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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

29 September 1981

B/P

TRIDENT NEGOTIATIONS

Lord Trenchard's visit to the United States in mid-October is now likely to fall in the period between President Reagan's public announcement of the American decision to go for Trident D5 and our own policy decision on whether or not to follow suit (see your Secretary of State's Top Secret minute to the Prime Minister no. MO 18/1/1 of 14 September). Given these circumstances, the Prime Minister asked, just before her departure on 25 September, whether Mr. Nott would agree:

- a. that Lord Trenchard should not initiate any discussion of the subject with Mr. Carlucci or others;
- b. that, if Mr. Carlucci or his colleagues take the initiative in raising the matter with Lord Trenchard, the latter should confine himself to indicating that we were most grateful for Mr. Weinberger's helpful letter of 24 August and that (as our Embassy in Washington have already explained to both the Pentagon and the State Department) we expect to be in touch with the Americans as soon as we have taken our own policy decision, which is likely to be within the next few weeks.

When Mr. Nott returns from abroad on 8 October you may like to ascertain whether he does agree with a. and b. above, and if so to ensure that Lord Trenchard is instructed accordingly before his departure on 12 October.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Brian Fall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

T. P. LANKESTER

N.H.R. Evans, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.