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United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

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**CONFIDENTIAL** December 17, 1983MEMORANDUM FOR MR. ROBERT C. MCFARLANE  
THE WHITE HOUSESubject: Request for a Call on the President from British Labor  
Party Leader Neil Kinnock

Neil Kinnock, new leader of the British Labor Party, would like to make his first trip to the United States in that capacity sometime between February 11-15, 1984 or February 21-25, 1984 to meet with the President. Mr. Kinnock has made clear that he wants to turn the page on the immediate past period of Labor Party leaders who did not visit Washington. We believe it is in our interest to respond positively to Kinnock's desire to return to the more traditional Labor Party relationship with the US through visible consultations with Britain's key NATO ally.

We expect Mr. Kinnock will have speaking invitations from the Carnegie Endowment, the National Press Club, and one of the major TV networks. He would also like to meet with Secretary Shultz, Secretary Regan, Secretary Weinberger and Congressional leaders.

We recommend that the President meet with Neil Kinnock in February for half an hour, with a photo opportunity included. There are numerous precedents for British opposition leaders calling on US Presidents, including Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Carter.

Coney

Charles Hill  
Executive Secretary

Attachment:

Biography of Neil Kinnock

598-002 \*586

LOJ 6/12/02

**CONFIDENTIAL**

DECL:OADR

MEMORANDUM

## NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

CONFIDENTIALACTION

January 10, 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR ROBERT C. MCFARLANE

FROM: PETER R. SOMMER *PRS*

SUBJECT: Possible Presidential Meeting with Neil Kinnock

In response to our overview memo on European visitors during the first half of 1984, you indicated that the President would not be keen on meeting with British opposition leader Neil Kinnock and suggested a back-channel to Mrs. Thatcher seeking her views (NSC Log 9407 redo).

Both Embassy London and State have strongly endorsed a Presidential meeting, albeit I am sure they would settle for a brief one (Tab II). Their major argument is that in seeking a Presidential meeting Kinnock has made a deliberate gesture to overturn the practice of former Labor leader Michael Foot, who bragged that he had not been in the U.S. in over twenty-five years. State also claims that Labor was cooperative in setting up a Presidential appointment for Mrs. Thatcher when she was in opposition.

Kinnock has reportedly now agreed to address the Carnegie Endowment on February 13 so we must either regret or accept his request to meet with the President.

RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that you sign the memo at Tab I, forwarding for the President's consideration a private message to Mrs. Thatcher concerning the Kinnock visit.

Approve  Disapprove

Jack Matlock *Mat* concurs.

Tab I Memo to the President  
 Tab A Private Presidential message to Mrs. Thatcher  
 Tab II State's recommendation

CONFIDENTIAL

Declassify on: OADR

598-002 #577  
 CTS 7/21/00

## MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

9173

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ACTION

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ROBERT C. MCFARLANE *RCM*

SUBJECT: Possible Presidential Meeting with Neil Kinnock

British Labor party leader Neil Kinnock will be in the U.S. during the first part of February and has asked to meet with you. Both our Embassy in London and the State Department have endorsed his request. Their major argument is that in seeking a Presidential meeting Kinnock has made a deliberate gesture to overturn the practice of former Labor leader Michael Foot, who bragged that he had not visited the U.S. in over twenty-five years.

I suspect that you would not be keen to meet with him. I am concerned that Kinnock would use the meeting for his own purposes. In recent years the Labor party has taken stances inimical to our interests, particularly on nuclear, defense, and broader East-West issues. I doubt very much that even your persuasive powers will change his views. Previous Presidents, however, have often met with British opposition leaders. To overcome our quandary, I suggest that you send a private message to Mrs. Thatcher seeking her views.

RECOMMENDATIONOKNO

—  That you approve the message to Mrs. Thatcher at Tab A.

Tab A Message to Mrs. Thatcher

cc: The Vice President  
Michael Deaver

*President wants Bond to go to Sir Robert Armstrong*

*Modify cable accordingly.*

*J*

Prepared by:  
Peter R. Sommer

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

918002 # 578

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7/21/00

FROM THE WHITE HOUSE  
TO THE CABINET OFFICE  
FOR SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG FROM ROBERT C. MCFARLANE

Dear Sir Robert:

Opposition Leader Neil Kinnock will be in the U.S. in February and is seeking an appointment with the President. ~~[The President is not inclined to meet with him. The Labor Party has increasingly taken positions inimical to our interests. Moreover, the President's schedule is full.]~~

During Kinnock's Washington visit, he will, I understand, be meeting with Secretaries Shultz and Weinberger. The Vice President, who often meets with opposition leaders, will either be out of town or just returning during Kinnock's visit.

~~While the President is not inclined to meet~~  
~~(By not meeting)~~ with Kinnock, we do not wish to create a political controversy in Britain. Therefore, if Mrs. Thatcher believes that the President should agree to see him, please let me know. I am very pleased that our close relations makes it possible to pose such frank and direct questions.

We are delighted that George Shultz <sup>had</sup> will have an opportunity to review matters of mutual interest with Mrs. Thatcher and Geoffrey Howe on his way to Stockholm.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

Bud

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WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM

OUTGOING

PAGE 01 OF 02 THE WHITE HOUSE 0360 DTG: 161807Z JAN 84 PSN: 056988  
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FM THE WHITE HOUSE  
  
TO CABINET OFFICE

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ VIA CABINET OFFICE CHANNELS WH00360

FOR SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG FROM ROBERT C. MCFARLANE

JANUARY 16, 1984

DEAR SIR ROBERT:

OPPOSITION LEADER NEIL KINNOCK WILL BE IN THE U.S. IN FEBRUARY AND IS SEEKING AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE PRESIDENT. DURING KINNOCK'S WASHINGTON VISIT, HE WILL, I UNDERSTAND, BE MEETING WITH SECRETARIES SHULTZ AND WEINBERGER. THE VICE PRESIDENT, WHO OFTEN MEETS WITH OPPOSITION LEADERS, WILL EITHER BE OUT OF TOWN OR JUST RETURNING DURING KINNOCK'S VISIT.

WHILE THE PRESIDENT IS NOT INCLINED TO MEET WITH KINNOCK, WE DO NOT WISH TO CREATE A POLITICAL CONTROVERSY IN BRITAIN. THEREFORE, IF MRS. THATCHER BELIEVES THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD AGREE TO SEE HIM, PLEASE LET ME KNOW. I AM VERY PLEASSED THAT OUR CLOSE RELATIONS MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO POSE SUCH FRANK AND DIRECT QUESTIONS.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM

OUTGOING

PAGE 02 OF 02 THE WHITE HOUSE 0360 DTG: 161807Z JAN 84 PSN: 056988

WE ARE DELIGHTED THAT GEORGE SHULTZ HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST WITH MRS. THATCHER AND GEOFFREY HOWE ON HIS WAY TO STOCKHOLM.

WITH BEST WISHES.

SINCERELY,

BUD

0220

MEMORANDUM

## NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

ACTION

January 26, 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR ROBERT C. MCFARLANE

FROM: PETER SOMMER *PS*

SUBJECT: Neil Kinnock Requests an Appointment

In addition to his meeting with the President, which is set for February 14, Neil Kinnock has asked to meet with you. Given his meeting with the President and the views you expressed in the course of arranging the Presidential meeting, I see no need to set up a separate appointment for you.

RECOMMENDATION

That I inform Kinnock's office (via the British Embassy) that you regrettably cannot meet with him.

Approve *PSM*

Disapprove \_\_\_\_

~~SECRET~~

The President has seen \_\_\_\_\_

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MR 598-002 #509

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

DR

~~SECRET~~

February 11, 1984

VISIT OF BRITISH OPPOSITION LEADER NEIL KINNOCK

DATE: February 14, 1984  
LOCATION: Oval Office  
TIME: 4:00 - 4:20 p.m.

FROM: ROBERT C. McFARLANE *rcm*

I. **PURPOSE:** To keep open our lines of communication with the British Labor Party.

II. **BACKGROUND:** The British Labor Party, particularly under Michael Foot, increasingly took positions inimical to U.S. interests. Following Mrs. Thatcher's landslide victory last June, Neil Kinnock succeeded Foot as Labor Party leader in October, 1983.

Kinnock, a red-haired Welshman, who has long been considered a comer in the Labor Party, appears determined to moderate his party's policies (except for nuclear disarmament -- he is a committed unilateralist) and reestablish Labor as a credible alternative to the Thatcher government. Whether he can do this is very much an open question. His visit to Washington is designed to burnish his international credentials and to signal to us and to Labor Party activists his desire to develop closer ties with the U.S. Kinnock will be around for a long time and it is in our interest to establish some form of dialogue, and hopefully take the edge off Labor's anti-american bent.

Kinnock will be making the full rounds in Washington. His schedule includes meetings with George Shultz, Cap Weinberger, Larry Eagleburger, leading Democrats, Senator Lugar, private think tanks, an appearance on MacNeil-Lehrer, and an address to the National Press Club. You may recall that we had second thoughts about him meeting with you, but, after checking informally with Mrs. Thatcher's office, agreed to continue the long-established tradition of Presidential meetings with British opposition leaders.

In his session with you, our Embassy in London expects Kinnock to focus on defense, arms control, and East-West relations. On defense, he will try to reassure us of his commitment to NATO and to the requirement to improve NATO's conventional forces. He will also seek "understanding" for his goal of a non-nuclear Britain, which carried to its furthest extreme would close U.S.

~~SECRET~~

Declassify on: OADR

cc Vice President  
Ed Meese  
Jim Baker  
Mike Deaver

~~SECRET~~



~~SECRET~~

SECRET

2

bases in Great Britain. He has been critical of our arms control policies in the past. Hence, Kinnock will be looking for assurances that you will continue to seek reductions in both armaments and tensions. These are all familiar topics. Suggested talking points are attached.

State's more comprehensive memo, which also addresses Central American and the Middle East, along with Kinnock's bio, are at Tab A. Given the events of this week, and Labor's opposition to a British military presence in Lebanon, Kinnock may opt to concentrate on the Middle East.

III. PARTICIPANTS

U.S.

The President  
The Vice President  
Secretary Shultz  
Robert C. McFarlane  
Assistant Secretary Burt  
Peter R. Sommer, NSC  
Meese, Baker, Deaver will attend at their discretion.

British

Neil Kinnock, Labor Party Leader  
Patricia Hewitt, Kinnock's Press Secretary  
Richard Clements, Kinnock's Executive Assistant

IV. PRESS PLAN

Photo opportunity at beginning of meeting.

V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

4:00 - 4:05 p.m. Photo opportunity  
4:05 - 4:20 p.m. Meeting

TAB A State's memo and Kinnock's bio

Prepared by:  
Peter R. Sommer

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

TALKING POINTS FOR MEETING WITH NEIL KINNOCK

- I am delighted to exchange views with you. I would, however, be remiss if I did not express disappointment over the Labor Party's position on a number of vital issues.
  
- Allow me to assure you that I am determined to improve East-West relations and to reduce both tensions and armaments. Indeed, I dream of getting the Soviets on the road to significant cuts-in nuclear weapons. I have no more compelling priority. But cuts by one side and not the other will not enhance the peace we so ardently seek.
  
- It is only through Alliance unity and resolve that the Soviets will negotiate seriously with us. Wavering on our part is not the answer. It is a sad irony that it is deterrence through military strength that prevents war.
  
- As I stressed in my January speech, we challenge the Soviets to join us in an intensified search for peace. We are ready for progress. We seek dialogue with substance, dialogue that takes the interests of both sides into account.

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GAS 7/21/00

- The dramatic events in Lebanon over the last week only strengthen our determination to promote a just and lasting solution. If a moderate government is overthrown because it had the courage to turn in the direction of peace, what hope can there be that other moderates in the region will risk committing themselves to a similar course.
  
- This is why our joint efforts with our European partners have not been in vain. We understand why the United Kingdom, like ourselves, had to redeploy its small peacekeeping force. We were impressed with the professionalism of the British soldier.
  
- We will not yield to violence and terrorism. Recent events have not deterred us. We will protect our forces on the ground. Indeed, our recent initiatives are designed to enable us to more effectively support the forces of moderation and to promote reconciliation.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
BRIEFING PAPER

~~SECRET~~

THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH  
BRITISH LABOR PARTY LEADER NEIL KINNOCK

I. SETTING

During the past two decades, US Administrations of both parties have maintained close contact and cordial relations with leaders of Britain's opposition party, whether Tory or Labor. The one exception to this long standing practice was former British Labor Party Leader Michael Foot, under whose left-wing leadership once strong Labor ties to the US withered. Shortly after his election as party leader last October, Kinnock affirmed his desire to move his party back to its traditional support for strong Atlantic ties.

Under Kinnock's leadership, the Labor Party is beginning to pull out of its post-election depression, and has moved back toward the political mainstream. He will want to burnish his image as Labor Leader by being seen to deal with senior American officials on an equal basis. Kinnock also sees his visit as an important opportunity to reassure the US about his foreign policy orientation. He intends to leave his Washington interlocutors with no doubt about his commitment to NATO and a strong conventional defense for Britain.

Nevertheless, for both philosophical and domestic political reasons, Labor has criticized US policy on INF deployment, arms control, and East-West relations. The most vehement attacks have been made by Labor's Shadow Foreign Secretary Denis Healey. In public, Kinnock has taken the high road, but he has made no secret of his opposition to the Administration's policies. Last month, Kinnock told a delegation headed by Congressman Lantos that Labor's mood was "anti-Reagan" not "anti-American."

Kinnock maintains that Britain can no longer afford nuclear armaments, and a Labor government should make the transition to a non-nuclear defense before it is forced on Britain by economic necessity. Such a defense policy would include the removal of US nuclear weapons from the UK. Britain would remain an active partner in NATO but, by unilaterally abandoning nuclear weapons, could play a bridging role between the West and the third world.

Kinnock claims that the US and the USSR are equally responsible for the breakdown of arms control talks. He will seek assurances that the President's message of January 16 is part of a coherent plan to ease East-West tension and to reduce levels of nuclear weapons. Kinnock will reportedly visit the Soviet Union in the spring.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

-2-

On Central America, Kinnock will argue that US policy in the region is one of the main causes for anti-Americanism in Britain. Kinnock welcomes the basic political, social, and economic goals of the Kissinger report, but differs strongly on the role of military aid and support for the Contras.

In the Middle East, Labor has criticized the MNF, complaining that it put British lives to risk for no good purpose. Kinnock recently told a group of US Congressmen that he recognized Israel's requirement for safety and security on its borders, but he could see no sense in Israel's policy of creating security by threat of "counter-annihilation."

Kinnock is distressed that the US did not provide full funding for IDA replenishment and appears uninterested in flexible dialogue with the third world to resolve trade and debt problems. Labor identifies the present US and British governments as opponents of North-South economic cooperation.

## II. OBJECTIVES

Despite strong policy differences with the Administration, both Kinnock's desire to begin a new, more constructive relation with the United States, and his inexperience in foreign affairs, offer the opportunity to:

-- Demonstrate that the close ties and good will, which are the basis of trust and cooperation in the US-UK relations, transcend partisan differences in both countries.

-- Educate Labor's inexperienced leader on the realities of world politics, especially on security issues.

-- Reaffirm our commitment to strengthen NATO's ability to deter war and maintain the peace, while seeking verifiable arms reductions with the Soviet Union.

-- Underscore your willingness to establish a meaningful dialogue and an improved working relationship with the Soviet Union.

-- Stress that the Anglo-American ideals of democratic pluralism and individual freedom are what we wish to see prosper elsewhere, particularly in Latin America and the Middle East.

~~SECRET~~