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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

May 18, 1987

Natl Sec Advisor
has seen

INFORMATION
ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR GRANT S. GREEN

FROM: PETER R. SOMMER *PRS*

SUBJECT: Request for President to Congratulate Mrs. Thatcher

You may recall that earlier this year, ITN (the new, fourth British TV station) proposed, via Ambassador Price, that the President appear in a joint TV hookup congratulating Mrs. Thatcher immediately following the British elections. Both we and Downing Street thought this was a bad idea. It suggested an arrogant presumption about who would win an election that had not yet been called and, even if she won, could easily have subjected Mrs. Thatcher to the old cry that she is America's "poodle." Given Price's involvement and the President's connection with Mrs. Thatcher, we begged off on grounds that any decision would be premature, since an election had not been called.

Now that the election date has been set my sources tell me that this idea is resurfacing in London. The same pitfalls still apply and we hope Mrs. Thatcher's office will head this off. Moreover, the scheduling difficulties have significantly increased. The British elections take place on June 11; therefore, any joint TV congratulatory hookup would have to take place on June 12. Bill Henkel has already called June 12, which begins in Venice and ends in Washington after stops in Berlin and Bonn, one of the most hectic days of the Reagan Presidency.

All this argues against such a hookup. However, experience has shown that Price can be very persistent. Hence, I wanted to give you and others an advance warning. I defer to you but you may wish to mention this "bad idea" to Mr. Carlucci and Gen. Powell.

Assuming Mrs. Thatcher wins, as predicted, or for that matter if someone else does, we would propose that the President make a congratulatory phone call or send the traditional message. This, of course, is technically much easier to arrange, even during the course of a busy trip, than an elaborate live, joint TV hookup.

- cc: Fritz Ermarth
- Nelson Ledsky
- Ty Cobb
- Paul Thompson
- Dan Howard

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