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CABINET

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet
held at 10 Downing Street on
MONDAY 11 MAY 1987
at 11.00 am

P R E S E N T

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister

The Rt Hon Viscount Whitelaw
Lord President of the Council

The Rt Hon Lord Hailsham of St Marylebone
Lord Chancellor

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and
Commonwealth Affairs

The Rt Hon Nigel Lawson MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer

The Rt Hon Douglas Hurd MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department

The Rt Hon Peter Walker MP
Secretary of State for Energy

The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP
Secretary of State for Wales

The Rt Hon John Biffen MP
Lord Privy Seal

The Rt Hon Norman Fowler MP
Secretary of State for Social Services

The Rt Hon Norman Tebbit MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

The Rt Hon Tom King MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

The Rt Hon Michael Jopling MP
Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and
Food

The Rt Hon Nicholas Ridley MP
Secretary of State for the Environment

The Rt Hon Lord Young of Graffham
Secretary of State for Employment

The Rt Hon Kenneth Baker MP
Secretary of State for Education and Science

The Rt Hon Kenneth Clarke QC MP
Paymaster General

The Rt Hon John MacGregor MP
Chief Secretary, Treasury

The Rt Hon Malcolm Rifkind QC MP
Secretary of State for Scotland

The Rt Hon Paul Channon MP
Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

The Rt Hon John Moore MP
Secretary of State for Transport

ALSO PRESENT

The Rt Hon John Wakeham MP
Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury

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SECRETARY

Sir Robert Armstrong

CONTENT

DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT AND GENERAL ELECTION

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DISSOLUTION
OF PARLIAMENT
AND GENERAL
ELECTION

THE PRIME MINISTER said that, after discussion with a number of senior colleagues the previous day, she had decided, subject to the agreement of the Cabinet, to seek The Queen's agreement to an early Dissolution of Parliament and General Election.

There were three principal reasons for calling an early General Election -

a. To put an end to the climate of uncertainty that had been created by speculation about the date of an Election.

b. To enable the Government to seek and if possible secure a mandate for the substantial plans of policy development which the Government had in mind, and to provide the prospect of a further term of office in which to put those plans into effect.

c. At a time when there were considerable international issues at stake, to end any uncertainty about the British position on those issues, and to ensure continuing consistency of policy.

The Prime Minister said that she would propose to The Queen that Parliament should be dissolved on Monday 18 May 1987, without prior Prorogation. This would provide opportunities to secure the passage of as much outstanding legislation as possible through Parliament before Dissolution. The General Election would be held on 11 June 1987. The new Parliament would be summoned for Wednesday 17 June and the State Opening of Parliament would be on Thursday 25 June 1987.

The Prime Minister would seek an audience with The Queen to tender her advice at 12.30 pm that morning. Thereafter advance notice would be given to the Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leaders of the Alliance Parties, and the Leader of the Official Unionist Party. The decision would be announced in a press statement from 10 Downing Street at 2.00 pm that day.

Cabinet Ministers would meet at 10 Downing Street on Tuesday 12 May 1987 to approve the Manifesto. It would not be possible to take major amendments; the purpose of the meeting would be to correct any remaining errors or statements that might be subject to misrepresentation.

There would be a regular meeting of the Cabinet on Thursday 14 May.

Guidance for Ministers on certain matters of procedure and conduct during the Election would be issued shortly.

That year's Economic Summit meeting of the Heads of State or Government of the seven major industrialised countries was due to be held in Venice from Monday 8 to Wednesday 10 June. Her present plan was to attend the working dinner of Heads of State or Government on the first evening and the formal meeting of Heads of State or Government on the morning of Tuesday 9 June. This would enable her to take the party press conference in London on the morning of 8 June and to attend an eye of poll rally on the evening of 9 June. The Foreign and Commonwealth

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Secretary planned to be in Venice throughout the Economic Summit meeting; the Chancellor of the Exchequer was expected to attend the meeting on Tuesday 9 June.

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL said that he would tell the House of Commons at 3.30 pm that a revised business statement would be made later in the day; the statement would, if possible, be made at 7.00 pm; if not at that time, then at 10.00 pm. He indicated to the Cabinet the business which it was hoped, subject to agreement with the Opposition, to complete up to 15 May.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL said that the House of Lords was expected to complete the Third Reading of the Abolition of Domestic Rates (Scotland) Bill that afternoon. Other business would be completed during the week, although there might be some difficulty with the Alliance Parties in relation to the Carriers Bill and the Criminal Justice Bill.

The following points arose in discussion -

- a. Unemployment figures for April would be published on Thursday 14 May. The latest figures for the Retail Price Index would be published on Friday 15 May. Balance of Payments figures for April would be published on Thursday 28 May. The current week would see the publication of the latest figures of reported crime in London.
- b. In the European Community, there would be meetings during the period of the Election campaign of the Council of Ministers (Environment), (Steel), and (Transport). The Council of Ministers (Agriculture) would begin its discussion of the farm price review for 1987 on Monday 18 May. The process was likely to be long and contentious, and decisions were not likely to be reached until after the Election.
- c. There was to be a meeting of the International Labour Organisation at Geneva on 20 May to consider complaints by the teachers' unions about the loss of negotiating rights. The Government response to the unions' complaints had not yet been submitted, and it was likely that any substantive discussion would be postponed until September.
- d. There would be a meeting of the North Atlantic Council on 11 and 12 June. Further consideration would be given as to how the Government should be represented at that meeting.
- e. The present round of action being taken by two Civil Service unions would be coming to an end shortly. The unions concerned had not yet decided whether to continue their campaign of action at the same level or to proceed to some more drastic form of industrial action.

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THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL said that he was in no doubt that his colleagues in the Cabinet would agree with those who had met the previous day that the decision which the Prime Minister had taken was right. He expressed appreciation of all the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster had done to make possible an informed and considered decision. Those of his colleagues who would not themselves be contesting seats in the Election would want to wish the Prime Minister and their other colleagues all possible success and good fortune.

The Cabinet -

Took note, with approval, that the Prime Minister would that morning advise The Queen to dissolve Parliament on Monday 18 May 1987 with a view to a General Election on Thursday 11 June 1987.

Cabinet Office

11 May 1987

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