



United States Department of State

Washington, D. C. 20520

BRIEFING MEMORANDUM
S/S

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TO: The Secretary

FROM: EUR - Richard Burt *Ray JHK*

SUBJECT: Your Visit to the United Kingdom, January 11-12
Scope Paper

I. Current State of US-UK Relations

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This past fall, pressures on the US/UK relationship have been stronger than at any time since Suez. Despite this stress the special relationship has persisted but it could benefit from repair. The joint action in Grenada elicited a strong reaction in British Parliamentary circles embarrassing Thatcher who has based her foreign policy squarely on close ties and influence in Washington. The following week, she stood firm on deployment of cruise missiles as previously agreed, despite the fact that over 90 percent of the British public prefers a dual key arrangement. Alone among major European leaders, she gave vocal support to our Central American policy in her fall Guildhall speech. Currently there is strong pressure on the Prime Minister to withdraw British forces from the MNF which she has thus far withstood. To demonstrate her desire to pursue a dialogue with Eastern Europe, she is planning a trip to Hungary later this month, rather than talking directly to the Soviets as many British would prefer. Bearing in mind these facts, prudence requires us to be prepared to listen and to respond to our proven ally when she wants to consult.

Generally, the British continue to back Alliance security goals, including the deployment of GLCMs and the President's arms reduction proposals. HMG's views on international economic questions are generally in tune with those of the Administration, given Thatcher's personal beliefs regarding the need to lessen government intervention and to promote private enterprise. Although we have some differences with the British over specific foreign policy issues, (e.g., witness Grenada) these disagreements have never altered our mutual desire for close ties and cooperation or affected our shared commitment to peace and security.

Your visit will serve to underscore the importance of our bilateral relationship and our willingness to consult frequently and meaningfully. British officials, including Prime Minister Thatcher and Foreign Secretary Howe, have

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The Secretary's visit to London,

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stressed the need to overcome what they fear is a widening divergence of views between the United States and the Western allies including the UK. Voicing dissatisfaction with the scope and duration of recent bilaterals, Sir Geoffrey called for more frequent meetings on fundamental issues conducted in an informal atmosphere. Prime Minister Thatcher has also emphasized to Ambassador Price the need to work hard at steady, sustained consultations to avoid being caught off-guard on key issues. Particularly regarding the Middle East, the Prime Minister has remarked that more time is needed for high level consultations with the US similar to those which occur among European leaders.

II. Objectives

-- Assure HMG that the USG desires to maintain and to deepen consultations and that our interests remain basically consistent.

-- Exchange views of East-West relations primarily on talks with Gromyko, and on related arms control issues.

-- Enlist continued HMG cooperation in regional trouble spots such as Lebanon/MNF, Central/South America and Cyprus.

-- Solicit British leaders' views on the ways on improving the bilateral relationship.

III. Issues

As the issue of consultations is foremost in the minds of British officials, the primary task for the US side will be to listen attentively to British concerns and to reiterate our basic willingness to consult on fundamental and particular issues. The British want to have a discussion of East-West relations bearing in mind the Prime Minister's upcoming trip to Hungary. Arms control issues may arise in this context as HMG believes it is important to influence the Soviets to resume negotiations now that the initial INF deployments have taken place. The President's initiative on defense against ballistic missiles has been a matter of strong concern to HMG. We expect the British to have a lot to say on the transatlantic relationship in light of their concern that the US is becoming increasingly isolated from its Western allies on a broad range of issues. Regarding specific topics the British will want to cover Lebanon and the Middle East, Namibia and Cyprus and possibly extraterritoriality questions. We may want to raise Poland.

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