

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

February 20, 1981 24ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR: RICHARD V. ALLEN *Allen*

FROM: JAMES M. RENTSCHLER

SUBJECT: Thatcher visit: Talking Points for the Press

At Tab B is State's recommended list of talking points for the President's use during a brief joint press appearance with Mrs. Thatcher following their substantive meetings.

This material seems to me seriously deficient in that it fails to establish from the outset either a tone to the meeting or a thematic context in which these two Western leaders of similar outlook and philosophical allegiances are talking (almost as if last Tuesday's economic message never occurred). At Tab A, accordingly, I have rejiggered the State material and inserted a couple of ticks at the top which provide something of a lead. I have also divided the list into two sections, one a series of essential ticks, the other optional - the President can go on and rap about the latter if he likes, but their elimination won't particularly matter, either.

It seems to me that the image we need to project for this visit is a mixture of sobriety and determination - two tough, sleeves-rolled-up leaders who have taken the measure in similar ways of the problems their countries face, who underestimate none of the situation's exceptional gravity, but who are not frightened by it, either. "Upbeat bad news" is the way I've been shorthanding it for the speechwriters.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you approve the talking points at Tab A for the Reagan-Thatcher press appearance.

APPROVE _____

AS AMENDED _____

Good for!
2/23/81

cc: Phyllis Kaminsky
Chuck Tyson

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Recommended Talking Points For Joint Press
Appearance Following President's Substantive
Meeting With Prime Minister Thatcher

Essential

- it is particularly timely and appropriate that Prime Minister Thatcher should be the first West European Head of Government with whom I have exchanged views in person since assuming this office; this is true not only because of the traditional ties of language, alliance, history, culture, and ancestry which so intimately link our two countries but also because of the perceptions we share concerning the dangers both our societies now confront;
- we agreed that the gravity of the international situation, of our common economic problems, and of the threat to Western security has seldom in history been more acute than it is right now; we agreed too, however, that our democracies have the resilience and the inner resources to deal with these problems. I am confident that firm and consistent leadership in that effort will not be lacking;
- I want to emphasize that in Prime Minister Thatcher I have the privilege and pleasure of working with a Western leader committed, like us, to the same rigorous prescriptions for redressing adverse economic and security conditions which have too long endangered the way we want to live. It was clear to me during our talks - and I pay tribute here, now, to her courage and conviction - that Prime Minister Thatcher provides an inspiring example of the long, hard but ultimately successful effort we must bring to the tasks ahead.
- in that connection, the Prime Minister and I discussed means of maintaining and safeguarding fundamental Western interests in Europe, Southwest Asia, the Persian Gulf, and Central America and the Caribbean.
- we reaffirmed our conviction that a strong, vigilant NATO remains the backbone of our mutual security. We noted that so long as the Warsaw Pact continues to arm at a pace far beyond the needs of defense, we and our allies must do whatever is necessary to maintain Western security.
- the Prime Minister and I also affirmed our support for the Alliance's decision of December 1979 to modernize long-range theater nuclear forces and to pursue arms control efforts in parallel. I assured the Prime Minister that we would continue to cooperate with the United Kingdom in the strategic field.
- the Prime Minister and I noted the coming to independence of a number of Caribbean states. We agreed on the need to assist these new nations in their search for security and economic well-being. I raised the crisis in El Salvador with the Prime Minister, explaining American policy which is designed to help that country defend itself against attacks from Marxist guerrillas who are supported and trained by Communist countries. The attacks by those guerrillas and by extremists from the right have greatly hindered the efforts of the Salvadoran government to carry out its far-reaching program of agrarian reforms and its commitment to elections next year.

- we discussed events in Poland, and were in strong agreement that the Polish people must be allowed to work out a solution to their own problems. Outside intervention in Poland would be a devastating blow to East-West relations and would effect the entire range of those ties.
- we discussed at length the crisis in Afghanistan brought about by the illegal Soviet invasion and occupation of that country. Our two nations will continue to work closely together to bring about the complete and total withdrawal of Soviet forces so that the Afghan people may choose for themselves their own government.

Optional

- I thanked the Prime Minister for her government's support during the Iranian crisis, particularly the key role of the Bank of England in helping to secure the release of the hostages. I expressed the hope that the British subjects currently detained illegally in Iran will soon be released.
- the Prime Minister and I also discussed the international energy situation. We agreed on the need for limiting oil consumption, and of restraining oil price increases.

