

MEMORANDUM

#6  
~~TOP SECRET~~

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

3/6/9  
J

~~TOP SECRET/CODEWORD~~

INFORMATION

May 12, 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT  
FROM: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI *ZB.*  
SUBJECT: NSC Weekly Report #96

1. Opinion

Thoughts on Thatcher

Thatcher Herself: King Brewster believes the new PM to be a cooler, wiser, more pragmatic person now than the Opposition Leader you met in May, 1977 or the dogmatic lady who visited you in Washington that fall. He sees a significant tempering process brought on by the campaign pressures, the tensions within her own party, and her recognition that governing will require more tact than does opposing. Her Cabinet selections bear this out, with emphasis on heterogeneity and balance. (C)

*I agree*

Despite that tempering process, I think it will take patience to deal with Mrs. Thatcher's hard-driving nature and her tendency to hector. This will be a real change from Jim Callaghan, but on the plus side she does appear to be a genuine person, with convictions that are real and not merely rhetorical. From the little I have seen so far, I am impressed by her courage and discipline, which have already generated admiring loyalty among her colleagues (Heath may be an exception). In the only interview she has thus far accorded a major U.S. medium (Time), I was struck by the warmth and good sense of her favorable remarks concerning the U.S. (C)

I am sure we can work with her; I am equally sure that she will benefit greatly from the fact and the feeling of your personal attention. (C)

US/UK Relations: We know Carrington to be a strong advocate of the transatlantic tie, and I view his appointment as Foreign Secretary as one of the most encouraging signals Mrs. Thatcher could send us at the start of her stewardship. (Pym too was quite vocal in pro-U.S. sentiment during the campaign). (C)

~~TOP SECRET/CODEWORD~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6

PER 8/18/94 CIA RE NLC-96-131  
BY *J* NARS. DATE 1/12/00



Detente and Defense: Though supporting the principles of SALT II and MBFR, Tories are far less convinced than Labor that detente works to the West's advantage. The contours of the Thatcher stance on defense and arms control issues will look like this: (C)

-- concern that the non-circumvention clauses of SALT could preclude the transfer of technology to the UK and Europe;

-- exploration of ways to become more self-reliant in defense matters and to collaborate more closely with Britain's West European partners;

-- maintenance of strong conventional and nuclear roles;

-- active support for and participation in NATO's LTDP and TNF decisions provided the UK is dealt with as an "equal partner" in these enterprises (read close consultation with the U.S.). (C)

Europe: I expect the Thatcher government to be at once more cooperative and more aggressive in European community matters, seeking to reestablish British primacy or at least prestige on the Continent. There will be greater receptivity to EMS, but at the same time much more vigorous intervention on such issues as energy, agriculture, and fishing. (C)

Southern Africa: Southern Africa offers the greatest potential for differences between the US and UK in timing, emphasis, and approach, especially in connection with Rhodesia. Mrs. Thatcher's views in this area are already familiar to you. (C)

*not so* → China: The Tories -- even more than Labor -- see China as a counterweight to the Soviet Union, as well as a potential market (in this issue, as in others, Thatcher's free enterprise convictions, together with long-standing Tory interest in commercial opportunity, will significantly influence Britain's approach). I believe that the Tory cabinet will continue to push for an expansion of contacts with the PRC but will weigh Soviet reactions on specific deals more carefully than they did as an opposition party. (C)

Middle East: Impotence in the face of events in Iran reminded Britain of its marginal influence in an area where it had once enjoyed preeminence. Tories will be more likely than Labor to support steps toward restoration of British prestige. They strongly endorse the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, but -- at least initially -- will probably not reverse the Callaghan government's decision to withhold British oil from Israel.