

## MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

CONFIDENTIALACTION

October 25, 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR ROBERT C. MCFARLANE

**SIGNED**FROM: PETER R. SOMMER *PS*

SUBJECT: Recommended Phone Call to Margaret Thatcher

I recognize that in dealing with the Grenada situation immediate relations with our European Allies must be secondary. However, after reviewing the exchange of correspondence between the President and Mrs. Thatcher I believe the President should again call her to protect our long term interests both in the Caribbean and Europe.

When I discussed this earlier in the day with John Poindexter and Bob Kimmitt, they both felt that in light of the President having already spoken and corresponded with Mrs. Thatcher a phone call was not necessary.

I recognize how burdened the President is, but I believe a phone call is well worth the few minutes it would take. As we move to some form of interim government in Grenada the British will have a crucial role to play. Moreover, on non-European issues the Europeans normally consult within the EC context and look to the EC country with the most direct interests -- in this case the U.K. -- in formulating their position. Furthermore, I believe there is a Commonwealth Conference coming up in the next few weeks where the U.K.'s role will be important. So let's call Mrs. Thatcher. In my view, we need the President's personal touch.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the recommended telephone call at Tab I.

Approve \_\_\_\_\_ Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_

Tab I Recommended Phone Call

~~Dr~~ Fortier and Oliver North concur.*(not available)*CONFIDENTIAL

Declassify on: OADR

598-002 # 661

CJS

7/21/00

Received SS

The President has seen

1983 OCT 26 PM 12:23

October 26, 1983

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

7671

CONFIDENTIAL

RECOMMENDED PHONE CALL

TO: Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister of England

DATE: October 26, 1983

RECOMMENDED BY: ROBERT C. MCFARLANE *RCM*

PURPOSE: To consult about the Grenada situation and its implications for our wider interests.

BACKGROUND: The British have been unhappy over what they consider lack of advance consultations with regard to Grenada. Mrs. Thatcher has made her unhappiness known to you in a phone call and by message. As we move into the next phase in Grenada it is crucial that Britain support us, particularly in regard to the establishment of an interim government. Britain's stance will also influence the position of European governments. A brief phone call should help smooth over differences and pay longer term dividends.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

1. Appreciated the opportunity to correspond and discuss personally Grenada. Understand your concerns. Governor General is safe.

2. Even though we disagreed with some of your Falklands position, we understood the broader imperative of standing behind a key Ally with fundamental interests at stake. We hope we can count on your support. We cannot let a fissure develop between us. If transatlantic differences emerge our enemies could exploit them.

3. In the case of Grenada, important U.S. and world interests are at stake. Also vitally concerned about the welfare of U.S. citizens. Moreover, had to honor a request for help and support from our Caribbean friends.

4. In the days ahead Britain's role will be critical as Grenada returns to democracy. We need your government's active cooperation in assisting an interim government. I have asked George Shultz to discuss our plans in detail on the margins of MNF Foreign Ministers Meeting in Paris later this week.

Date of Submission:

Action: *Call made*

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Cc Vice President

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

7671 Add-On

SECRET

MEMORANDUM FOR CHARLES HILL  
Executive Secretary  
Department of State

SUBJECT: President's Telephone Conversation with Prime  
Minister Thatcher (C)

Attached for your information is a summary of the President's  
phone conversation with Prime Minister Thatcher on October 26.  
It should be accorded highly restricted circulation. *LSY*

Robert M. Kimmitt  
Executive Secretary

Tab A Memcon of Telephone Conversation

*We do not send  
these to State.*

SECRET

Declassify on: OADR

*C/S*

*598-002 #522*

*7/21/00*

## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

SECRET

## MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

**PARTICIPANTS:** President Ronald Reagan  
 Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Britain

**DATE, TIME:** October 26, 1983  
**AND PLACE:** 1:28 - 1:38 p.m.

Prime Minister Thatcher: Hello, Margaret Thatcher here.

President Reagan: If I were there Margaret, I'd throw my hat in the door before I came in.

Prime Minister Thatcher: There's no need to do that.

President Reagan: We regret-very much the embarrassment caused you, and I would like to tell you what the story is from our end. I was awakened at 3:00 in the morning, supposedly on a golfing vacation down in Georgia. The Secretary of State was there. We met in pajamas out in the living room of our suite because of this urgent appeal from the Organization of East Caribbean States pleading with us to support them in Grenada. We immediately got a group going back here in Washington, which we shortly joined, on planning and so forth. It was literally a matter of hours. We were greatly concerned, because of a problem here -- and not at your end at all -- but here. We have had a nagging problem of a loose source, a leak here. At the same time we also had immediate surveillance problem -- without their knowing it -- of what was happening on Cuba to make sure that we could get ahead of them if they were moving; and indeed, they were making some tentative moves. They sent some kind of command personnel into Grenada.

Incidentally, let me tell you that we were being so careful here that we did not even give a firm answer to the Caribbean States. We told them we were planning, but we were so afraid of this source and what it would do; it could almost abort the mission, with the lives that could have endangered.

When word came of your concerns -- by the time I got it -- the zero hour had passed, and our forces were on their way. The time difference made it later in the day when you learned of it. For us over here it was only 5:30 in the morning when they finally landed and at last we could talk plainly. But I want you to know it was no feeling on our part of lack of confidence at your end. It's at our end. I guess it's the first thing we have done since I've been President in which the secret was actually kept until

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BY CAS ... DATE 7/21/00

it happened. But our military and the planning only had -- I really have to call it a matter of hours -- to put this together. I think they did a magnificent job. Your Governor General and his wife are safe. One of our primary goals was to immediately sequester him for his safety. He is safe in our hands down there.

Prime Minister Thatcher: I know about sensitivity, because of the Falklands. That's why I would not speak for very long even on the secret telephone to you. Because even that can be broken. I'm very much aware of sensitivities. The action is underway now and we just hope it will be successful.

President Reagan: We're sure it is. It's going beautifully. The two landings immediately took the two airfields. Then we managed to secure that medical school, St. Georges Medical School, where we have about 800 students. We've moved on, but there is still some combat. All those several hundred Cuban construction workers down there must have been military personnel or reserves, because, and as I told you, we got word that a little group had arrived before we could get anything underway. They looked like they were pretty prominent Cubans because they were being treated with great deference. They turned out to be a military command and the opposition that still remains, as of the last word we have here -- in about three spots on the Island -- is led by those Cubans. They are the leading combat forces, not the Grenadian forces. We have captured 250 of them already.

Prime Minister Thatcher: Well let's hope it's soon over Ron, and that you manage to get a democracy restored.

President Reagan: We're very hopeful that it is going to be short and then your role is going to be very critical, as we all try to return Grenada to democracy under that constitution that you left them. The leader that was murdered, and of course those that murdered him, have abandoned that constitution.

Prime Minister Thatcher: Well the constitution, I'm afraid, was suspended in 1979.

President Regan: Yes, that's when Bishop made his coup and took over. We think he was murdered because he began to make some noises as if he would like to get better acquainted with us. He no more got back on the Island -- he was here and visited our State Department -- and he was murdered. The people who murdered him are even further over in the Cuban camp. So things would be worse, not better, for the people on Grenada.

Prime Minister Thatcher: That is right. Is there any news about Coard, his rival?

President Reagan: No. The man that seems to be out in front is named Austin. We believe that the same thing has happened to Coard that happened to Bishop. We won't be sure of that until we get the situation controlled, but we have the radio stations, so we can communicate with the people. They have just these three spots and we're very optimistic. There have been very limited casualties, certainly on our side. We don't want a lot of casualties on the Grenadian side. The troops that are out in front now seemed to be those several hundred Cubans. We know that you and through the Queen's Governor General there -- all of us together -- can help them get back to that constitution and a democracy.

Prime Minister Thatcher: I just hope Ron, that it will be very soon and that they will manage to put together a government which can get back to democracy.

President Reagan: Those people on those other islands are pretty remarkable. I had with me Prime Minister Charles when I made the announcement to the press here that our forces are on shore and D-Day has happened.

Prime Minister Thatcher: I know her. She's a wonderful person.

President Reagan: She certainly is. She's captured our city by storm. She's up on the Hill meeting with some of our Congress right now. And then, Adams, from Barbados, we are getting him up here. We've gotten both of them on some of our television shows so they can talk to the people. We are getting him on, we've had her on. He's a remarkable man also.

Prime Minister Thatcher: He is a very cultured man and very wise. He's been in politics for a long time.

President Reagan: Yes. Mrs. Charles doesn't even have an army. She did away with an army completely. She has a police force. She told me that her constables in her police force were coming in from out in the country and asking her if they couldn't go with the forces to Grenada.

Prime Minister Thatcher: They wanted to help.

President Reagan: They all feel -- and dating from the days when they were under the Crown -- she used the expression: kith and kin. I don't know if that's one of our expressions or one of yours.

Prime Minister Thatcher: It's one of ours.

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President Reagan: Well, we still use it here. We still have the heritage. She used that several times to describe their feelings. They have no feeling of the people on the other islands being foreigners. They still think of themselves as all one group. We want to put them out ahead in helping with the restoration of a government, so there will be no taint of big old Uncle Sam trying to impose a government on them.

Prime Minister Thatcher: There is a lot of work to do yet, Ron.

President Reagan: Oh yes.

Prime Minister Thatcher: And it will be very tricky.

President Reagan: We think that the military part is going to end very shortly.

Prime Minister Thatcher: That will be very, very good news. And then if we return to democracy that will be marvelous.

President Reagan: As I say, I'm sorry for any embarrassment that we caused you, but please understand that it was just our fear of our own weakness over here with regard to secrecy.

Prime Minister Thatcher: It was very kind of you to have rung, Ron.

President Reagan: Well, my pleasure.

Prime Minister Thatcher: I appreciate it. How is Nancy?

President Reagan: Just fine.

Prime Minister Thatcher: Good. Give her my love.

President Reagan: I shall.

Prime Minister Thatcher: I must return to this debate in the House. It's a bit tricky.

President Reagan: All right. Go get 'em. Eat 'em alive.

Prime Minister Thatcher: Good-bye.

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