



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

2 February 1983

LR  
DEFENCE  
*Dear Lord Chalfont*

Thank you very much indeed for your letter of 10 January.

We have been giving a lot of thought recently to the question of policy formulation and presentation in the field of arms control and disarmament and it was most useful to have your own ideas available. We have just taken some steps to re-organise our arrangements for handling these matters. I have weighed carefully your suggestion that we should have a Special Adviser on arms control and disarmament in No. 10. I have concluded that this is not necessary at present but do now have a new Adviser on the whole field of defence questions.

I have noted your comments about the need for stronger representation in international negotiations.

It was very good of you to write.

*Yours sincerely*  
*Royal Highness*

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Chalfont, O.B.E., M.C.

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PRIME MINISTER

Duty Clerk

Please now detailed  
letter.

Mr 3  
/ 2.

LORD CHALFONT

You will recall his private and personal letter (attached)  
of 10 January.

In the light of the decisions you have now taken about  
a new structure for dealing with nuclear issues, I doubt whether  
it will be worth your while to invite Lord Chalfont in for a  
talk. If you agree, you could sign a letter on the lines of the  
attached.

If you prefer to have a talk with Lord Chalfont, I will  
of course invite him in. Alternatively, he is coming to the  
dinner for President Mubarak tomorrow and you could have a quick  
word with him then. - I will do so.

A.S.C.

1 February 1983





Prime Minister

I do not believe that the conflict he suggests exists. Would you like to reply saying you have noted his ideas?

A.T.C. 1/1

STRICTLY PRIVATE AND PERSONAL

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher, M.P.  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

10 January 1983

Would it be worth having him in to talk. A letter might look like a bank. off? m.

Dear Prime Minister,

I know that you are aware of the concern which many of us feel at the apparent success being enjoyed by CND and other unilateralist and "peace" movements. The press seem to believe that your appointment of Mr Heseltine to the Ministry of Defence is designed partly to meet the threat posed by their activities. If this is so it is a welcome move. However, having studied this problem in a number of incarnations over the last 25 years, I have a feeling that it will not be enough to win the "debate" - as important as that may be.

There have always been, I believe, two areas of weakness in our approach to the arms control and disarmament aspects of national security - one of policy formulation and direction, and one of representation in the diplomatic field. I would like to put forward for your consideration a proposal designed to remedy these deficiencies.

So far as policy formulation and direction are concerned, I am convinced that it is a mistake to have the political responsibility for arms control and disarmament in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. My own experience as Minister of State charged specifically with these responsibilities was that there was a persistent conflict of interest between the FCO and the Ministry of Defence - and more specifically the Chiefs of Staff. Constructive arms control proposals, in these circumstances, are almost automatically resisted by the services; and quite sensible defence policies are often undermined by the Foreign Office.

continued.....



The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher, M.P.  
Prime Minister

10 January 1983

Although in normal times, these interdepartmental tensions might be acceptable (and, in any case, susceptible of resolution in Cabinet or its committees) these are, as you would be the first to recognise, not normal times. My strong feeling is that there would now be great merit in having a special adviser on arms control and disarmament in No. 10, directly responsible to the Prime Minister. He should have a very small staff, including officials of reasonable seniority from the FCO and the MOD. Only in this way will policies aimed at multilateral disarmament receive the powerful political direction which they must have if the dangerous influence of the unilateralists is to be reduced and eventually eliminated.

Inextricably linked with this is the need for a more potent representation at the international negotiating table. During a recent visit to the Palais des Nations in Geneva (my first since I led the British delegation there in the 1960's) I was depressed at the decline in our status and influence. The British case now seems to be in the hands of bureaucrats who, however able, have no political weight and, indeed, no political motivation.

You have already given a valuable lead in the campaign against those who, often for mistakenly idealistic reasons but too often for less reputable motives, seek to undermine the defences of the West. I am convinced that the climate is now right for a serious attempt at certain multilateral agreements - especially in the fields of nuclear weapons testing, development of chemical weapons, levels of strategic and intermediate range missiles, as well as conventional force levels. All this can be achieved without any danger to western security; but it must have irresistible political impetus.

I would be ready at any time to discuss my ideas further with you. In the meantime may I congratulate you on your very successful and timely visit to the Falkland Islands and wish you continued success in 1983.

Yours sincerely,

Ann Chalper