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Mr Graham

VISIT TO THE USA OF MRS MARGARET THATCHER

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REGISTRY NO. 72
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		Action Taken

1. In White (52)
2. PUS. J. H. W. 6/1x

Print Secretary to PUS
who might be interested to glance at Mr Nelhuish's report

JAN Grah
5/10
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1. I think you would wish to see the attached report from Washington on the recent visit to the United States of Mrs Margaret Thatcher.
2. Mr Adam Butler, Mrs Thatcher's Parliamentary Private Secretary, passed on to me this afternoon his impressions of the visit. He said that it had been a great success. The programme particularly in Washington, was enormously busy but they had accomplished much in a short time. The arrangements had been excellent and Mrs Thatcher had been particularly happy with her programme in Washington. She had much enjoyed the generous hospitality of the Ambassador.
3. Mr Butler mentioned 3 small difficulties which he thought might be noted for another occasion or for a different visitor. There had been a slight misunderstanding over the role which he envisaged for BIS New York and our Information Department in Washington. He had hoped that they would make the normal press arrangements but he admitted that this had not been clearly passed on. It did not matter very much as he was able to sort things out in the few days he was in the USA before Mrs Thatcher arrived. Secondly, he said that Mrs Thatcher and her party had found the Warwick Hotel in Houston rather disappointing. As, however, the English Speaking Union in Houston had made these arrangements for the party he realised that we had no control over the accommodation. Finally, he said that Mrs Thatcher had found the audience at the Washington Institute for Foreign Affairs not up to the usual high standard. He acknowledged that we had pointed this out to him as soon as he had told us that he had made the arrangements for this himself.
4. Mrs Thatcher had thoroughly enjoyed all the discussions she had had with leading members of the US Administration. Although Mr Butler was not there himself, he understood that her interview with President Carter which went on longer than the allotted time, was very cordial. She found Dr Brown rather tight-lipped but was clearly pleasantly surprised by her conversation with Ambassador Young.
5. On individual subjects Mr Butler thought that we might be interested in some impressions:
 - a. Mrs Thatcher brought away from her discussions on Rhodesia with the President, Mr Vance and Mr Young, a more hopeful assessment of the chances of a Rhodesian solution. In her talk with Mr Young she had been surprised to hear his evaluation of the extent of guerilla control within Rhodesia. She had also been amazed to note that after describing the guerillas as "liberation forces" on two occasions Mr Young thereafter described them as "so-called liberation forces". She had also been interested to hear Mr Young's ideas on the mixture of troops which might make up the security forces during the transitional period. Mr Young seemed to have thought they might be able to establish physically separated camps which could house the different

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elements in the security forces. For her part Mrs Thatcher had emphasised strongly that she did not think the present Rhodesian security forces should be disbanded during the transitional period. It was important to retain the confidence of the white population of Rhodesia. She had also stressed the paramount need for the peaceful handing over of responsibility. She had also expressed doubts about the personal ambitions of Mr Nkomo. She did not think that he would be prepared to stand aside if, for example, Bishop Muzorewa achieved power through the ballot box.

- b. Southern Africa. Mr Butler said that Mrs Thatcher had made the point in all her conversations on Southern Africa that it was inconsistent to seek out Mr Vorster's help in leaning on Mr Smith while at the same time attacking his own position within South Africa. She left her American hosts in no doubt about the extent of Western interest and investment in South Africa. In this connection Mr Young told her that there was now very hard and consistent pressure on US banks and commercial companies dealing with South Africa to prevent further investment.
- c. Defence. Mr Butler said that they had had good briefings in Washington in the course of which Mrs Thatcher had said that she was distressed at the recent defence cuts and that she hoped Britain would be able to increase her defence contribution to NATO in the future.

Ramsay Melhuish

Ramsay Melhuish
North America Department

30 September, 1977

cc:
Mr Laver, Rhodesia Dept
Mr Reid, CSAD
Mr Wilberforce, Defence Dept
Mr Sloman, PCCU
Head of Chancery, Washington

BW
11/00

Mr. Melhuish