

November 23, 1989

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

Prime Minister will leave for Washington where she is to hold discussions with President Bush

Haemophiliacs/AIDS package announced

1922 Committee calls for nominations for Tory leadership

The Princess Royal visits Kent; including HM Prison, Swaleside

The Duke of Edinburgh visits Salford University, Greater Manchester and the City of Technology College, Solihull, West Midlands

Bills: Coal Industry; Food Safety; Human Fertilisation and Embryology; PSA and Crown Suppliers

STATISTICS

CSO: Balance of payments current account and overseas trade figures (Oct)

PUBLICATIONS

DES: Implementation of national curriculum in primary schools

HO: BBC annual report and accounts

HO: Immigration for the India Sub-Continent bulletin

OPCS: Social Survey report: Attitudes to the Public Search Room

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Business: The Debate on the Address will continue (3rd day)
The Debate will concentrate on Law Reform and Broadcasting

Adjournment Debates: War Widow's Pension (Mr A Morris)

Lords: DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS - Second Day

The Debate will concentrate on HOME, HEALTH AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

PRESS DIGESTMain News

Sir Anthony Meyer announces his candidature for Tory leadership if no-one else turns up to challenge you. Sir Anthony gets a savaging.

Peter Morrison calls on constituency chairmen to establish how their MP will vote.

Lord Whitelaw calls on party to stop tearing itself apart - end internal intrigues and concentrate on winning election.

William Hill make you 3-1 on to lead Conservatives into next election. Leadership election on December 5.

President Bush pledges that US forces will stay in Europe as long "as our friends want us and need us" (Times).

Peter Stothard writing in the Times under the heading "Can Thatcher sway Bush?" previews tomorrow's Camp David talks. He says that Bush is naturally negative; you may need to egg him on. He is naturally averse to risk; you will want him to stick his neck out. His is the more cautious and pragmatic mind. You will want to remind him that there is more to pragmatism than trimming a sail to the prevailing wind.

Guardian says you are preparing for a head on clash with President Bush over American proposals for radical cuts in defence.

FT says US considering large cut in forces in Europe and Asia in response to easing international tension and pressure on the US defence budget. Cuts could go well beyond CFE talks in Vienna. Bush has said they will not take unilateral action.

FT says you face restrained welcome in US. Special relationship has begun to lose its shine - for Bush there is no one special relationship: he favours strong ties with Kohl and Mitterrand. Moreover US policy has developed and takes a more positive view of European integration than its predecessors and believes US interests are best served by Britain playing a full part in Europe.

Dubcek joins demand for resignation of Czech party leaders.

Mitterrand, speaking at EuroParliament, and Kohl, in statement, step up pressure on you to speed up EMU.

PRESS DIGEST

Telegraph leads with scarcely veiled threat to Britain by Andriessen of being relegated to second tier Europe if you stand out against EMU. He pointedly adds; if one country is tempted to go back to EFTA it is up to that state.

Independent editorial says that the precise nature of the Delors suggestions are less important than his recognition of the need to change the present institutional arrangements within the EC. Improvements could lessen the dangers of pressures, from Germany's eastern neighbours, hampering progress within the EC. If Britain is not to be marginalised, it must play a full, whole-hearted role in shaping these changes.

Chancellor Kohl, at the European Parliament yesterday, firmly supported the French call for swift integration of the EC, and clearly rebuffed your contention that there should be a pause to take stock of events in East Europe (Times).

EC Commision has unveiled tentative proposals in making Europe's railway companies more open (FT).

Market nervousness ahead of today's trade figures. Mail welcomes way sterling has been allowed to take the strain since Lawson went.

Assassins kill Lebanon's new president after only 17 days in office; at least 17 others killed and 36 wounded in bomb blast. Atrocity plunges the nation into its worst political crisis, killing hopes of peace and sending the country on a slide towards partition.

Mail leads with picture of No 12 Downing Street from FCO taken by a staff reporter who penetrated security without being challenged, highlighting, it says, IRA oportunity to mount attack against Cabinet. Leader attacks "security shambles".

Lump sum payments to haemophiliacs who have caught the HIV virus to be announced today after your meeting with MPs yesterday.

Mirror presents it as a climbdown.

AIDS virus among infants growing in sub-Sahara Africa. Nearly 8,000 have been born infected by HIV. By 1992 figures will have risen to 250,000 (FT).

PRESS DIGEST

Pressure on Government grows over war widows' pensions. Times leader under the heading "A Time to Remember Them" says that half a century after the Second World War began there remains a sense of grievance and injustice. These war widows are a special case and that they should now feel financially disadvantaged reflects poorly on the post-war generation. West Germany and Japan, the nations which were defeated in the war, treat servicemen's widows more generously than we do.

Kenneth Clarke claims striking ambulancemen have neglected and abandoned emergency patients in dispute and ignored 999 calls. London Service publishes list of 999 calls unanswered.

Government sets 240p as price of water shares; 4.3million people register for sale. Labour says every taxpayer is subsidising an unnecessary sell off.

Press claim that up to 24p a share profit will be instantly on tap when trading starts.

City expects a successful launch.

FT puts cost of privatisation for the 10 water companies at £62million - 3 times the cost of any previous issue.

National Rivers Authority says none of Britain's beaches is likely to meet the EC's environmental standards as it is impossible to guarantee that they are free from the risk of pollution (Times).

Nicholas Ridley pledges full Government support for any MP who introduces legislation to outlaw computer abuse. Times leader is critical of the Government's not bringing forward its own Bill to outlaw computer hacking saying that to tolerate hacking a minute longer than necessary, as Nicholas Ridley appears willing to do, is to indulge non-intervention to an extravagant degree.

Independent says expectation that the Government's grant to the railways is to be cut by a further 25% is likely to lead to fares increases to fund safety and modernisation demanded by the Clapham inquiry. Morale amongst BR managers is already at an all time low, exacerbated by the Government's difficulty in finding a new chairman.

Oftel director-general says that the record 32,000 complaints against BT shows there is a need for more competition in the telecommunications field.

PRESS DIGEST

Dutch investigators say firm knowingly sold lead contaminated cattle feed which affected 1,400 British farms (Times).

British executives languish far behind pay of best in Europe, but have more perks, notably office cars and share options.

Treasury expect modest fall in rate of wage rises next year to around 8.5% (FT).

Greater protection for pub tenants announced by Nicholas Ridley - who said they should be able to shop around for the best deal without being penalised by landlords (FT).

Pig Improvement Co to supply 2,000 breeding animals to Ukraine.

Council tenants in England owe nearly £500million (Times).

Kenneth Clarke predicts there will be more pay beds in NHS hospitals under reforms.

Telegraph leader says Kenneth Clarke must press ahead with the NHS Bill regardless of obstacles, secure in the knowledge that what he is doing is right for patients.

Waste disposal industry has agreed to a disciplinary code (FT).

British scientists discover link between diesel fumes and lung cancer (Times).

Application to go to polytechnics or higher education colleges expected to be up by 14% next year (Times).

You have appointed Lord Justice Stuart-Smith to be an independent watchdog of MI5 (Times).

Archbishop of Canterbury attacks cowards responsible for IRA atrocity at Deal at Canterbury memorial service.

"Engineer" magazine journalist ordered by High Court Judge to reveal his source for a potentially damaging article involving leaked financial information (Independent).

100 MPs sign Commons all party motion calling for Government study in pornography.

PRESS DIGEST

Reports that your award of Woman of the Decade was greeted with slow handclapping at the Palladium and that Cilla Black tells audience not to knock you - you put the Great back into Great Britain.

15 arrests during protest march by 4,000 students in London yesterday over introduction of loans (FT).

Dutch funded study group draws up outlines for a world treaty to limit global warming caused by fossil fuels, with the main premise being to limit rise in Earth's temperature to 2°C above the present temperatures.

Labour peer Lord Houghton moves to block the abortion amendment through introduction of his own Bill (INdependent).

32 died during first day of Indian elections (FT).

San Salvador hotel siege ends peacefully.

Independent sees the removal of Party leaders in Moscow and Leningrad as a move by Gorbachev to avoid humiliating defeat for the Communist Party should they have been candidates at forthcoming local elections.

MEYER etc

Sun p1 - Peter Morrison calls on constituency chiefs to impose loyalty tests on MPs. Inside - 10 things you didn't know about Sir Anthony Whatshisname.

Mirror p2 - Tory MP makes bid for Thatcher's job. First challenge in 14 years as party leader. Editorial asks where are Heseltine, Baker, Walker, Major, King, Howe and others who want your job. Hiding, it says, behind an older man. Nobody with the ability to be Prime Minister has yet had the guts to come forward unlike you when you took on Ted Heath.

Today p2 - Stalking donkey. No hopper MP to take on Maggie in leadership vote. Hopes to win 20-30 votes and that 70 will abstain. Leader on "PM's empty challenger" says if Howe or Heseltine think they are fit to step into your shoes they should have the guts to stand against you. The only ones who would vote for a no-hoper like Meyer are the mischief makers. There is nothing more contemptible than a would-be political leader who sends someone else over the top to test which way the bullets are flying. Voters will not forgive that kind of coward.

PRESS DIGEST

Express p1 lead - Sir Nobody takes on Maggie. Whitelaw urges Tories to stick by Thatcher. Pressure mounts on Sir Geoffrey Howe to speak out against rebels and stand four square behind the Prime Minister. Chris Buckland writes about "a suicide mission by an old Etonian". Leader says Meyer is about to earn himself a footnote in political history. How big a footnote will depend on how sound the Tories' instinct is for survival. If the Tories were to toss aside their greatest asset now they would gravely damage their chances of winning the next election. And it calls on the present Deputy Prime Minister, bearing in mind the former deputy Prime Minister's call yesterday, to stop Meyer challenge. Sir Geoffrey seems determined to be the dog that does not bark in the night.

Mail p2 - Whitelaw: back Maggie. Report says that if 80 MPs come up in opposition you face the run up to the election with your credibility in question.

Times p1 lead - Lord Whitelaw delivers stern warning to Tory MPs telling them to stop their internal intrigues over party leadership challenge. Peter Morrison demands that all Ministers declare their personal loyalty to you. Meyer says he would not expect to attract a large number of votes, but the number of abstentions would carry its own message about waning support for you.

Separate story in the Times about Meyer describes him as an old-style patrician Tory of the decidedly wet tradition who has always had an uneasy relationship with his constituency party.

Kenneth Baker warns a challenge to your leadership would be an "irrelevant distraction" in an interview with the FT. He signalled that the Government expects to run to mid 1992 before calling an election; you need time to bring inflation down and restore the economy's growth rate.

Ronald Butt in the Times says Meyer's willingness to stand against you for the Party leadership is a foolish business because nothing can come of it, except damage to the Tory cause. Whoever succeeds you will almost certainly come from within the present Cabinet but none of them is going to rock the boat. He adds that the only feasible justification for a contest would be if there arose one of those genuine issues which deeply divide the Conservative Party once or twice a century. Europe is the only possible issue of that sort and it is one which you would probably win.

PRESS DIGEST

Independent examines the factions in the Tory Party expected to mount or support a challenger to your leadership. Saying you have made a lot of enemies over the last decade, the paper refers to the 40 ex-ministers on the backbenches most of whom resent the method of their departure. Underlying all those who are politically disaffected there is a predominantly personal antipathy towards you. But many who support the next generation of potential Prime Ministers will support you in any leadership election to keep out Messrs Howe or Heseltine.

Independent - Viscount Whitelaw warned Tory MPs the party risked electoral defeat if they continued the divisive spate of "gossip, rumour and internal intrigue". Peter Morrison called for public declarations of support for you from all frontbench colleagues, after rumours Mr Ridley now considers you a "lame duck".

Telegraph p1 - Whitelaw urges party to be loyal.

Guardian says Meyer describes himself as a "burnt offering". Leader says he is not the best placed to present a fair test of opinion. But the fury and knife work against him should be contained. Meyer is prepared to provide a focal point for discussion and decision on absolutely legitimate matters of political concern.

Hugo Young, in the Guardian, says unless someone more plausible than Meyer comes forward the challenge is likely to have two results - a derisory vote after unhelpful aggravation; and enough of an overwhelming victory to rule out your departure before the election.

COMMONS TV

In his commentary on the televising of Parliament, Peter Jenkins, in the Independent, argues that the impact on the political process may be significant, with TV tending to take away the natural advantage enjoyed by the Government in the Chamber. Reputations may be made, or more often broken.

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DEM: Mr Fowler addresses the Businessman of the Year dinner, Birmingham
- DES: Mr MacGregor delivers short address to the Braintree Industrial Consultative Council
- DH: Mr Clarke and Lady Hooper attend press conference on Warnock Bill
- DTI Mr Ridley meets UK Ambassador to Korea
- DEM: Mr Eggar makes opening speech at the Small Firms Policy and Research conference at the Barbican, London
- DEM: Mr Nicholls visits Sotherby's new painting exhibition, London
- DES: Mrs Rumbold visits Central School of Ballet
- DH: Mr Freeman meets members of the Association of Community Health Councils for England and Wales; later, with Lady Hooper attends press conference on the Food Bill
- DH: Mrs Bottomley meets Sir A Graham of the Joint Consultants Committee, London
- DTI: Mr Hogg addresses European Structural Funds conference, London
- DTp: Mr Atkins addresses British Federation of University Women on "Transport Problems of the 1990s"
- FCO: Mr Waldegrave addresses the UK South African Trade Association, Hyde Park Hotel, on Southern Africa
- HO: Lord Ferrers attends Metropolitan Police five-a-side football competition, Wembley
- OAL: Mr Luce speaks at Royal Institute of Public Administration seminar on Civil Service Reform, London; later addresses launch of British Library/Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts Conservation Fund, London
- WO: Mr Roberts visits Mobile Life Education Centre Classroom, Grinling Gibbons School, Deptford
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MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- DSS: Mrs Shephard visits Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, West Germany
- DTI: Mr Redwood attends Internal Market Council, Brussels
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TV AND RADIO

"Hard News" Ch 4 (20.00)

"Analysis" BBC Radio 4 (20.00) with Peter Hennessy

"This Week" ITV (20.30)

"Question Time" BBC 1 (22.00) with Kenneth Baker MP, Menzies Campbell MP, Bryan Gould MP and Chantel Cuer