

POOL REPORT #33

TRAVEL POOL M

LONDON, THURSDAY, JUNE 1, 1989

This report covers the President's events from his departure from Winfield House by Regent's Park until his departure from No. 10 Downing Street for lunch at Buckingham Palace. There is nothing of substance here and little of color.

The ride from Regent's Park to No. 10 was uneventful, except perhaps for the tens of thousands of motorists held back so that the motorcade could proceed relatively smoothly like a \$5 bus tour of London past some of the great sights, including Kensington Gardens, Trafalgar Square and Whitehall. The motorcade did go past this very hotel and shortly after it entered the park. It passed several of our colleagues looking as if they were on a London holiday.

The President met with Mrs. Thatcher for about an hour and a half, the pool was told, with only Mr. Scowcroft sitting in on the American side. Meanwhile, Secretary of State Baker and Foreign Secretary Howe, with their associates, met in a separate room in No. 10 Downing.

The pool was taken into Downing Street where Mr. Mike Bates, Press Officer for No. 10, issued instructions that no questions were to be asked at the photo opportunity which was to ensue. Should questions be asked, Mr. Bates said, there will be "no opportunities at all."

He instructed the American pool to back-up into a corner dominated by a large, round, brown, slightly scratched table. When your pooler bumped into the table, Mr. Bates sharply instructed, "Watch the furniture."

A little before noon the Baker party arrived. The Secretary continued to chat quietly with Foreign Secretary Howe. Chief of Staff John Sununu engaged in conversation with a man identified to the pool as Mr. Percy Craddock, Political Adviser to the President; and Mr. Marlin Fitzwater chatted with Bernard Ingham. It can be reported without source that some consideration is being given to the President's attendance at the funeral on Monday next for Claude Pepper.

Fifteen minutes later, Mrs. Thatcher and the President arrived. Looking at her, assembled British and U.S. officials, she said, "Shall we all go in?" No one responded verbally, but they all moved towards the door. Mrs. Thatcher then addressed the press. "Are you all photographing this?"

A cameraman responded for the group, "After you sit down, Prime Minister." Mrs. Thatcher then repeated, "After we sit down."

The door was then closed and they apparently met for about 20 minutes at which point the pool was admitted to the Cabinet Room. The aforementioned Mr. Bates, under questioning, said that it is called the Cabinet Room because the Prime Minister meets there with her Cabinet. He said that takes place once a week.

The pool found Mrs. Thatcher and her group to the left of the table that looks about half as long as the table in the White House Cabinet Room, and, of course, the Americans were on the other side. Mrs. Thatcher was leaning forward with a fixed smile on her face. She said, "Can you see everyone?" With that, everyone else in the room at the table seemed to lean forward and face the cameras. The President said, "While the cameras are here, can I say thank you." The question hung in the air, and the President said no more. The pool was then instructed to depart, and as it did Mrs. Thatcher said, apparently to the President, "I think that we'll have to ask you to report first."

Twenty minutes later the PM and the President came out in front of No. 10 and had their press conference, and you will, of course, get a transcript of that. The scene was the Prime Minister and the President standing on a small red carpet behind a microphone, Bush to the left and Thatcher to the right, aides milling off to the sides. Four or five windows of No. 10 and No. 11 Downing Street opened with folks leaning out the windows. That event over, the Prime Minister and the President went back inside the building.

Mrs. Bush arrived in a limousine and was greeted by Mr. Denis Thatcher, standing in the doorway of No. 10. Mrs. Bush put forward her hand; Mr. Thatcher clasped it, raised it and kissed it. Photographers yelled something or other and Mrs. Bush took Mr. Thatcher's hand, raised it and kissed it.

The only other flurry of activity came when various aides came out of Downing Street with maybe a dozen packing boxes and stuffed them into a trunk. A British reporter said they were undoubtedly the gifts that the Bushes had received or were perhaps giving to the Queen. The pool has nothing on that.

Mr. Fitzwater did say that Secretary Baker will appear before the White House Press at 3:30 this afternoon and that Mr. Fitzwater will follow.

Larry O'Rourke, St. Louis Post-Dispatch

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