

Prime MinisterPublicity during the Summer Recess

This recess is particularly important since it could mark the last Party Conference season before the next Election. In any event it will be important psychologically to build up our activity so that the Party is in good heart for the start of the next Parliamentary session in early/mid-November.

There are three different phases to the recess.

1. August

Inevitably a difficult month, since resources will be depleted and the public's eye distracted. This makes it less productive to launch a major initiative during the month. However, we must be ready to deal with the unexpected. There must be a strong emphasis on fire-fighting.

- We need at least one senior Cabinet colleague (preferably a member of this Group) who can speak for the Government, and one Minister in each Department who can speak if necessary for the Secretary of State, available throughout the recess.
- We must have contingency plans for dealing with crucial issues like stability in the inner cities and South Africa. For example, I do not believe that inner city disturbances should be left to junior ministers to deal with.
- Each Department should be required now to look ahead to the end of the recess at the announcements, published statistics and other relevant events and establish the best way of presenting this.
- In addition, Departments should note carefully the dates for the implementation of any legislative or other changes. Departments should notify your office and Central Office of all significant dates arising during the recess.

I recommend:

- You raise these points at Cabinet and ask your Office, in consultation with the Duchy Office and Robin Harris, to draw up a full list of Ministerial availability and Departmental dates on the lines set up above.
- We agree to drawing up a full calendar of political events for the Recess;
- I shall appoint a Duty Vice-Chairman who will speak for the Party on appropriate matters during this period

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- I shall write to all of our MPs asking them to take advantage of any media opportunity during August, particularly regional television and radio programmes, if necessary by telephone.
- Cabinet colleagues should be encouraged to seek media opportunities through signed articles and interviews. I shall write to key colleagues and offer to supplement the drafting contributions of their Special Advisers with the facilities CRD and the media contacts of the Central Office Press Office.

2. September

The TUC gathering on 1st September marks the start of the Conference season. We must be ready to set the scene for opposition conferences and not be content simply with responding to them. This is particularly important in the case of the Labour Party, for we should assume that on their own the TUC and Labour Conferences could be public relations successes on key issues such as Militant expulsions, trade union law and renationalisation.

- Central Office has given considerable thought to initiatives against the "Alliance" and Labour Parties between July and October. I attach as an Annex to this Minute what we have in hand.
- All Cabinet colleagues should be asked to reiterate throughout September a theme compatible with the theme for our own Conference - which we should discuss at a subsequent meeting of this Group.

I recommend that, in addition to the activities identified for August:

- Cabinet colleagues be encouraged to co-operate as closely as possible in supporting the themes set out in the run-up to the Party Conference and the efforts to expose the inconsistent policies of the Opposition.
- Colleagues should be encouraged to "step up" their media activity, particularly in the days before Opposition conferences.
- We should consider which of the potential initiatives I have outlined later could be most usefully timed for September, rather than October/November.

3. October/November

Our own Conference should mark the start of a concerted period of activity in building up to the Queen's Speech. Once again, we should agree a clear theme or themes during

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this period which all colleagues can reinforce.

- In October/November (or earlier if needed) Central Office should be in a position to launch campaigns aimed at students at universities and polytechnics, and, more generally, at younger voters. We shall be able to take a major initiative on the media monitoring front in the form of a professional analysis of BBC News Reporting. We would hope to be able to arrange the launch of "Businessmen for Britain". After the summer break, we will be renewing our direct mailing activities, not only to Party members but also to home owners and share-owners in privatised industries. All of this will be linked in with our critical seats operation.
- I would hope also to be in a position to launch publicity campaigns on the Health Service and Education, and towards pensioners. These should clearly follow the directions of any campaigns being pursued by the DHSS and DES.
- I have also discussed with the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for Defence the recreation of the governmental unit to deal with CND and the issues of nuclear defence.

I recommend:

- Norman Fowler and Kenneth Baker should be asked to present papers to this group on their proposals for possible Health Service, pensioners and education campaigns, having discussed these with me, before the summer recess.
- Similarly, I should consult with the Foreign Secretary and the Defence Secretary about the best timing for an anti-CND campaign - aimed at the "Alliance" as well as Labour - and report back before the recess to this group.
- We agree, on the basis of the discussions outlined above, a detailed plan for the launch of our various campaigns/ initiatives for the latter half of the recess.

I am sending copies of this paper to all Members of the Group.

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ANNEX

TACKLING THE OPPOSITION PARTIES DURING THE RECESS

1. The "Alliance"

The following publications for which maximum publicity will be sought are proposed.

The Research Department publishes an up-dated analysis of 'Alliance' policies in a document for MPs and Constituencies in July. It will be launched during the Newcastle-under-Lyme by-election.

We propose to distribute special versions of 'Newline' for both the SDP and Liberal Conferences focussing on those Parties.

A CPC pamphlet on the 'Alliance' defence policy split should be produced before the Liberal and SDP Conferences.

We expect in early August (postponed from 20th July) publication of the 'Alliance' document, Priorities for the 1990s. The document is likely to skate over difficult issues such as defence and energy. The Research Department will provide material for Ministers to pre-empt the publication and then to respond immediately through speeches and other means.

The Treasury exercise of costing 'Alliance' policies is, we believe, nearing completion. The results should be launched with maximum publicity, with which Central Office will fully co-operate, preferably before the 'Alliance' document appears. If slippage within the Treasury precludes that, publication and attendant speeches should be delayed till early September so as to have the maximum impact on the SDP and Liberal Conferences.

The Research Department will monitor the 'Alliance' Conferences and will call on Ministers to respond quickly, on the basis of briefing provided, to decisions which can be exploited: defence is a prime example.

2. The Labour Party

The Research Department are publishing a new pamphlet on the state of the Labour Party to be launched during the Newcastle-under-Lyme by-election. This up-dates the earlier publication of last December which attracted considerable publicity.

The Treasury are, I understand, concluding their work on up-dating Labour's spending pledges. A new figure will be circulated before the end of the Recess if it reveals a substantial change to the £24 billion figure currently used. Colleagues will be encouraged to make maximum use of this in speeches and in the House of Commons.

Once that exercise is complete, Chairmen of selected Back-Bench Committees will be approached to write open letters to the appropriate Labour Spokesmen challenging them to say which of their pledges they will drop in the light of Roy Hattersley's refusal to

accept the £24 billion (or more) total spending increase which has been promised.

Several initiatives are planned to reduce any favourable impact which the TUC and Labour Party Conferences may have and to re-inforce our fundamental charges against the Labour Party. In late August we expect publication of Labour Party documents on trade union law and renationalisation. As soon as we gain sufficient advance notice of the contents of those documents, the Research Department will approach Cabinet colleagues in the Economic Departments to challenge the Labour Party on what appear the weakest elements of their proposals.

We hope to be in a position to launch a direct mail appeal to shareholders of relevant privatised industries immediately following the publication.

The Research Department will also publish a pamphlet in the week before the Labour Party Conference with an introduction from the Party Chairman on the Left in Local Government. A separate pamphlet is planned but not yet agreed on the non-Militant Left, stressing the fact that Militant is only one element of the hard Left.

We also plan to initiate a telephone poll of Labour Candidates and MPs and Labour Local Government Leaders, similar to our successful telephone poll of 'Alliance' Candidates earlier this Summer on defence. No mention of this must be made at any time until it is carried out. Questions would focus on Militant expulsions, trade union law, unilateral disarmament, re-nationalisation and political control of the Police. We aim to publish the results after the documents on trade unions and renationalisation have been published, but before the Labour Party Conference. The Research Department will take responsibility for this.

Work is also in hand on a major publication which we hope would appear sometime before Christmas - a Directory of Labour Candidates showing the affiliations and record of all of those that we know about and which should demonstrate the considerable power of the hard Left in any future Labour parliamentary majority.