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Dear Mark,

MRS THATCHER'S VISIT TO NORTH AMERICA

1. I mentioned to you the other day that Mrs Thatcher was thinking of visiting the United States and Canada in September, and that I would shortly be calling on her principal aide, Mr Airey Neave, MP, to discuss her plans. You subsequently told me (in line with the letter which the Ambassador had himself written earlier to Mrs Thatcher) that the best time for this would be between 8 and 21 September.
2. I have now had a meeting with Airey Neave. Two of Mrs Thatcher's other staff (Derek Howe, her press aide, and Sarah Hepburne-Scott, who is a sort of private secretary) were present. What follows shows the ideas they have in mind, and the areas in which they will need our (and your) advice. They had not yet consulted Mrs Thatcher in any but the most general terms. They themselves appeared to have few contacts in the United States or Canada.
3. Their outline plan is for Mrs Thatcher to arrive in Washington on the afternoon of Tuesday 16 September; and to begin her programme at lunchtime the following day. In Washington, she would hope to call on the President, Dr Kissinger (whom she met in London some weeks ago) and perhaps Mr Schlesinger. I said I thought she should also see the top people in the Senate and House Foreign Relations/Affairs Committees, and that it might be possible to lay on the sort of meeting which the Prime Minister and Secretary of State had on their last trip. Mr Neave said he would ask Mrs Thatcher about calls on Democratic dignitaries (I reminded him that she had met Senator Kennedy on his recent visit to London for the North Atlantic Assembly). She would want to make one major public speech in the United States, and he thought this might be to the National Press Club in Washington, who had extended her an invitation. She had received quite a lot of invitations to speak to other groups, and I attach a list of these. I said that the National Press Club

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was probably the best of these, if it could be arranged, but that I would seek confirmation from you.

4. Mr Neave said that he would like to fit all this in before the weekend of 20/21 September. He hoped it might be possible for Mrs Thatcher to have this weekend free of any formal engagement, though she would of course be happy to meet people informally. He thought she should leave Washington for New York on the night of Sunday 21 or the morning of Monday 22 September. In New York, she would want to call on the Mayor, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Mr Neave thought she had other contacts in New York whom she would wish to see, perhaps including Mr David Rockefeller whom she met in London very recently. I said that the BIS would probably want to arrange one of their luncheons for her. Her plan would be to leave New York for Ottawa or Toronto late on Wednesday 24 September or early on Thursday 25th.

5. Mr Neave thought that Mrs Thatcher would probably want her programme to include a visit to some big scientific or industrial project. She had trained as a scientist, with chemistry her speciality. He wondered whether a visit to the Eastman-Kodak establishment (is this near Washington?) would be a good idea. He thought she would prefer this to a visit to a hospital or welfare institution. I said I would ask you for your ideas.

6. We also had a word about press arrangements in general. I said that the British press corps in Washington would certainly want her to give them a background briefing, perhaps over a drink. Mrs Thatcher would also receive requests for radio and television appearances. Mr Neave said she had already got one from the "Today" show and they would give serious consideration to taking this up. He also said that Bill Buckley was intending to record an interview with her, in the not too distant future, and in London, for his "Firing Line" programme. He hoped that Buckley would be able to put this on the air to coincide with Mrs Thatcher's visit to the United States.

7. Mr Neave understood that Mrs Thatcher would be staying with the Ambassador in Washington. He does not know where she proposes to stay in New York, and that it might be best to go to an hotel. I said I would ask for advice about this too. I knew that Gordon Booth would very much want to see her, but I naturally could not say whether he would be able to put her up. I pointed out that he had only recently arrived.



8. All this is rather vague, and reflects the fact that Mrs Thatcher's staff do not know much about the United States. They will therefore be leaning on us and on you rather heavily for advice. Could you let me have your comments in due course on the kind of arrangements proposed above, and any suggestions for additions or deletions? Once I have returned to Mr Neave with these, I shall suggest that he establish direct contact with you (if that is right) about follow-up, but wherever possible establishing direct contact with the people or bodies Mrs Thatcher will be seeing. I should also be grateful for similar comments from Ham Whyte and Gordon Booth, either separate or co-ordinated with your own reply.

9. I am also copying this letter to Terry Empson in Ottawa and Mac Samples in Toronto, to whom I have written separately about arrangements in Canada.

10. As a final thought, it occurs to me that it might be useful for a member of Mrs Thatcher's staff to make a short reconnaissance visit. Please do not hesitate to urge this if you think it would help.

Gordon
Lennox

Lord N Gordon Lennox
North America Department

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