

MR. ADDISON

THE PRIME MINISTER'S TIME

I attach a copy of my minute of 20 October on this subject which shows the Prime Minister's own annotations. I am assuming that her main comment -

"Excellent - alas we need 48 hours in every day"

is not said entirely with tongue in cheek, but is, at least some encouragement for us to proceed in the three ways suggested at the end of the minute!

With that in mind, I would like you to examine the diary, for the first three months of 1986, to gauge the extent to which it meets the five objectives sketched out in my minute. If any objective is being neglected, could you please suggest ways in which it might be met.

More generally, and in line with the thought at the end of paragraph 3 of my minute, I wonder if engagements etc. outside London should not be targeted upon events which focus upon Government "successes", especially with a view to trying to change the "tone" of the public's perception of the Prime Minister. For example, opening a hospital so as to bang the drum for the Government's record in the NHS; opening the last link in the M25 (the Department of Transport have not already got The Queen for this) and so on. Indeed, any substantial piece of infrastructure from a nuclear power station to a major bypass could be subject for a Prime Ministerial opening. Should we not try to seek out such events?

Stephen and Bernard will see the Prime Minister has ticked the footnote about the possible weekly meeting on the exploitation of the week's presentational opportunities. I do not think that we can quite take that tick as endorsement of that idea. Perhaps they could have a word with me on how to proceed on this.

N.L.W.

(N.L. WICKS)

28 October 1985

cc: Mr. Powell
Mr. Norgrove
Mr. Flesher
Mrs. Ryder
Mr. Catford
Mr. Ingham
Mr. Alison
Mr. Sherbourne
Mr. Redwood
Professor Griffiths

DCAAUZ

PRIME MINISTER

Rs. 1000 -
also we need 4+ hours
in every day
not

YOUR TIME

Your time is one of your most precious commodities and never more so than in the next two or three years. So this note, which reflects wide consultation within the Office, suggests a framework within which you might wish to allocate your time.

Of course, the diary needs to be kept flexible, responding to day to day needs. Many meetings are determined by events outside your control and others are virtually unavoidable. But a framework of the sort suggested below would help us to monitor whether the diary is meeting your objectives and to plan so that it does.

So with these aims in view, I wonder whether the diary might not encompass, over a period of time, the following objectives:

A ✓ 1. It should allow you to follow through the following strategic issues:

- ✓ law and order
- ✓ jobs
- ✓ raising "the quality of education"
- the 3 reviews (social security, local authority finance and personal tax)
- an efficient, value for money public sector

B 2. It should permit you to give strategic direction to our foreign policy and see essential foreign visitors

C ✓ 3. It should provide opportunity for you:

- (i) to give strategic direction to the overall presentation of Government policy * and
- (ii) for you to promote some important presentational themes, e.g.

* see govt note on.

- promulgation of the Government's record
- an Administration which - to use that awful phrase - "cares and listens"
- the Government's programme goes beyond economics in its emphasis in enlarging the freedom and independence of ordinary people.
- the kind of Britain you want to see
- the need to reinforce traditional ethical values while encouraging economic change
- the enterprise society
- dangers of the Opposition's alternative programme

Engagements arranged in pursuit of these themes should be tailored so far as possible so that you can be seen with people, publicising Government successes, and countering public perception of Government weaknesses (e.g. opening new hospitals, roads, etc.)

4. It should provide for you to have meetings with, in particular:

- often with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Secretary of State for Employment, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord President, Chancellor of the Duchy and Chief Whip
- periodically tete-a-tetes with other Cabinet Ministers
- ✓ - media, including editors
- ✓ - MPs
- ✓ - Party

Footnote

- ✓ * In this connection, Stephen and Bernard have suggested that you should have a weekly meeting early on Mondays with the Chairman, Lord President, ~~Bernard~~, etc. to decided how to exploit the week's presentational opportunities and to avoid the pitfalls.

- E 5. It should allow you time for "ideas gathering", (through seminars, visits, personal briefings, with distinguished outsiders, etc.)

I recommend this as a framework which you might have in mind when planning your time. The diary is already largely determined for the rest of 1985, but the framework might be helpful in planning it for 1986. If you agree we will:

- (i) keep the framework in mind when recommending to you whether you accept diary engagements;
- (ii) review the forward diary framework to check whether it is meeting the five objectives above; and
- (iii) suggest action to you if it appears that any of the objectives are being neglected.

and time to get about the country!
ms

N. L. W.

N. L. Wicks

20 October 1985

cc: Mr. Powell
Mr. Norgrove
Mr. Flesher
Mr. Addison
Mrs. Ryder

Mr. Catford
Mr. Ingham
Mr. Alison
Mr. Sherbourne
Mr. Redwood
Mr. Griffiths

hlc, ea

MR. WICKS

cc Mr. Sherbourne

PRIME MINISTER'S DIARY: PLUGGING THE GOVERNMENT RECORD

Thank you for your note of 28 October on the Prime Minister's time.

I shall follow up your suggestion (para 2) that the diary for the beginning of next year be examined and assessed.

Meanwhile, I have considered with Stephen Sherbourne how we might best take forward para 3 of your note. One way of doing so would be to systematise the way in which we get ideas from Departments on visits/engagements etc. which the Prime Minister might usefully undertake. I accordingly enclose a draft letter, on which I would be grateful for yours and Stephen's comments, to send Departments every six months or so asking them to let us know of any candidates for Prime Ministerial visits likely to come up in the following six month period.

On the specific point about the M25, I put to the Department of Transport the proposal that the completed orbital should be opened by the Prime Minister. They told me this was something they were already thinking of suggesting, and they will be letting us have a note on where and when. Apparently the road is expected to be complete around this time next year.

MARK ADDISON

1 November 1985

EL3ARO

DRAFT LETTER TO PRIVATE SECRETARIES TO ALL CABINET MINISTERS

THE PRIME MINISTER'S FORWARD ENGAGEMENTS

As you know, the Prime Minister at present sets aside a number of days each year - usually half a dozen or so - for regional tours. These tours involve a number of official and Party engagements, including visiting factories, hospitals, schools, opening new buildings and so on. In between times, the Prime Minister sometimes undertakes individual public engagements outside London, though we try to keep these "one-offs" to a minimum since the Prime Minister can nearly always best use her time by combining a number of visits in the same area at once.

Our normal procedure for regional tours is to draw up a draft programme in this office, and then seek departmental advice before putting it to the Prime Minister for her approval. This arrangement has worked quite well in the past, though there is one important difficulty with it. We have no recognised procedure for departments themselves to consider and propose public engagements which the Prime Minister might usefully undertake, in good time for us to feed this in to our own planning arrangements. I am thinking of engagements which are of more than purely local significance and which would afford the Prime Minister an opportunity to give the best possible platform for the Government's record, to demonstrate the way in which policies are being successfully implemented, and to get useful publicity for the organisation or cause itself. We have in mind events such as, for instance, opening motorways and key bypasses, power stations, hospitals, schools, celebrating suitable anniversaries of children's homes, homes for the elderly and so on.

To ensure we identify engagements of this kind early enough in advance, we intend to implement a new procedure whereby departments are asked to let us know [on a six-monthly basis] of engagements which the Prime Minister might usefully

undertake over the next [six months or so]. Of course, we can be by no means certain that the Prime Minister's diary will permit her to follow these up. But a new arrangement of this kind should give a better prospect of fitting them in than we have at present.

I should, accordingly, be grateful if you would let me know by the end of this month of any such engagements [in the first half of 1986] which you would recommend for inclusion in the list.

If this procedure proves successful, we will send out a reminder in six months' time, to cover the second half of 1986. And, of course, you will let us know if, in the meantime, there are any other events or engagements in prospect which you think are candidates for the Prime Minister to take on.

C/F. B/F to me pl
~ 15 MarchMR. WICKS

WLCW

THE PRIME MINISTER'S TIME

I have had a go, as you requested, at classifying engagements so far fixed for the first three months of next year (Flag A). I have used the categories you identified in your minute to the Prime Minister of 20 October. However, I have to say that I do not think this has been a very fruitful exercise. There are a number of reasons:

- (i) An individual engagement can last anything from a quarter of an hour to a day (e.g. in the case of a regional tour). Of course, we can adjust for that if we are to attempt a proper "activity analysis".
- (ii) Picking any period a number of months in advance inevitably biases the distribution of engagements. For instance, Cabinet Committees are not yet fixed for the beginning of next year, and we have not in fact so far included many regular events (such as Cabinets, Questions, Audiences, in the diary). Again, we can take steps to correct this, but we are still stuck with, e.g., Cabinet Committees being unknown quantities until much nearer the time.
- (iii) Classifying engagements has a hefty arbitrary element. For instance, category 4 includes everything from bilaterals with the Chancellor to media receptions; should a meeting with the Chief Whip really be in the same category as the Thirty Club Dinner? Or, many engagements (e.g. No. 10 receptions) are social functions which the Prime Minister is called upon to give or attend by virtue of her position as Head of Government and fit uneasily into the classification.

/Having gone

Having gone through the Diary, I think a simpler - if longer - classification might be more sensible. This would be along the following lines:

/1. Strategy

1. Strategy and Policy (including Cabinet, Cabinet Committees, Meetings of Ministers).
2. "Think Sessions" (including seminars and meetings with outsiders)
3. Foreign.
4. Parliamentary.
5. Media.
6. Meetings, including bilaterals, with colleagues.
7. Presentation (including Regional visits, one-off visits, speeches, videos, presentation planning).
8. Social/formal commitments (Audiences).
9. Party/Constituency.
10. Other.

Flag B sets out what the diary looks like in practice under this classification. It is based on the forward diary for the next two weeks. As an 'after' rather than a 'before' picture, it looks, of course, more balanced than the analysis at Flag A. (The most obvious shortfall - media - needs to be looked at in the context of the "presentation" category including a good deal of general press contact.)

The conclusions I draw from this do not take me far from where I started, viz:

- (i) most of the diary's content is demand-led;
- (ii) much of it is necessarily fixed at the last minute;
- (iii) there are no obvious gaping holes which need to be plugged;
- (iv) we ought to give more thought to general "think" sessions (though we have this in hand to some extent; seminars are already lined up on Crime Prevention, Better Made In Britain, and we are considering one on Health);
- (v) we ought to give more thought to presentation planning, though diary meetings have proved excellent value, at least from a psychological point of view, in looking at competing claims on the forward diary;
- (vi) it is always more of a struggle than it should be to fit in domestic/ministerial policy meetings but since these very often come up at short notice and have to battle against commitments which are necessarily easier to fix up further in advance (eg. foreign visitors, social functions, etc).

I have two modest proposals:

(a) we ear-mark for sometime ahead two one-and-a-half hour slots each week essentially for David's purposes;

(b) we should have a word about whether there is not some more systematic way of building presentation planning sessions into the diary.

The first proposal may not end up changing the balance of the diary, though it should ease the task of the diary managers and help David's blood pressure.

/The second

The second means setting aside more time than we do at present for a particular purpose; this means there will be less time for other things. A point we must all bear in mind when restructuring the diary is being proposed.

Lillian

p.p. MARK ADDISON

15 November 1985

A

1. Strategy and value for money (including Cabinet Committee Meetings, etc) (2)
2. Foreign (7)
3. Presentation (policy and practice) (9)
4. Bilaterals (including media, MPs, Party) (26)
5. Seminars, meetings with outsiders (9)
6. Other (including constituency, portrait sittings, hair appointments) (10)
7. House (4)

3APC

1. Strategy and Policy (including Cabinet, Cabinet Committees, Meetings of Ministers). (6)
2. Think Sessions (including seminars, meetings with outsiders). (4)
3. Foreign. (14)
4. Parliamentary. (11)
5. Media. (3)
6. Meetings, including bilaterals, with colleagues. (7)
7. Presentation (including Regional visits, one-off visits, speeches and their preparation, video, presentation planning). (8)
8. Social/formal commitments (ie. Audiences) (8)
9. Party/Constituency. (4)
10. Other (inc. eg. hair appointments) (6)