

# LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 11.00 date: 14.1.80

## PRIME MINISTER'S DAY

The United States Under-Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, had made a short call on the Prime Minister (1000 - 1015) accompanied by the United States Ambassador and Mr. Douglas Hurd.

The Prime Minister would visit the Department of Industry this morning - one of a series of departmental visits she is making; others included the Department of Energy, DHSS, MOD and the CSD. The Prime Minister will be in the House this afternoon for the statement on steel (Sir Keith Joseph) and Afghanistan (Mr. Douglas Hurd) and for the vote at 2200 hours on Tenants Rights (Scotland) Bill.

## IN THE HOUSE

### 3 Statements:

Revised Business Statement (Mr. St. John-Stevas);  
Steel (Sir Keith Joseph);  
Afghanistan (Mr. Douglas Hurd).

### There were 2 PNQs:

Mr. Peter Emery to ask the Prime Minister whether she will take the necessary action to ensure that legislation is enacted within the next 10 days to fulfil the promise in the Conservative Manifesto to deal with secondary picketing.

Mr. John Ryman to ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the proposed national strike action by the workers in the Water Industry and what contingency plans he has to meet the emergency.

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/AFGHANISTAN ...

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Christopher was here for talks with FCO before visiting Bonn, Paris and Brussels. He would leave the UK <sup>in the afternoon</sup> at ~~1200 noon today~~. The two main topics for discussion with FCO were Iran and Afghanistan. On Iran, he would be discussing follow up to the Soviet Union's veto in the Council on ways in which frustrations to our actions could be avoided; on Afghanistan, he would be discussing with European Governments appropriate steps, following the Soviet Union's action. We reminded the Lobby that the Foreign Affairs Council and the NATO Council would be meeting in Brussels tomorrow and we should await the outcome of these meetings to see what action would be taken.

STEEL

We expected no change in the Government's attitude and gave no encouragement to the suggestion that an inquiry should be set up before the unions "got round the table". We reminded the Lobby of the White Paper in early 1978, in which the previous administration had come down heavily on the need to raise productivity in the steel industry. The statement this afternoon from Sir Keith Joseph would reiterate the Government's position. It was important to put the Government's position on record and let the Government and Opposition have a chance to ask questions. We said there was not a regular group of Ministers meeting on steel. However, meetings were held regularly, which various Ministers attended.

WATER

We said that, of course, the Government was concerned about the possibility of any strike. They were keeping the situation on water under close review.

JL

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Morning Lobby was repeated.

## AFGHANISTAN

We said that the timing of an announcement on any concerted action by UK and her European partners in response to the Soviet Union's action in Afghanistan was governed obviously by the outcome of the Foreign Affairs Council, NATO Council (both meeting tomorrow) and Lord Carrington's visit to the Middle East. We expected an indication of what that action might be to emerge after the Brussels meetings tomorrow.

On the question of participation in, or re-siting of, the Olympics, we said that this was a decision for the International Olympics Committee. The Government could offer advice only. It was clear, however, that the Soviet Union were investing great importance in holding the Olympics and a decision by a majority of European partners and the USA to withdraw would have an effect.

## CIVIL SERVICE CASH LIMITS

Same briefing as that given on 11 January (11.00 Lobby).

JL