

Mr Petrie

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P.S. P.S.
Enter P.S. 1 Petrie
8/12*

cc Mr. Hiltner

P C Petrie Esq
EID (Internal)
FCO

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Your reference

Our reference

Date

6 December 1977

*P.S.
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Dear Peter,

MRS THATCHER'S VISIT

1. I am writing, for the record, about Mrs Thatcher's visit to Brussels from 30 November to 3 December.
2. I enclose a copy of the final version of Mrs Thatcher's programme. You will see that she was very busy indeed during her stay. In addition to her lengthy calls on NATO, SHAPE and the EEC, she had dinner with the Belgian Prime Minister, Mr Tindemans, on 1 December, and breakfast with his Foreign Minister on 2 December. She commented to me as she went into her press conference that she had found all this new information rather difficult to sort out.
3. Douglas Hurd (who with John Davies accompanied Mrs Thatcher during the Community part of her visit) told me that Mrs Thatcher was particularly impressed by Commissioners Gundelach, Ortoli and Davignon. Natali spoke sensibly, Brunner was abstract and preachy. Discussion over lunch had been lively, though Mrs Thatcher's comments to the Ambassador indicated that she thought less highly of this occasion than Hurd.
4. Discussion at Commissioner Tugendhat's dinner seems to have centred particularly on the organisation of Community business in Whitehall and on the extent to which a Prime Minister should be expected to master the detail. Roy Denman described both the present system, and the one operating under the previous Conservative government. Mrs Thatcher seems to have shown some preference for the idea of a senior minister responsible for European Affairs.
5. The leader of the German CDU, and his Austrian opposite number were present at Prime Minister Tindemans' dinner. They discussed relations between the Conservative Party and European Christian Democratic Parties, in the perspective amongst other things of direct elections to the European Assembly. I do not know in more detail what passed.

Mr. Davies should have better report

6. Mrs Thatcher's press conference, which I attended, was reported accurately enough in the British press.

7. John Stanley, Mrs Thatcher's PPS, said on at least two occasions that Mrs Thatcher had been impressed by the quality of the briefs she had received from the FCO.

8. I leave it to you to decide whether to copy this letter any further.

Yours ever,

Rodric

R Q Braithwaite