election campaign. And The Queen (and perhaps you?) would be likely to prefer that the reintroduction of hereditary peerages was not announced in the pre-Election atmosphere.

5. There would, of course, be a complication if you were to lose the Election. It would not then be for you to recommend honours for anyone except members of your own Party, and I suppose there is a risk that, if you wanted to recommend a hereditary peerage for e.g. Mr Whitelaw, Mr Foot would refuse to put it forward, despite the well-established convention that a Prime Minister acts as a post box for his predecessor's resignation list. But on the assumption that you would cross that bridge when you come to it, the rest of this minute is written on the premise that you win the Election and put forward a dissolution list after polling day.

Hereditary Peerages

6. I suggested to you that, if you are reintroducing hereditary peerages for Mr Whitelaw and the Speaker, it would be appropriate to offer Sir Harold Wilson the earldom traditionally offered to former Prime Ministers. And this would be the obvious moment to make a further attempt to persuade Mr Macmillan to accept one. On that basis, the structure of your recommendations for hereditary peerages would be:-

Earldom
Viscountcy
Baron

Mr Macmillan
The Speaker
Mr Grimond

Sir Harold Wilson
Mr Whitelaw

7.

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ACT 2000

Life Peerages

8. It would also be possible and appropriate to include some life peerages in the list, and ^{the opportunity to nominate} to offer some to Mr Foot and (possibly) to Mr Steel. We need not approach them until after the Election or decide about numbers until then. In approaching Messrs Foot and Steel, it would be right to tell them that you are recommending Sir Harold Wilson, the Speaker and Mr Grimond for hereditary peerages, and to say that it would be made clear

publicly that these were your recommendations, not theirs.

Summary

10. i) Do you agree that we should now envisage a dissolution list, containing hereditary and life peerages, after Polling Day ?
- ii) Do you agree provisionally the names of hereditary peers in paragraph 6 above ?
- iii)

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