

March 29, 1990

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

Prime Minister to see Russian schoolgirls

Konigswinter 40th conference, Cambridge - Prime Minister and Chancellor Kohl to attend

EC: Transport Council, Brussels (to March 30)

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STATISTICS

DEN: Energy trends

DES: Education statistics in the UK

OPCS: Mortality and Geography: Dicennial supplement no 9

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PUBLICATIONS

HMT: Banking Services White Paper, CFRs at 9am, published at 3.30pm

DTI: British companies' compliance with the EC code of conduct on South Africa

HO: International telephone crime survey

HO: Notifiable offences recorded by the police, 1989

HO: Chief Inspector of Prisons report on HM Prison Manchester and Board of Visitors annual report

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PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Northern Ireland; Prime Minister

Business: Motions on Community Charge Benefit Regulations. Details will be given in the Official Report  
OPPOSED PRIVATE BUSINESS  
Exmouth Docks Bill  
Criminal Justice (International Co-operation) Bill (Lords):  
Remaining Stages

Adjournment Debates: Women's gynaecological privacy (Miss E Nicholson)

Select Committees: COMMITTEES ON PRIVATE BILLS  
Cardiff Bay Barrage Bill [Lords]  
King's Cross Railways Bill

Lords: Starred Questions  
Education (Student Loans) Bill: Third Reading  
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions)(Scotland) Bill (HL):  
Committee (3rd Day)  
Community Charge Benefits (General) ) Motions  
Amendment Regulations 1990 ) for  
Community Charge Benefits (General) ) Approval  
Amendment No 2 Regulations 1990 )



PRESS DIGESTMain News

The news is dominated by the Customs & Excise operation - described by Mirror as The Nuclear Sting - against attempts to export nuclear detonators to Iraq. Sun says world recoiled in horror at news.

One Iraqi deported; three other people charged. Houses to be searched in North West and Scotland today.

Kaufman calls for Govt statement.

Iraqi Ambassador denies his country is involved.

The arrests bring forth a new anti-Saddam Hussein campaign - Madman hoping to blow up the world (Star).

Today - "Switch in time saves the world".

Independent adds that Iraq has jets and missiles to deliver nuclear bombs. UK-Iraq relations close to breaking point, with latest incident bringing this one step nearer.

Some 300 friends and colleagues attend memorial service for Bazoft (Independent).

You send a cool-it message to Gorbachev over Lithuania. Mail says you urged him not to panic.

Times says you urge need for restraint on all sides in Lithuania in 50-minute phone conversation with Gorbachev. Meanwhile paper carries a letter from Zamyatin warning of chaos with unpredictable consequences if the Lithuanians continue to maintain their independence.

Lithuania - hopes of early talks failed as a tense stand off developed over the fate of 1000 Red Army deserters (FT).

Peter Jenkins, writing in the Independent, previews the Konigswinter dinner and Anglo/German summit. Saying relations have been made worse by your lack of enthusiasm for unification; but he sees tentative signs British policy may be edging towards closer European involvement, while Kohl is recognising more the legitimate interests of others in the German question. He concludes Konigswinter provides the perfect opportunity for both of you to open a new chapter of reconciliation and friendship.

PRESS DIGEST

Times - Bonn correspondent says that both you and Kohl will publicly do your utmost to smooth over the differences and tensions which have developed since the idea of German unification moved irresistably on to the world's agenda. The personal relationship between the two has often been awkward. Kohl is heavy handed but increasingly confident and powerful; you are adroit but increasingly wrongfooted and with diminishing influence.

Senior officials on both sides have fingers crossed all will go smoothly in Anglo-German Summit which is overshadowed by Bonn's public rebuke to you over Der Spiegel interview (Independent).

FT leader on Anglo-German summit says it is worrying relations between you and Kohl are not better. By no means all the faults have been on the British side. Kohl's has not always been the easiest govt to deal with. The leader calls on you both to repair some of the damage in the next day or two otherwise there is some danger that Britain will become increasingly the odd man out, posing as a guardian of a world that no longer exists.

East German industry even more ineffective than thought with production output per head as low as 30% of that in West Germany (FT).

Row over Granada naming four men they claim are the real Birmingham bombers as part of campaign to free Six. Benn says it will deny men a fair trial. Geoffrey Dickens objects to "trial by TV".

Chris Mullin MP claims that on all the evidence the six should be free.

Today says there is nothing wrong with naming suspects on TV; police do it regularly.

West Midlands police defend the convictions of Birmingham Six in the face of a new inquiry ordered by the Home Office and last night's Granada TV programme, alleging Granada had been "selective in the facts they use ... to influence public opinion" (Independent).

Governor of Bank forecasts peak for inflation around 9% in early summer.

Independent says Governor backs John Major against your public position on British entry to the ERM (Independent).

PRESS DIGEST

Leon Brittan in the Times urges full EMS membership this year as the key to inflation's cure.

Guardian leader says you are looking more isolated than ever on ERM. If ERM fails to deliver lower inflation and greater currency stability you will have genuine ammunition against committing Britain to the more rigorous discipline of full monetary union.

Terence Higgins MP says pressure to join the ERM is increasing considerably for understandable reasons.

Governor tells Select Cttee that most of the conditions, apart from inflation, for UK entry in to the ERM had been met.

Report that three major estate agents, Halifax, Pru and Hambro, lost £100million between them last year.

Nicholas Ridley accused of stonewalling at DTI Select Cttee over his handling of Fayeds affair, says he did not have to explain his reasons for not acting against the Fayeds and he did not intend to do so.

Rover close to reaching deal on 24 hour working.

B/Rail to scrap monthly return tickets in Network South East area - fear this will lead to back door fare increases (FT).

Community charge

Liverpool sets charge at £449.28 - Tories wanted to fix one £100 less.

Times - At least 18 Liverpool Labour councillors face disciplinary action for defying local and national party orders and voting against setting a community charge. Meanwhile Chris Patten is said to be anxious to keep charge capping to a minimum, suspecting that the exercise could be counterproductive, with capped authorities winning maximum publicity by cutting services in the most sensitive areas.

SLD propose a 5% of taxable income impost as their solution to community charge.

PRESS DIGEST

Times leader looks at the whole philosophy of introducing the community charge and questions what the Labour Party would do should they come to power. It says the community charge now appears, as many experts predicted, to lack both fiscal coherence and political judgement but goes on to describe the "horrors of a local income tax".

Bishop of Coventry accused of encouraging people to break the law by refusing to pay charge in leaflet which draws comparisons with Peasants' Revolt.

Hyundai, Korean car makers, offer to pay charge for buyers of their cars.

Express intensifies campaign for charge concessions for student nurses.

Govt comes under pressure from all sides of the Lords to undertake review of the charge. (Independent).

Row over Gurkha troops having to pay charge.

Pay "war" in retailing: Tesco offer 70,000 staff a new deal by raising hourly rates by one-sixth after big settlements by Sainsbury and Marks & Spencer.

Express welcomes training credits as imaginative. It hopes it will be followed by education vouchers.

Sun writer asks who says crime doesn't pay? TGWU Left-wing have got away with ballot rigging and strengthened their hold on the executive.

Sun wants to know why Nicholas Ridley has referred B/Airways 20% bid for Sabena to MMC. Open Skies and small minds go ill together.

Olympia and York dismiss Ellis Don McAlpine management team on Canary Wharf Tower which is six months behind.

The future of Britain's clean energy programme looks bleak after a decision by the EC to approve a revised British electricity privatisation plan (Times).

AEA to shed 2,000 more staff to cut costs by £40million and generate more income from non-nuclear work.

PRESS DIGEST

Michael Heseltine, speaking at St James's Church, Piccadilly, launches a couple of vigorous attacks on the church leadership and defends you gallantly (Times).

Robin Oakley in the Times says Ministers are admitting that the crucial test of Conservative nerves this year is likely to follow the local council elections, the first national measure of public feeling on the community charge.

Labour Party decides that constituency candidates will be chosen on basis of one man one vote, eliminating unions' block vote; shelves plan to make staff leave if they secure a Parliamentary seat.

Labour Party Socialists, as they call themselves, resolve to set up new hardline group seeking defence cuts and return to unilateralism.

Sun columnist says Glenda Jackson is ideal choice as Labour candidate for Hampstead & Highgate. Like many of those she would represent she hasn't done a proper day's work for years and is now so rich she can afford to vote Labour.

CBI survey finds only 40% of 10% of firms who responded claim to have any pollution policy. Industry slowly becoming more conscious of environmental responsibilities. Today says Govt must send them some crisp price signals.

Draft official report says global warming will cost each Briton £116 in coastal defences (Independent).

RCN conference told that doctors are asking nurses to keep patients alive for 24 hours after hospital admission to avoid an inquest (Times).

New and existing drugs will be given up to 10 years of additional protection after their patents expire in EC plans to help European drugs industry regain the lead in research lost to the US and Japan (Times).

AEA Technology, Britain's only source of radio medical isotopes, will close this weekend (Independent).

Paul Foot, in Mirror, identifies as one of your bodyguards, though does not name him - an inspector who was in charge of a police operation in which a black, Winston Rose, choked to death in 1981.

PRESS DIGEST

Judge at Guildhall Crown Court, in giving suspended sentence to squatter who broke into a pensioner's home says "If I am asked to send someone to prison for breaking into a property and using it as a squat I would say the Minister connected with housing should serve a similar sentence alongside him". Mirror interprets this as a call to jail Michael Spicer "over the homeless crisis".

DSS installing a computer which will list individuals believed to be involved in organised crime, in an attempt to combat the problem (Independent).

Mail says Rittner quits after row with Palumbo.

Independent editorial looks at the resignation of the general secretary fo the Arts Council, saying in many ways his departure is opportune. It concludes there will be plenty of strategic issues to occupy his successor.

Figures due to be released today will indicate that the overall rate of reported crime is again on the increase, providing further embarrassment for ministers who have always prized their law and order record (Times).

Tom King restyles the notion of a "peace dividend" as a "forces dividend", declaring his ambition that UK Forces should be "smaller but better" (Independent).

Telegraph leader says the way ahead for British policy towards NATO must be to encourage the French back into the Alliance and to keep the Germans in and begin a public debate on its future.

US and Japan have reached an agreement to co-operate on research in military technology, which is seen as an important preliminary to much greater future collaboration (Times).

Foreign Secy in Paris says Britain wants full French participation in the new NATO (Times).

Supporters of Mugabe accused of violence and intimidation in election in Zimbabwe.

China poised to resume missile exports to Middle East, Western military experts say (Independent).

Fears that proposals in Hong Kong Passport Bill are even more elitist than expected will lead to fresh eruption of the row on this, when Bill published next week (Independnet).

PRESS DIGEST

Rising toll of deaths in battles between ANC and Inkatha in South Africa.

South African army and police reinforcements rushed to townships in Natal in an attempt to quell heavy fighting between rival blacks.

IRAQ

Star leader headed "We must curb this mad man" says Hussein would not hesitate to use nuclear weapons even if it precipitated World War III. And he will probably succeed in getting his hands on the equipment sooner or later. The civilised world must unite to keep Iraq under control.

Mirror leader says Saddam Hussein has rightly been called the Butcher of Baghdad - the monster who authorised the use of chemical weapons against Iranians and Kurds and hanged Bazoft. For the sake of harmony he cannot be permitted to have nuclear weapons. This is a perfect case for the UN Security Council which should instruct Hussein to dismantle his nuclear military plant.

Times says Britain has been concerned in the past about an extensive network of companies set up here by Iraq as a way of acquiring military equipment and skills. But we have been keen to preserve relations and influence in an area where links with Syria, Libya and Iran have been cut. Leader says that the revelation should put Britain's relations with Hussein's repugnant regime into the deepest of deep freezers. Brilliant detective work has stopped Iraq in its tracks, but the case exposes the imperative need for more systematic pre-emptive action.

Independent editorial says that over the past few years Saddam Hussein has in every sense got away with murder. Adding that it is possible the discovery of nuclear triggers destined for Iraq will arouse sufficient alarm to shake the world from its tendency to indulge the Butcher of Baghdad, it concludes Saddam would be unwise to assume he can pursue his ambitions indefinitely without retribution. If that comes, it is hard to imagine many people would object.

(Also an article in Independent by Robert Fisk on "Iraq's grand executioner" saying Bazoft was only one of several thousand show trial victims).

PRESS DIGEST

Express leader headed "A nuclear nightmare for West" says less than two weeks after Bazoft's execution we have caught the Iraqis red-handed trying to smuggle nuclear triggers. The prospect that one of the world's main terrorist regimes is poised to go nuclear is not something the West can view with indifference. It does not rule out an international military strike to deal with threat.

Mail leader says it doesn't bear thinking about what would happen if some Middle East mad man were to get his hands on nuclear weapons. But think about it we must. It is an ever real threat. We must keep our ears and eyes open, our alliances in good repair. And we must not ditch our nuclear deterrent or irresponsibly run down our conventional forces. At this time it is reassuring this Govt is led by a woman for whom security has never been a dirty word.

Guardian leader says Britain must reconsider its excessively mild reaction to Bazoft's execution. There must now, at the very least, be an outright ban on all other technology exports which support the industrial machine of his destabilising regime.

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DH: Mr Clarke meets Bedfordshire MP's, London
- DOE: Mr Patten launches Building Research Agency
- DEM: Mr Nicholls addresses Consort Hotels Parliamentary Forum lunch, London; later visits Stafford to address industrialists and present awards and certificates
- DEN: Mr Morrison opens Hotels '90 Seminar, Portsmouth
- DES: Mrs Rumbold visits Duchess High School, Alnwick, Northumberland
- DH: Mrs Bottomley addresses the Suzy Lamplugh Trust conference "Working with the Sexual Offender", London
- DH: Mr Freeman attends opening of EMI Unit, Hastings Health Authority; later attends signing of agreement on the Read Classification System
- DOE: Mr Chope visits Cambridgeshire PSA
- DOE: Mr Moynihan addresses Metropolitan Planning Officers Society annual conference, Stockport; later attends Boxing Writers' Club annual dinner, The Savoy, London
- SO: Mr Lang addresses 'Energy Management in Middle Education'
- DOE: Mr Heathcoat-Amory addresses CBI conference
- DTI: Mr Forth visits Fairfields Primary School, Basingstoke language training project
- DTI: Lord Trefgarne visits EXPO '92 Regional Promotions Tour, Cardiff
- DTI: Mr Hogg attends reception for Society of British Aerospace Companies, QEII Conference Centre, London
- DTp: Mr Portillo visits BREL Works at Derby
- DTp: Mr Atkins launches ROSPA "Cycleway", Guildhall, London
- DTp: Mr McLaughlin gives speech to Interports 1990, Southampton
- HO: Lord Ferrers addresses conference on Prevention and Treatment of Sexual Offenders; later attends Royal Institution of British Architecture seminar on the Taylor report
- OAL: Mr Luce speaks at re-opening of Sale Library, Cheshire
- WO: Mr Grist attends reception to mark the re-opening of East Wing Picture Galleries, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff

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MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- DOE: Mr Spicer visits Paris re Homelessness
- DTp: Mr Parkinson attends EC Council, Brussels (to 30 March)
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MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

FCO: Mr Hurd interviewed by Hugo Young, The Guardian

DTI: Lord Trefgarne interviewed by BBC TV and HTV

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TV AND RADIO

"Yes Minister" BBC2 (8.00 pm)

"Nature" BBC2 (8.30 pm) Michael Buerk reports on the need for action to tackle the world's environment crisis

"This Week" ITV (8.30 pm) Report on the Government's national health service reforms

"Question Time" BBC1 (10.15 pm) With Virginia Bottomley, Alan Beith, Gavin Laird and Bishop of Durham

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