



## Britain Knights 'Pleased, Astonished' Weinberger

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FEB. 24, 1988 | 12 AM



Los Angeles Times

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TIMES STAFF WRITER

LONDON — In a private audience Tuesday with Queen Elizabeth II, former Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger was awarded the highest honorary knighthood that Britain can bestow on a foreigner.

“He’s been a staunch friend to Britain and will be remembered most of all for his unfailing support and assistance during the Falklands war,” the Foreign Office said in a statement explaining the award.

Weinberger, accompanied by his ailing wife, Jane, and Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe, was whisked into Buckingham Palace shortly before noon to be named an Honorary Knight Grand Cross of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

Although 55 other Americans have received honorary knighthoods, Weinberger is only the second to be given the Knight Grand Cross. The first, who received the honor 12 years ago, was Hugh Bullock, a Wall Street financier and head of the Anglo-American friendship society, Pilgrims of the U.S.A.

“I’m very honored, very pleased, and still very astonished,” Weinberger said.

Later, Weinberger was Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s guest at a formal dinner at 10 Downing St., her official residence.

Weinberger declined to discuss the reasons for his award. “I haven’t the faintest idea,” he told a reporter. “I’m the last person you should ask that.”

However, the nature of the honor reflects the Thatcher government's assessment of his contribution to Britain's victory over Argentina in the Falkland Islands War of 1982.

Few details of U.S. involvement in the Falklands war have been officially confirmed, but the United States is believed to have passed to Britain critical intelligence material gathered by satellite, including Argentine ship and aircraft movements.

Weinberger was secretary of defense at the time. He is believed to have helped override objections to such aid, notably from Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, then the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. She is said to have argued that aiding the British would damage U.S. relations with much of Latin America.

The British Broadcasting Corp., in its evening newscast Tuesday, called the honor "official acknowledgment of his crucial help in the Falklands War."

It said Weinberger had promised to provide Britain with an aircraft carrier if one of the two British carriers committed to the war were lost, and also ordered that aviation fuel, communications equipment and Sidewinder missiles be supplied to the British fleet.

British citizens who are knighted are known by their first names preceded by the title "Sir," but Weinberger, as a foreigner, will not be addressed as "Sir Caspar."

But British newspapers pinned a new title on Weinberger--"Cap the Knight." This is a play on the "Cap the Knife" nickname he won for his budget-slashing

policies as U.S. budget director from 1972 to 1973.

Weinberger resigned from the Cabinet last November in order to devote more time to his wife, who is in chronically ill health.

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