

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Thatcher Visit

January 11, 1985

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I understand that the British Ambassador, Sir Oliver Wright, has written you concerning the desire of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to address a joint session of Congress on February 20th during her official working visit to Washington. I heartily endorse this suggestion.

Britain is among our closest and most important Allies. The Prime Minister's visit presents a wonderful opportunity for American political leaders and our public to hear her views first-hand on the major issues of the day, including the state of the trans-Atlantic Alliance and East-West relations.

I would greatly appreciate your giving the British proposal careful and sympathetic consideration.

Best regards,

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

The Honorable Thomas P. O'Neill
Speaker of the
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

0173

January 10, 1985

ACTION

SIGNED

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ROBERT C. McFARLANE/M. B. OGLESBY, JR. *MR*

SUBJECT: Presidential Letter to Speaker O'Neill
Endorsing Mrs. Thatcher's Desire to Address
Congress

You will recall that we learned during Mrs. Thatcher's recent visit that she hopes to address a joint session of Congress when she returns to Washington in February.

We have been working to facilitate her request. The first step was for the British to make a formal request, which Ambassador Wright has done in a letter to Speaker O'Neill. The next step is for you to endorse the British request.

We have ~~has~~ prepared an endorsement letter in coordination with State.

RecommendationOKNo

MR _____ That you sign your Tab A endorsement letter to Speaker O'Neill.

Attachment:

Tab A Presidential Endorsement Letter

Prepared by:
Peter R. Sommer

cc Vice President

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

ACTION

January 10, 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR ROBERT C. McFARLANE

SIGNED

FROM: PETER R. SOMMER *Peter*SUBJECT: Presidential Letter to Speaker O'Neill
Endorsing Mrs. Thatcher's Desire to
Address Congress

As we worked out via B. Oglesby, Ambassador Wright has now written Speaker O'Neill formally asking if Mrs. Thatcher could address a joint session of Congress at 11:00 a.m. on February 20 (Tab II).

We promised to follow-up Wright's letter immediately with a Presidential endorsement letter.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the Tab I memo (B. has already signed it), forwarding the endorsement letter for Presidential signature.

Approve Disapprove

PRS/
Chris Lehman concurs

Attachments

Tab I Memo to President
Tab A Presidential Letter to Speaker O'Neill
Tab II Wright's Letter to Speaker O'Neill



BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D. C.
TELEPHONE (202) 462-1340

FROM THE AMBASSADOR

7 January 1985

The Honorable
Thomas P O'Neill Jr.
Speaker of the House of Representatives
2231 Rayburn House Office Bldg
WASHINGTON DC

Dear Mr. Speaker,

My Prime Minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher will be paying an official visit to Washington from 19 to 21 February for talks with the President and other members of the Administration. She will be accompanied by the Foreign Secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, and probably also by the Defence Secretary, Mr Michael Heseltine. An official announcement about this visit is likely, I understand, to be made from the White House within the next two weeks.

It has been suggested that while in Washington Mrs Thatcher might address a joint session of the two Houses of Congress. I know that she would very much appreciate the opportunity to do so if this could possibly be fitted into the Congressional schedule. Such an occasion would be the highlight of her visit, and would be symbolic of the special ties of tradition and friendship which link our two countries and parliaments. It would also be an occasion on which she could mark, in a formal and public way, the 200th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Britain and the United States which falls in June this year. As she approaches her seventh year as Prime Minister, Mrs Thatcher might also take this opportunity to speak about some of the challenges facing our democracies in the final years of this century.

If you could agree to the idea of holding such a joint session, the most convenient time for Mrs Thatcher's programme would be at 11.00 am on Wednesday 20 February (or earlier that morning). But we would naturally fit in with whatever suited you best. Mrs Thatcher would hope to come to Capitol Hill a little before the session in order to meet you and other Congressional leaders privately beforehand.



I had hoped to be able to come and discuss this idea with you personally, but plans for Mrs Thatcher's visit have only just begun to take shape and I understand that you are now in California. Since time is fairly short, we have asked your staff to forward this letter to you there. I should be most grateful if you would let me have your reactions so that, if you agree, the necessary planning for a joint session can be set in hand by our respective staffs.

I am writing in similar terms to Vice President Bush, as President of the Senate.

has many

A large, handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read "Oliver Wright". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Oliver Wright