‘Her Rather Ambitious Washington Program’: Margaret Thatcher’s International Visitor Program Visit to the United States in 1967

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Introduction

It has been long assumed that the major area of weakness for Margaret Thatcher when she gained the leadership of the Conservative Party in 1975 was her lack of first-hand knowledge of foreign affairs.¹ As Hugo Young wrote in his biography, one of the main differences between Thatcher and Edward Heath was that ‘unlike him she knew almost nothing about foreign affairs, and had rarely been abroad on official business’. A ‘crash course in world travel’ therefore followed her election, including visits to France, West Germany, Rumania, and Turkey before the end of 1975.² Naturally, considering the importance that relations with Washington would play later during her time as Prime Minister, she also paid two important visits to the United States in 1975 and 1977 which established her as a familiar figure across the Atlantic. Young notes that ‘she was a tremendous hit with Americans’, and in his more recent biography John Campbell describes how in September 1975 her American schedule was well-orchestrated by her public relations man Gordon Reece to ensure maximum publicity, a difficult job to achieve for the leader of a party then outside of government. Meetings with President Ford, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, and the Treasury and Defence Secretaries secured a high profile. Thatcher herself claimed after the trip that ‘the very thing I was said to be weak in – international affairs – I’ve succeeded in’³.

Yet despite the importance of these visits in the mid-1970s, it is worth emphasising that she had already received an invitation to travel to the United States long before she reached a position of political leadership. Already in 1967 Thatcher had been asked to participate in the State Department’s International Visitor Program (prior to 1965 this was referred to as the Foreign Leader Program), through which she spent about six weeks touring around the USA. Young makes no mention of this, nor does Kenneth Harris, another Thatcher biographer.⁴ The first person to treat the 1967 visit in any detail was Margaret Thatcher herself, who commented in 1995 that

I had made my first visit to the USA in 1967 on one of the ‘leadership’ programmes run by the American government to bring rising young leaders from politics and business over to the US. For six weeks I travelled the length and breadth of the United States. The excitement which I felt has never really subsided. At each stopover I was met and accommodated by friendly, open, generous people who took me into their
homes and lives and showed me their cities and townships with evident pride. The high point was my visit to the NASA Space Center at Houston.\textsuperscript{5}

Campbell, in his extensive biography, does not go into any more detail on her 1967 trip, other than to mention that her already-existing favourable attitude towards the United States was well and truly solidified.\textsuperscript{6} Considering this, it is worth looking in more detail at the International Visitor Program in general, and the background and details of Margaret Thatcher’s visit in particular.

**The Foreign Leader / International Visitor Program**

The United States had begun an international exchange programme for political, economic, and cultural ‘professionals’ in South America at the end of the 1930s in order to counter the increasing propaganda activities of Nazi Germany in that continent. From 1942 to 1945 Nelson Rockefeller’s Office of Inter-American Affairs brought 128 South American journalists from 20 nations on tours of North American cities and war industries, an exercise that was considered a major success for influencing opinion.\textsuperscript{7} In the years immediately after the end of the war, due to a Republican-dominated Congress wanting to cut back the responsibilities of government and a widespread dislike of any activities that could be associated with propaganda, there was considerable debate over and resistance to the desirability of a continuing information and exchange programme. The Fulbright Amendment to the 1944 Surplus Property Act authorising the funding of educational exchanges was carefully (and quietly) marshalled through Congress by its sponsor in 1946, who benefited from the fact that it could be paid for from revenue provided by the sale of surplus war equipment. However, the heightening international tensions in 1947-48, intricately combined with the commitment of the United States to a much broader conception of its national interest, caused the passage of Public Law 402, the United States Information and Educational Exchange Act (Smith-Mundt Act). This was the first major sanctioning of overseas information and exchange programmes by Congress, and effectively the beginning of the Foreign Leader Program (hereafter referred to as the FLP-IVP). Out of the lengthy Congressional debates on the Act came the resolution that information and exchange activities must be separated: the former would deal with psychological, propaganda, and public relations matters, while the latter should be associated more with efforts to achieve cooperation, reciprocity, and mutual understanding. As Senator H. Alexander Smith stated,
‘to be truly effective’ the exchange programmes ‘must be objective, non-political, and above all, have no possible propaganda activities’. The divisive nature of these topics caused the bill to be caught within the legislative process for almost two years, with more than 100 amendments put forward. However, the separation of these two activities did not actually occur until the formation of the United States Information Agency as an institution independent from the State Department in 1953.

Initially, the exchange programme field was dominated by the massive effort in Western Germany as a major part of the post-war ‘democratisation’ process for German society. Under the jurisdiction of first the US Military Government (OMGUS, 1945-48) and then the US High Commissioner (HICOG, 1949-55), between 1948 and 1956 a total of 14,000 Germans and Americans moved between their respective countries in an unprecedented exercise to share skills and promote democratic ideals. After this programme began to be wound down in the early 1950s the operation of the exchange programmes shifted to a more world-wide outlook.

The educational exchange facility was itself split into different sections: the leaders programme dealing with persons of a certain rank in society, who were chosen because of their influence over significant numbers of others; the specialists programme, orientated towards the exchange of knowledge in specific fields; and the ‘educational travel’ section. A 1956 State Department Directive on the Leader Program stated that, while candidates could be selected from any field, the most important groups were as follows: information media, governmental affairs, labour, education, other cultural fields (museum directors, librarians, writers, and artists), women’s affairs, and civic, community, and youth activities.

The exchange system was originally meant to operate on a reciprocal basis, ensuring a genuine sharing of people and knowledge. But the increasing pressures to improve the standing of the United States abroad and to lead the way in political and economic matters soon pushed a more unilateralist approach to the fore. On the information side this expressed itself via President Truman’s Campaign of Truth launched in 1950, intended to raise the budgets and the impact of all forms of American-sponsored media abroad. In these circumstances it was almost impossible to avoid the politicisation of the exchange programmes, and their goals were consequently also directed towards the need to strengthen
resistance to communism and communist influence abroad. William C. Johnstone, Director of the State Department’s International Educational Exchange Service (IES) from 1948 to 1952, declared that ‘It is basically a political job, for this program is an effective arm or instrument of American foreign policy’. Indeed, budgets would not have been secured for the IES in the atmosphere of the early 1950s if it was not seen to be politically motivated, and the annual reports to Congress continuously stressed the fact that the exchange programmes were a vital element in the struggle to overcome communist influence around the world. In 1960 it was still being expressed that ‘in EUR [the State Department’s Western Europe division] we feel that the leader program is primarily intended to be a “political instrument”, and emphasis should be placed on obtaining men of high calibre from the political field and others closely related to it, such as labor and journalism’. However, while anti-communism was an important factor, it was intended to be achieved via the desire to openly display and explain the American way of life as the best of all possible options. In this way, United States foreign policy could be forwarded by instilling a greater confidence in its outlook, motives, and goals. As the Advisory Commission on Educational Exchange stated in 1949, the purpose of the programmes ought to be

First, to develop awareness in other nations of the technical and economic resources of the United States as well as of the social organizations, the cultural activities, and the moral strength of the American people. Second, to provide ‘an understanding of the character and motives of the United States and confidence in her purposes’.

Nevertheless, throughout the 1950s the exchange budget was often the area to suffer cuts during the regular appropriations skirmishes between Congress and the Department of State. As a State Department report noted in 1954, one of the major disadvantages of the Smith-Mundt programmes in comparison with the Fulbright exchanges was that the former was ‘subject entirely to planning on an annual basis’, leading to some instability and an inability to meet objectives.

The continuing discussions within American government circles as to the best way to achieve effectiveness in the management of information programmes led to the creation of the United States Information Agency in 1953, separate from the State Department. USIA dealt with libraries, cultural centres, and exhibitions abroad, while exchange programmes remained with
the State Department’s IES. In 1960 IES was reorganised and renamed the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Exchange (CU), with specific offices responsible for particular regions of the world (the same as the State Department’s organisational framework). The status of ‘cultural diplomacy’ in general as an element of the Department’s activities was further bolstered by the passage of the Fulbright-Hays Act in 1961. However, the running of the exchange programmes in each embassy abroad had always been the responsibility of the Public Affairs and Cultural Affairs Officers, both positions being filled by USIA personnel after 1953. The administrative complexities were further increased by the fact that Smith-Mundt specifically determined that private agencies should be used for as many aspects of the programme as possible. In 1952 this regulation was more widely applied when the agencies previously occupied purely with the OMGUS-HICOG German programme – for instance the Governmental Affairs Institute (GAI), the American Council on Education, and the Office of International Labor Affairs - began ‘programming’ all incoming visitors. Having organised the itinerary of the grantee, volunteer groups would then provide guidance and sometimes entertainment and accommodation at each location. Despite the intricacies of these arrangements, it seems to have worked surprisingly well. The selection procedure for grantees was largely the responsibility of the embassy staff from each section (e.g. politics, economics, commercial, cultural affairs). Neither CU nor any of the programming agencies had much influence over the embassies, but naturally they had an opinion on this process. Thus a 1960 memo from the GAI considered that ‘a higher priority be given to the younger leaders on their way up and a lower priority be accorded those persons who have passed their power peak’.

In the early 1950s the visit could last as long as three months, but by the late 1960s this had been reduced to about six weeks. A ‘per diem’ was also paid to the grantee, which rose from $10 in 1950 to $25 by 1967 (with a special rate of $30 for VIPs).

A key factor of the FLP-IVP since its inception had been the stipulation that visitors could more or less go where they wanted when in the United States. Yet the determination to avoid state-sponsored propaganda and present a contrast to Soviet programmes introduced an uncontrollable element that could always deliver uncertain results. Each grantee, with the aid of a programming officer, could plan their own itinerary, meaning ‘when they return to their home country, they are substantially free – recognizing that they may feel a certain obligation to the United States government or to their own government – to say what they please’.

Nevertheless, the openness of the programme, allowing remarkable freedom of access for the
visitor to American social and political life, has definitely been one of its most valuable assets. Visitors expecting a propaganda exercise were pleasantly surprised to find it a very different experience.

The Foreign Leader / International Visitor Program in the UK

For the 1967 fiscal year (running from July 1966 to June 1967), the US embassy in London was able to issue 30 invitations for International Visitor grants. This was a decrease of seven from the previous year, and reflected the fact that the budget for CU was in the process of being radically reduced from a high of $53m in 1966 to $31.4m in 1969.17 Not only that, but the total number of grants issued to Western European nations had been declining throughout the 1960s because of the increasing relevance of the decolonised world for American foreign relations. In 1958 Western Europe received a budget to issue 273 Leader grants, but by 1968 this was down to 212. In comparison, over the same period Africa’s quota had increased from 40 to 123, Latin America’s from 212 to 292, and the Far East/Pacific from 156 to 335.18 Such was the decline in the West European budget that concerns began to be voiced about taking European attitudes for granted, particularly in the wake of the troubles concerning France’s position within NATO.19 A State Department memo from 1969 recommended this for Western Europe:

An optimum program would require about 250 IV grants: 35-40 each for the larger countries (France, Germany, Italy, UK) to cover adequately the various sectors of interest to the US, including business, government, politics, labor, education, and youth; and 8-10 in each of the medium-sized countries – 4 political leaders, one labor leader, two administrators or educators concerned with educational reform and one press or TV representative.20

Nevertheless, the budget would continue to decline in the early 1970s. The division of grants for the United Kingdom in 1967 was as follows:

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<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentarians</td>
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<td>Cultural Affairs</td>
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This selection is not representative of other major West European nations, since the embassy in London always concentrated on inviting MPs, reflecting the centralisation of British politics and the powers of Parliament in relation to other governmental organs. Embassy’s elsewhere tended to concentrate more on inviting civil servants and local or regional government officials. A 1969 report undertaken by the Governmental Affairs Institute, responsible for programming political, governmental, and media visitors, stated that thirty percent of the Western European visitors were members of parliament and another 11 per cent were other leaders of political parties…One fourth of the Western Europeans were information media leaders. Thus politicians and media leaders accounted for approximately two-thirds of the Western European visitors.  

In terms of numbers, the United Kingdom was one of the main recipients of FLP-IVP grants in Western Europe. The State Department’s own figures for the 1966 fiscal year report that alongside the 37 visitors from the UK, 31 came from France, 37 from Finland, 46 from Italy, and 67 from West Germany. In 1967, in line with the newly introduced budgetary constraints, all these countries had their quotas reduced.

The annual report on the exchange programme in Britain for 1967, written by the Cultural Affairs office of the US Embassy in London, noted that International Visitors are selected for participation, in the first instance, because they show qualities of leadership and promise. In reporting ‘evidence of effectiveness’, therefore, it should not be supposed that a man has been promoted or assigned to a new job only because he has first-hand experience of the United States. However, it can be understood that his understanding of the United States will be spread among his new colleagues – in fact that his seed of understanding will ‘quietly flourish’ as suggested by the President in his recent report to Congress.
The report also noted that special areas of interest for British visitors to the USA included matters of social integration, education, urban planning, employment, and the modernisation of industry. While the level of British expertise in these areas was not negligible, still it was considered that ‘almost invariably, when a university, a city, an industry, a county is confronted with a problem, the question immediately arises: “How do the Americans solve it? Or approach it?”’ Another area of consistent concern was reckoned to be this:

The ‘peaceful’ Americans. And, if that is true, why does it seem that the Americans are so frequently on firing lines in Korea or Vietnam or Santo Domingo or…But the British do believe that we are peaceful, or at least, peace-loving. But still their MPs and political scientists would like to discover why we behave like Americans.

Margaret Thatcher’s fellow parliamentarians who received invitations in 1967 were the following: Joel Barnett, David Gibson-Watt, Robert Howarth, Patrick Jenkin, John McGregor, Francis Pym, Ivor Richard, Robert Sheldon, Brian Walden, and Ben Whitaker.25 ‘Evidence of Effectiveness’ in terms of the parliamentarians included the note that Jeremy Thorpe, a visitor in 1961, had attained the leadership of the Liberal Party. In 1970 a report also stressed that, of Heaths’ newly-formed government, seven of the front bench had previously travelled to the USA as part of the FLP-IVP. In total, 14 of 38 new Ministers, Ministers of State, and Parliamentary Secretaries had been recipients of invitations, as had 40 of the Conservative MPs, 41 of the Labour MPs, and the Speaker, Dr. Horace M. King.26 Despite this impressive record, financial constraints were becoming more of a problem. The 1967 Report complained that ‘the Post, hampered by lack of staff, has done the best it could on reporting activities of returned grantees. It has not been possible adequately to cover as many newspapers as should be covered.’27

The person who selected Margaret Thatcher for a visitors grant was William J. Galloway, then serving as first secretary and political officer of the US Embassy, with a brief to cover the Conservative Party. After serving in the artillery during the war, Galloway joined the Foreign Service in 1948, initially in the State Department’s West European division with responsibility for Spain and Portugal. From 1949 to 1952 he served as special assistant to Charles Spofford, the US Representative to the North Atlantic Council, the body that was intended to develop the infrastructure and purpose of NATO, after which he became special
assistant to Department of State counselor Douglas MacArthur II. By the time Galloway
arrived in London in 1965 he was an experienced official who had been heavily involved with
the NATO planning structure, the formation of SEATO, the negotiations over the four-power
withdrawal from Austria, and the Hungarian and Suez crises.

During that period of time, the political section in London was fairly large compared
with most embassies. Two officers were assigned to cover the two main political
parties in all aspects, their everyday activities, their performance in the House of
Commons, their planning and policy formulation in their party headquarters, their
principal ministerial level leaders, and their ‘backbenchers’, or the rank and file of
the parliamentary parties. We also had some ‘plums’ to pass out in the form of grants
under the Smith-Mundt program, which financed visits to the US by foreign
government leaders for a six week tour and consultations around the country. Many of
these grants went to members of parliament of both parties.28

Galloway benefited from a few introductions and from the considerable knowledge of Albert
Irving, who had been the Political Officer covering the Labour party for several years. After
this, due to his regular visits to the House of Commons – two or three times a week –
Galloway’s relations with the Conservative party were always close.

The daily routine in the Commons, over a period of time, gave us a pretty good feel
for what to expect from [the British] on policies and programs of interest to us,
NATO, Europe in all aspects, commonwealth and colonial issues, and particularly,
economic conditions. The embassy was in the position, I think, to report to
Washington and give a fairly good picture of what to expect, and what to get into and
when to stay out.29

He remained in London for a long time, moving up from first secretary to deputy chief of the
Political Office, before becoming the Political Officer in 1970 and holding that position until
1974 – an in-house promotion that, as he later admitted, was ‘very, very unusual’ due to the
established set-up of rotating appointments within the Foreign Service. This was arranged by
the incoming Nixon-appointed Ambassador, Walter H. Annenberg. Annenberg had
experienced a difficult beginning to his post in the wake of the popular David Bruce, who had
served in London since 1961, and his evident reliance on Galloway to manage Embassy affairs led to this rare occurrence. By 1970, therefore, Galloway was one of the principal contacts between the US Embassy and the incoming government of Edward Heath, most of whose members he already knew quite well. His best relations were with James Prior, William Whitelaw, ‘fountain of information’ Sir Michael Fraser, Sir Alec Douglas Home, and Edward Heath himself. Galloway has since given a good insight into the close relations between the US Embassy and the party hierarchy, claiming to have

briefed Ted Heath regularly, usually at his conference room office at Commons, which was assigned to the Leader of the Opposition. I covered broad foreign policy events and issues and specific events or issues as they occurred so long as they could not be used to attack the Labour government. In other words it was international affairs information which they needed and wanted to know…

Margaret Thatcher’s 1967 Visit

Galloway’s first encounters with Margaret Thatcher came from his visits to the House of Commons, where he witnessed her ‘very strong will’, ‘high standards of ethics and morals’, ‘tremendous self-confidence’, and the fact that ‘she didn’t hesitate to express her views’. Galloway also noted that her somewhat aggressive approach did not exactly endear her to some of her colleagues, which clearly marked her out as ‘a politician who was not seeking support for her own personal advancement’. Nevertheless she was ‘the outstanding lady in the House of Commons at that time’.

Thatcher’s opinions of the United States were formed on a basic level by her appreciation of American sacrifices during the Second World War. As John Campbell states, her life-long commitment to the Atlantic alliance, in contrast to her disdain for the other nations of Europe, were perspectives that were formed during her teenage years in Grantham in the 1940s. Although her commitment to maintaining a world role for Britain via the Empire never faltered, America was to be the partner in this endeavour, itself the leading example for progress, freedom, and prosperity. Thatcher was elected to parliament in 1959 as the member for Finchley, having had two unsuccessful but noteworthy campaigns in the Labour stronghold of Dartford in 1950-51. Within two years she had successfully introduced a Private Members Bill – the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Bill on press freedom to
report on local government – and became the joint Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance. She was the youngest woman to receive such a ministerial post, only the second woman minister to have a family, and one of the first of the Conservatives elected in 1959 to gain promotion. The Conservative defeat in 1964 saw her given the task of junior spokesman for pensions, switching to Housing and Land a year later once Heath had won the party leadership. In 1966, after a second defeat at the hands of Labour, Heath reshuffled his team. Despite a suggestion that Thatcher might enter the Shadow Cabinet, she was given a post outside the inner circle (but nevertheless with a higher profile) as spokeswoman for Treasury and Economic Affairs. Several reports have it that Shadow Chancellor Iain Macleod specifically requested her for his team.\(^{33}\)

By the end of 1966, therefore, it is not at all surprising that Margaret Thatcher had come to the attention of William Galloway, not just as a forceful character and a skillful parliamentarian, but also as an MP with a definite chance at high office in the future. Galloway thinks he first met her in 1965 or 1966, although his recall that ‘her first assignment was in a shadow junior role on taxation’ suggests it was 1966. He met her and Denis socially on a few occasions, with Denis inviting him ‘down to Burmah Oil for sherry on Friday evenings’.\(^{34}\) The usual procedure was to keep an eye on a parliamentarian over a period of a few months, so that a too-hasty decision to offer a Visitor grant invitation could be avoided.

For Thatcher to receive a grant in the 1967 fiscal year, she must have been put forward as a candidate by Galloway some time in mid-1966. If he had been spending a good deal of his time in the Commons, then it is highly likely that he would have been present for Thatcher’s widely-acclaimed speech attacking the Labour government’s Budget in May of that year – and if he was not present, it is clear that he would have heard about it afterwards from his friends in the Conservative party. Ian Macleod was apparently pushed to speculate afterwards about the chances of a future woman Prime Minister, meaning Thatcher in all but name.\(^{35}\) Nevertheless, before forwarding the invitation Galloway checked it with his most important friend in the party:

I talked with Jim [Prior] about Margaret Thatcher and my high regard for her. I told him I was going to recommend her for a Smith-Mundt grant visit to the US. She was accepted and spent about six weeks in the States very profitably for her politically. Jim
wanted to give her opportunity in the House of Commons, and…persuaded Heath, against his will, to take her in the shadow cabinet.\textsuperscript{36}

James Prior was then acting as Heath’s Parliamentary Private Secretary, and he had put forward Thatcher’s name when Heath assembled his renewed shadow cabinet after the 1966 election defeat. But the Heath-Thatcher relationship was never an easy one, and Campbell recounts how both Heath and Chief Whip Willie Whitelaw opted for the safer option of Mervyn Pike as the ‘statutory woman’ on the front bench. It was not until October 1967, by which time she had definitely merited such a promotion, that she was accepted onto the Conservative top table, and even then only because Mervyn Pike had to retire on health grounds.\textsuperscript{37} Galloway would certainly have known through Prior that Thatcher was on the edge of a Shadow Cabinet position from mid-1966 onwards, and that her abilities in the Commons would eventually be rewarded with promotion. How politically profitable her 1967 trip to the USA actually was is hard to judge. From Galloway’s practical perspective it would have contributed to widening the vision of someone already proficient in the technicalities of the domestic political scene. As mentioned above, being invited on the Visitor Program was not so unusual for a British politician, despite it being a mark of acknowledgement that the person in question was demonstrating considerable future potential. Yet in Thatcher’s case there was apparently much more being said behind the scenes than a simple recognition of her political skills, which could of course be claimed for every political grantee.

Galloway has since stated that he absolutely did not expect to be inviting a future Prime Minister, since ‘Willie Whitelaw was the heir apparent’ because of his key post as Chief Whip.\textsuperscript{38} However, those on the receiving end of the incoming embassy communications at that time remember it very differently. Dean Mahin, then director of visitor programming at the GAI, has this to say:

\begin{quote}
We had often been burned by embassies that inflated the importance of visitors, in order to be sure that they were taken seriously in Washington, so we were not inclined to go overboard just because of something in an embassy cable or dispatch. But in this case the embassy clearly indicated that is was possible that she would become the first female PM of Britain. It is not the sort of thing that one would forget. The people in the State Department concerned with her visit (in CU and the British desk in the
European bureau) were certainly aware that we were describing her as a possible future PM and raised no question about that description.39

Despite Galloway’s disavowal, Mahin’s recollections are the more trustworthy simply because the schedule of appointments that was arranged for Thatcher was by no means a typical schedule for a British MP. As Mahin insists, ‘most of [her] high level appointments were possible only because Mrs. T was billed as a possible future prime minister’. Why Galloway has since backed away from acknowledging these communications is unclear, especially in view of the fact that he could claim remarkable foresight.40

In characteristic fashion, her schedule for her American visit was filled to the maximum. Albert Keogh (who, as her GAI programming officer, organised her trip through the USA) later remarked that, as well as her official meetings, she also spent a considerable amount of time with ‘her numerous personal contacts which included nearly every well known English journalist in Washington’.41 She arrived in Washington DC on 20 February 1967, and stayed in the capital until 3 March. The first few days were spent with Keogh at the GAI finalising her itinerary for the following six weeks. Between Thursday 23 February and Thursday 2 March Thatcher conducted, as Keogh put it later, ‘her rather ambitious Washington program’42:

Thursday 23 February:

Mr. Fred Bakki  Federal Reserve Board
Miss Jean Lashly  Department of State
Mr. John Ghiardi  Deputy Assistant Secretary, International Monetary Affairs, Department of State
Mr. M. Goldstein  Bureau of Economic Affairs, Department of State

Friday 24 February

Mrs. Esther Peterson  Assistant Secretary, Department of Labor
Mrs. Katie S. Louchheim  Deputy Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State
Colonel King-Harmon  Department of Defense
Mr. White  Executive Vice-President, British Aircraft Corporation
Mr. Floyd Riddick  Parliamentarian for the Senate

Ladies Luncheon Guests:
Mrs. Kitty Clark Gibbons  Director of Office of Community Affairs, Department of State
Mrs. Abigail McCarthy  Wife of the Democratic Senator from Minnesota, Mr. Eugene McCarthy
Mrs. Edna Rostow  Wife of the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Mr. Eugene Rostow
Mrs. E.D. Pearce  General Federation of Women’s Clubs
Miss Wauhilla LaHay  Journalist with the Washington Daily News
Mrs. Leonor K. Sullivan  Congresswoman from Missouri

Monday 27 February
Mr. Larry Krause  Brookings Institution
Miss Ida Merriam  Office of Research and Statistics, HEW Federal Credit Union
Mr. Roy Judridge  Internal Revenue
Mr. H. Ponsen  Senior Advisor, European Department, International Monetary Fund
Mr. Douglas W.G. Wass  Alternative Executive Director for the United Kingdom, International Monetary Fund

Wednesday 1 March
Senator Margaret Chase Smith
Mr. John Davis  United States Supreme Court

Thursday 2 March
Mr. P.-P. Schweitzer  Managing Director, International Monetary Fund
Mr. Charles Warden  Council of Economic Advisors
Mr. Walt Rostow  Special Assistant to the President
Mr. Carl W. Guidice  Bureau of the Budget
Senator Joseph Clark

It is easy to spot from this list that economic matters were her prime concern, reflecting her expertise in the fields of monetary and fiscal policy. Galloway of course had no influence on
arranging Thatcher’s itinerary in the USA, only recalling later that ‘she had an entree to a large number of people in Washington…[she] mostly talked with people in tax, revenue, maybe educational people’.43 It was clearly an aim of her visit to gain a better understanding of the workings of the International Monetary Fund, and thus a greater appreciation of the international dimension outside of her domestic knowledge. Meeting someone from the Supreme Court was an obvious choice considering her own legal career. A meeting with someone from Defence would also be standard procedure, as the Americans were keen to maintain their public relations with their allies at a time when the Vietnam War was at its peak. For a junior spokeswoman from an opposition party, not yet in the Shadow Cabinet, it would have been difficult to arrange a list of higher-level appointments. Her Senate contacts offered an interesting contrast. Joseph Clark entered the Senate in 1956 and was long a major figure within the Democratic Party’s liberal wing (he was one of the leaders of Americans for Democratic Action). Supportive of anti-poverty, urban renewal, and civil rights legislation, Clark was best known for his persistent attempts to increase the efficiency of the legislative branch and ensure that it worked according to a strict ethical code. Such goals were bound to appeal to the probity of Margaret Thatcher, but what makes the meeting more interesting is that Clark had been one of the main critics of the Johnson administration’s Vietnam War policies from 1965 onwards. Margaret Chase Smith was a more obvious choice for a meeting. Elected as the first woman into the Senate in 1948, she declared herself a Presidential candidate in 1964 in order to promote the increased visibility of women in the highest political offices. However, she was never a supporter of feminism, and her voting record became more conservative through the 1960s (for instance, she consistently supported the war in Vietnam).44

It appears that Thatcher did not change her forthright style according to her appointments, apparently lecturing the Director of the IMF on subjects best left to others.45 A meeting with Walt Rostow, a senior figure in President Johnson’s administration, was something of a coup. Rostow, trained in economics, had been associated with the Center of International Relations at MIT before becoming a national security advisor for both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. Rostow had been a Rhodes Scholar in 1936-38, and had published two books on the British economy in the nineteenth century, but his main claim to fame was the all-encompassing The Stages of Economic Growth from 1960.46 Dubbed a ‘non-Communist manifesto’ when parts of it were serialised in The Economist, it confirmed his status as a major figure in the theory
of international political economy and economic development. By 1967 Rostow was one of the closest advisors to the President on Vietnam, and one of the main spokespersons for the administration’s policy.47

After Washington DC, Thatcher travelled to Wilmington, Delaware, for a one-day visit to the Du Pont facility situated there. It is here that one of the noticeable facts about her visit to the USA becomes more relevant: she was travelling with her husband, Denis. This was relatively unusual, since the visitor grant was meant only to provide for the person invited, and grantees were usually discouraged from taking their spouses in order to avoid that the tour deviate from a professional experience into more of a holiday outing. It was also unusual in another way, since it was a factor of the Thatcher marriage that they by and large kept their own professional pursuits separate from each other. When asked about Denis, Galloway stressed that the grant was only issued for her and that Denis paid his own way.48 Du Pont, the paint, chemicals, and man-made fibres giant, would have been of special interest for Denis.

Margaret Thatcher’s biographic sketch for GAI mentioned Denis as follows: ‘Chairman and Managing Director of a paint and chemical company, Atlas Preservative Co.; as well as, Managing Director of Chipman Chemical Co., and Vice Chairman of the Educational Supply Association’.49 His career had originally begun with the family owned Atlas Preservative Company in 1933, a paint and solvent concern based in London. Making his way up from the shop floor, Denis became managing director in 1947, chairman in 1951, and led a major export drive in Africa and elsewhere. By the early 1960s, however, Denis was feeling the strain of being in sole control of the business, and concerns for his family’s security made him decide to sell the company to Castrol Oil Limited in 1965 for £530,000.50 This decision was also related to the fact that Margaret’s political career was on the rise, and from then on his ambitions would be subordinate to hers. Denis continued to run Atlas for Castrol, and became a member of the Castrol board. By 1967 Castrol had been taken over by Burmah Oil, and Denis found himself a senior divisional director and in charge of the planning and control department. A trip to the United States at this point, if it could take in some potentially useful business contacts, would therefore have been of some interest. It is quite likely that the Du Pont tour was related to Denis being present, since despite Margaret’s background as a research chemist it seems unlikely that she would arrange such a visit for herself.
From Delaware, Thatcher went on to Florida to stay the weekend with friends in Delray Beach, before spending 5 to 7 March in Atlanta and 7 to 9 March in Houston. Albert Keogh later commented that the Houston visit included a combination of NASA ‘and petroleum people’, the latter again pointing to the interests of Denis being incorporated within the tour. 51

9 to 13 March were spent in San Francisco. The report from the Department of State Reception Center in San Francisco stated that she ‘was very enthusiastic about her visit to the Bay Area…she was one of the most enthusiastic grantees the program officer has had the pleasure of working with’. Her appointments included visiting the Kaiser Foundation Hospital, run by the independent philanthropic Henry J. Kaiser Foundation that promotes research and educational awareness on important health issues. She also visited Lowell High School, the Bay Area Educational Television Association and KQED-TV, and spent Monday 13 March at the University of California in Berkeley, meeting Professor Thomas C. Blaisdell Jr. and Professor Earl Rolph. Blaisdell was already 72 when she met him, and to Thatcher he must have had a special aura as a major representative of the New Deal/Marshall Plan generation. Having served in several of the reform-orientated New Deal agencies, Blaisdell joined the European Cooperation Administration to administer the Marshall Plan before moving to Berkeley in 1951 as Professor of Political Science. For the next twenty years he oversaw the running of the Institute of International Studies at Berkeley. Earl Rolph was someone closer to Thatcher’s direct professional interests, being one of the most prominent theorists in the field of public finance and a provocative writer on subjects such as taxation, Keynesian economics, and the pros and cons of government intervention. 52

From 13 to 16 March Thatcher was in Los Angeles, followed by a trip to visit the Strategic Air Command centre close to Omaha, Nebraska. From 18 March she spent three days in Chicago, visiting the Grain Exchange in the Board of Trade building, the American Bar Center, and the Chicago Tribune newspaper. A meeting was also arranged with Margaret G. Reid, Professor Emeritus in Economics at the University of Chicago. Reid, like Blaisdell, was an eminence gris of her profession, yet, as some have argued, she has rarely been acknowledged as a major figure within the traditionally male-dominated field of economics. Considering Reid’s early training in home economics and consumer issues, matters that were considered as appropriate for female researchers, it is easy to see that there must have been a professional attraction between the two women. 53 21 to 24 March were spent attending various engagements around Boston, including a class in Management at Harvard taken by
Professor Theodore Levitt, a meeting with William B. Moses of the Massachusetts Investors Trust, and lunch with Mildred Bixby from the International Federation of Women Lawyers.54 On 22 March Thatcher had a meeting with Professor Paul A. Samuelson, the distinguished economics don at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Samuelson had attempted to collect together and clarify the different streams of economic thought around the rigorous application of mathematical theory, the result being *Economics: An Introductory Analysis*, published in 1948 and the most widely used economics textbook of all time. Describing himself as ‘the last “generalist” in economics’ and ‘in the right wing of the Democratic New Deal economists’, Samuelson had acted over the years as an important consultant to the United States Treasury, the Bureau of the Budget, and the RAND Corporation. Samuelson was neither a free marketeer nor a promoter of ‘big government’, saying in 1960 that ‘I never look upon the government as something in Washington that does something to us or for us. I think of public policy as a way in which we organize our affairs’ via a combination of fiscal and monetary mechanisms.55 However, from the late 1950s onwards he became preoccupied with the problem of inflation and how best to manage it, also a subject-matter of mutual interest between him and his British guest.56

On Friday 24 March Thatcher flew to New York where she stayed until she flew back to London on 30 March. After a weekend staying with friends in New Jersey, she had a typically full schedule on the Monday, with meetings in the ‘Wall Street area’:

**Monday 27 March:**

11.00 a.m. Mr. Wilbert Walker  
Administrative Vice President and Comptroller, US Steel Corporation  

12.30 a.m. Mr. Maurice Burnett  
Vice President, Morgan Guaranty Trust Company  

3.00 p.m. Mr. Peter Lang  
Federal Reserve Bank  

**Tuesday 28 March:**

12.30 p.m. Mr. Donald S. Howard  
First National City Bank of New York
These meetings were clearly deemed a success.

Mrs. Thatcher’s visit to New York went smoothly. Her program wishes were clearly spelled out by GAI and the people with whom I arranged appointments, prepared as they were to show her every courtesy, sould hardly bear to part with her once she actually met and charmed them. Thus lunch at the Guaranty Trust scheduled for 2 hours lasted 3 and was cut short even then as she had to move on to the Federal Reserve. Lunch at the First National City Bank did not end with dessert but continued until 4 p.m.57

After attending a performance of Il Travatore at the Metropolitan Opera on the Tuesday evening, on Wednesday 29 March Thatcher flew to Albany for the day for a meeting with the Governor of New York, Nelson Rockefeller. Thursday included a lunch engagement with Sir Leslie Glass, the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom’s Mission to the United Nations. She also found time to meet with Paul Wright, the Director of British Information Services in New York, whose wife was a personal friend.

Conclusion
There is no doubt that Margaret Thatcher’s 1967 visit was a great success, both for her and for the Program’s organisers. Certainly she could not expect much extra publicity from the trip, but that was not the goal at that time. Instead, she used it to the maximum to meet respected academics and practitioners of economic policy and to offer her views on their work. However, it is noticeable that Blaisdell, Rolph, Reid, and Samuelson were all of an older generation of economic thinkers, and there is no record that she met up with anyone who represented more radical new trends in the subject. For instance monetarist guru Milton Friedman, who would later be regarded as a much-valued mentor by Thatcher, was present in Chicago in 1967, but she did not make an effort to meet him. Although recognised as belonging to the small group of market economists in the Conservative Party by the late 1960s, Thatcher’s reverence for Friedman and other neoliberal theorists really came later in the 1970s after her experience in the Heath government and her increasing contact with Keith Joseph.58 Typically, apart from her weekends with friends in New Jersey and Florida, there was little time for relaxation. Grantees were often encouraged to see something of the diversity of the American landscape, with the Grand Canyon or one of the major National
Parks sometimes being included. Neither did she meet much of a cross-section of American social life. By the end of the 1960s, with negative images of America being broadcast worldwide almost daily, the emphasis of visitor programming shifted from organising ‘contacts with a wide range of Americans’ to ‘a carefully-planned series of contacts with professionals and volunteers active in organizations concerned with problems of interest to the visitor’.

Setting up professional contacts was therefore the order of the day, and Thatcher clearly made the most of the opportunity available.

Galloway has commented that there was no doubt ‘she was really grateful’ for her trip, and one can understand that, after years of harbouring a favourable impression of the United States, she had finally experienced its character and its people at first hand. She had been granted access to some key figures in the Johnson administration and in Congress, as well as being able to meet several of the top economists who had had an influence on her intellectually in the past. For a politician yet to achieve a governmental position, it had been a programme of a high order. From the American side, there is little doubt that the Thatcher approach – self-confident, direct, well-informed – was something of a revelation, especially considering that the vast majority of FLP-IVP visitors had been men. After 1967 Galloway did stay in touch with the Thatchers, but the opportunities for socialising declined rapidly after she attained office as Education Minister in 1970. He returned to the United States in 1974 to become executive assistant to the undersecretary for management in the State Department. Nevertheless, they did all meet up again at a British Embassy reception when Thatcher visited Washington DC in 1975, after she had become Conservative party leader. Denis then expressed his belief to Galloway that it was only a matter of time before she entered 10 Downing Street. There is no doubt that Galloway was taken in by Thatcher’s political qualities, stating in a letter to her in 1979 that she was in a position ‘to give individuals back their rights and chances to pursue a better life’ and ‘to bring unity to her party such as it has not known for a long time’. In 1987 Galloway again wrote to the Thatchers to congratulate them on the Conservative party’s third election victory in a row: ‘I like to think that forming associations with many MPs and arranging for some of them, like yourself, to visit the United States contributed in a small way to the continuing close relationship between our countries’. Thatcher responded: ‘It was marvelous to hear from you, especially as you masterminded my first visit to the United States. I have been eternally grateful for the wonderful experience it gave me’.

21
Over the last 50 years the Foreign Leader and International Visitor Program has built up an impressive record, not just in terms of numbers of grantees invited (more than 100,000 by the end of 1999) but also in terms of those invited who became future leaders of their respective nations. It has certainly had an impact on the views of those who can thank the Program for their first trip to the United States. But it would be a mistake to expect this type of cultural diplomacy to achieve much more than. Opinions are not changed dramatically in one relatively short visit. In terms of West European visitors, a survey conducted in 1972 showed that the overall impressions gained of the United States, and of the Program itself, were broadly favourable. The main criticism, however, was that too much had to be crammed into such a relatively short period of time - not something that was likely to trouble Margaret Thatcher. The same survey also addressed the issue of what effects the Program may have had on visitors’ careers once they returned home.

The answer was: Not much. Two visitors said their positions had been ‘strengthened’ as a result of the grant, many said they were ‘envied’ by their colleagues, but only one, a young journalist, believed his professional career had been advanced. I noted that quite a few of the French group referred to the grant as a ‘bourse’, a word whose primary definition in translation is ‘scholarship’.62

If it did not help careers, it did at least help to build up a body of people who felt privileged for having had the chance to go. But contact between embassy and visitor was rarely maintained for long after the trip. Galloway’s intermittent correspondence with the Thatchers was only maintained because of her own remarkable political success. By and large embassy officials did not aim to invite people who were hostile or even critical of the United States. Better returns could always be gained from offering what grants were available to those who were either somewhat doubtful or relatively friendly so that favourable impressions could then be strengthened and possibilities for future cooperation opened up.

Despite this, State Department officials have been in a constant battle to gain sufficient funding for the programme from Congress, principally because it is difficult, if not wholly undesirable, to prove its worth by claiming that it is making the world more pro-American. Lacking the necessary support, programming agencies have sometimes had difficulties in
coping with the number of visitor arrivals as a result.\textsuperscript{63} Always needing to justify their work, it is noticeable that Margaret Thatcher’s rise to political power was seized upon as a potential boost, with Albert Keogh suggesting after her victory in the Conservative Party leadership battle in 1975 that it might ‘be appropriate to bring it to the attention of John Richardson [then assistant secretary of state for educational and cultural affairs, and head of CU] who always needs good ammunition when he makes his annual visit to Capitol Hill’.\textsuperscript{64} But the inability, indeed almost impossibility to prove concrete results has always been a major handicap when faced with the demands of the Appropriations Committees.
NOTES

1 I would like to thank Dean B. Mahin for sharing his knowledge and for giving his valuable comments on this article, and William J. Galloway for discussing his time in the US Embassy in London.
2 Hugo Young, One of Us: A Biography of Margaret Thatcher (London: Pan, 1990), p. 120.
6 Campbell, p. 174.
12 T.A. Healy to S.W. Lewis, CU archive, Group IV Box 153 Folder 19.
13 Thomson and Laves, p. 83.
16 Thomson and Laves, p. 87.
17 CU archive, Group IV Box 320 Folder 23; J. Manuel Espinosa, Landmark Events in the History of CU 1938 to 1973, unpublished manuscript.
20 Francis J. Colligan to Sam L. Yates, 5 August 1969, CU archive, Group IV Box 151 Folder 34.
22 In an internal memo dated May 20 1954, ‘politically important countries’ for the leader program were reported to be France, Italy, the United Kingdom, Egypt, India, and Indonesia. CU archive, Group IV Box 153 Folder 17.
23 It is important to note that these figures as issued by the State Department take account of arrivals in the United States only. Therefore, if a grant was issued during the 1967 fiscal year but that person did not travel until late in 1968, then they do not show up in the 1967 figures. Hence, although 37 grants were issued in the UK during 1967, the State Department only registered 16 arrivals because many of them delayed their travel. This potential discrepancy also applies to the numbers given for the other countries.
25 Of this group, Galloway’s own selection consisted of the Conservative MPs Gordon-Watt, Jenkin (‘able fellow’), McGregor (‘really coming up’), and Pym. The latter three later served under Margaret Thatcher after 1979. Of the others, he was most impressed with the lawyer and Labour MP Ivor (later Lord) Richard. William J. Galloway, telephone interview, 29 July 2002.
26 ‘Former Grantees in Ministerial Posts’, 1970, CU archive, Group IV Box 156 Folder 15.
27 Annual Report 1967, CU archive, Group IV Box 320 Folder 23.
28 William J. Galloway, US Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection, Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, 2001. At the beginning of 1967 the combined Political and Political-Military Sections in London included 12 Political Officers under the leadership of William H. Brubeck, with additional support from a Labor
Officer and 11 other administrative and technical staff. Each Officer in the Political Section was occupied either with one of the major political parties or with a regional focus (e.g. matters pertaining to Europe, Africa, the Middle East, or Asia). Foreign Service List (Washington DC: Department of State, January 1967); William J. Galloway, telephone interview, 29 July 2002.

William J. Galloway, Oral History.

William J. Galloway, telephone interview, 31 May 2002; William J. Galloway, Oral History. Fraser was at the time vice-chairman of the Conservative Party and had previously been in charge of the Conservative Party Research Department. In 1967 his successor at the Department, Brendon Sewill, also received a Leader grant, along with his Labour Party opposite number, Terence Pitt.

William J. Galloway, Oral History.

William J. Galloway, Oral History.

Campbell mentions that Iain Macleod himself wrote in the Daily Mail: ‘I have heard many excellent speeches from women Ministers and Members from the front and back benches of the House of Commons, but cannot recall another in a major debate that was described as a triumph.’ Campbell, pp. 170-171.

William J. Galloway, Oral History.

Campbell, p. 176.


William J. Galloway, telephone interview, 31 May 2002.

‘Biographic Sketch’, GAI, CU archive, Group IV Box 155 Folder 26.

Carol Thatcher claims that Denis’s personal share was only £10,000, but Campbell disputes this, suggesting that he effectively became a millionaire from the sale. Carol Thatcher, Below the Parapet: The Biography of Denis Thatcher, (London: Harper Collins, 1996), pp.33,52-53,93-96; Campbell, pp. 157-158.

Albert Keogh to Jean Lashly, 13 February 1975, CU archive, Group IV Box 155 Folder 26.

Blaisdell’s only published book in political science was The Federal Trade Commission: An Experiment in the Control of Business (New York: AMS Press, 1932), which was reprinted in 1967. Rolph had a major impact in his discipline with his 1954 work The Theory of Fiscal Economics (Berkeley: UC Press), and later with the standard textbook Public Finance (New York: Ronald Press, 1961) co-authored with George F. Break. For further information on these two men, see <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu:2020/dynaweb/teiproj/uchist/inmemoriam/inmemoriam1989/@Generic__BookView> (30 July 2002).


Levitt, the author of Innovation in Marketing: New Prospects for Profit and Growth (New York: McGraw Hill, 1962) which won the Academy of Marketing Award, was well on the way in 1967 to becoming one of the most respected marketing gurus in corporate America. See <http://www.hamiltonco.com/facultybios/levitt.html> (30 July 2002).


Grace M. Belt to Albert Keogh, 26 March 1967, CU archive, Group IV Box 155 Folder 26.

The godfather of neoliberalism, Friedrich von Hayek, had been at the University of Chicago from 1950 to 1961. Hayek’s seminal *The Road to Serfdom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944 / London: Routledge, 1946) had a major impact on Thatcher’s thinking. Friedman only met Thatcher for the first time in 1978, at a private dinner arranged by the monetarist research body, the Institute for Economic Affairs. There is no doubt that Thatcher was receptive to ideas and opinions coming out of America. Denis Thatcher reported in a letter to Galloway in 1979 that she had been ‘much influenced’ by Bill Simon’s *A Time for Truth* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1978). Written by Nixon’s former Treasury Secretary, it included a preface by Friedman, a foreword by Hayek, and was something of a manifesto for free market conservatism. Campbell, pp. 366, 372; Richard Cockett, *Thinking the Unthinkable: Think-Tanks and the Economic Counter-Revolution, 1931-1983* (London: Harper Collins, 1994), pp. 171-176; William J. Galloway, Oral History.


William J. Galloway, Oral History; William J. Galloway, telephone interview, 29 July 2002.

See the list of recent heads of state who have participated in the programme at [http://exchanges.state.gov/education/ivp/alumni.htm](http://exchanges.state.gov/education/ivp/alumni.htm) (31 July 2002).

Mary W. Brady, *Interviews with Thirty International Visitors from Western Europe: A Report to the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State, February 1973*, CU archive Group IV Box 155 Folder 28.

‘Controlling Workloads of IVP Programming Agencies’, 23 February 1968, CU archive Group IV Box 151 Folder 34.

Albert Keogh to Jean Lashly, 13 February 1975, CU archive Group IV Box 155 Folder 26.