



RECEIVED IN
 REGISTRY No. 72
 15 JUN 1977
 AMU 026/24

Pa
 12/11
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PS/PUS *Print.*

Jan. 9/10.

2 VISITS TO WASHINGTON BY MRS THATCHER AND OTHER SHADOW SPOKESMEN

1. In his letter of 25 May, attached, Mr Russell asks for some guidance about the assistance and general attitude which the Embassy in Washington should adopt towards the planned visit of Mrs Thatcher (mid-September) and Sir Geoffrey Howe (late July).
2. We heard about these two visits in the Department a few days ago. My ruling to my desk officers was to let the American Embassy make the running and not to initiate any contacts ourselves with either Mrs Thatcher's office or Sir Geoffrey Howe. Sir Geoffrey Howe was however, on the telephone this morning to my visits officer to inform us of his plans but without seeking any specific assistance. And in a separate letter, Mr Russell has asked us to find out more details of Mrs Thatcher's plans.
3. I propose to continue to play this in a fairly low key while of course offering the usual courtesies and assistance as we have done in the past. ~~for a few more days.~~ I am sure that the PUS will have discussed this with Sir Peter Ramsbotham in Washington and I should be grateful if you could let me know on his return how he thinks we should handle this potentially delicate issue.

Ramsay Melhuish

Ramsay Melhuish
 North America Department

27 May 1977