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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

January 26, 1981

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED

MEMORANDUM FOR: CHUCK TYSON
FROM: JIM RENTSCHLER
SUBJECT: Thatcher Visit and Related Thoughts (U)

J.R.

NLRR FD1-047 # 22253

BY CIS NARA DATE 11/14/06

You asked for my views on the desirability of "breaking precedent" and occasionally scheduling a return engagement for the President in connection with certain visits here by Heads of State or Government. Considering the sensitivity of our relationships with key allies at the present time, and the likelihood that these relations will become more rather than less delicate in the years immediately ahead, I see two reasons why such scheduling may be not only desirable but indispensable: (C)

--- First, in terms of the President's own domestic image, it will be psychologically valuable to demonstrate that he is putting our relations with our major transatlantic partners on a basis which is different from the one prevailing in the recent past. As I don't have to tell you, novelty is politically useful in its own right. At the very least, this will help blunt the press axes which will inevitably grind away at the theme of U.S.-Allied "discord", "disarray", etc. (C)

--- Second, and even more important, Presidential willingness to participate in some follow-up social activity to the official dinner would help underscore the substantive importance he is placing on our relationships with a number of key Allies. The public affairs impact of such participation could be enormous and would signal that we have moved beyond the loose rhetoric of "closer Allied cooperation" (so prevalent in the past) to some visible evidence that U.S. leadership in the person of its President really does have a special regard for our major partners. (C)

The "follow-up social activity" need not be, of course, a simple return dinner in the Embassy of the visiting head of government. Any "personally tailored" engagement based on the interests and tastes of the visitor - museum visit, brief walk-through during the cocktail portion of a dinner, a Kennedy Center performance, maybe even a one-on-one breakfast meeting - would carry the same message and would preserve the President's flexibility so far as "precedents" are concerned. In fact, the more varied the examples of post-State dinner activity the better.

I personally feel that the visits of both Maggie Thatcher and the Spanish royal couple offer very timely and appropriate occasions for moving this kind of message. (U)

cc: Janet Colson

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