
Thatcher and Nixon

Sir, Contrary to your report based on the National Archives Papers (Dec 29), Margaret Thatcher did not sidestep a meeting with Richard Nixon in April 1980. Although the Foreign Office had advised the prime minister not to receive the former US president, Mrs Thatcher overruled its recommendation.

Mr Nixon, who was photographed entering No 10, was delighted by the warmth and respect shown to him at this one-on-one meeting. He said to me afterwards: "Thatcher's got what it takes. With her steely courage she could stay in power for ten years."

This was an astute prediction at a time when Mrs Thatcher's unpopular economic policies were causing many to write her off as a one-term prime minister. She remained in power for 11 years.

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