



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

23 November, 1984

Western Arms Control Strategy: Anglo/US Discussions

The Prime Minister was grateful for your Secretary of State's undated minute on this subject.

The situation has changed in two important respects since Ministers' discussion on 7 November at which it was agreed to prepare further papers on defence and arms control issues for a seminar with President Reagan in February. The first is that the Prime Minister will now be having a substantive discussion with the President on 22 December, with some uncertainty about whether the seminar will still take place in February or at some later date. Secondly, there has been the announcement that US/Soviet talks on arms control will be held in Geneva in early January.

The upshot is that the 22 December meeting will be the only certain opportunity we shall have in the short term to get our points on arms control across to the US Administration at the highest level. If we are to make the most of it, we shall need to do the homework more rapidly than planned and distil the key points for the Prime Minister's brief for that meeting. The points in paragraph 3 of the Foreign Secretary's minute are rather general and not in themselves enough. I do not think that the Prime Minister will want to hand over papers to the President at that stage, though she may wish to offer to provide some soon after.

I should be grateful if the Cabinet Office would coordinate further work on arms control for the Prime Minister's December meeting, with the aim of producing a full and reasoned brief on the main issues dealt with in the Foreign Secretary's minute. If it were also possible to produce the proposed composite paper on outer space in the time available, that would be useful. Until we know about the fate of the seminar, no conclusion can be reached on the

timescale within which other papers will be needed. But it would be prudent to assume that they will still be required and quite possibly early in the New Year. It seems best for the Cabinet Office to coordinate this work too.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely
C. D. Powell
C. D. POWELL

Colin Budd, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth