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16 October 1986

From the Private Secretary

Dear Colin,

ARMS CONTROL

Following the Reykjavik summit, we need to do some hard thinking about the way forward on arms control. This will be an essential part of the preparation for the Prime Minister's meeting with President Reagan in mid-November.

The Prime Minister would like a paper prepared rapidly which deals with the following points among others:

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- (i) our best assessment of US and Soviet intentions. There is a lot of confusion and conflicting statements. Both sides appear ready to resume talks but it is not clear to what extent their aim is to maintain the integrity of the package discussed in Reykjavik.
 - (ii) we should use the alarm which President Reagan's impromptu proposal to eliminate strategic ballistic missiles within ten years has caused in the Alliance to have the proposal subjected to thorough - and long drawn-out - scrutiny in NATO. The aim will be to reaffirm that the Alliance's strategy is based on nuclear deterrence and on the doctrine of flexible response. It will also be to persuade the Americans to drop the ten-year - or indeed any - time-scale for eliminating nuclear weapons, so that it reverts to being a distant aim. How do we go about this? And what arguments do we use?
 - (iii) as part of our efforts to move the Americans off this unrealistic proposal, we should encourage the break-up of the Reykjavik package into its constituent parts, splitting off negotiations on INF, nuclear testing and chemical weapons. This would meet our interest in being able to point to some concrete progress on arms control, while avoiding the very difficult issues raised by the US proposals for eliminating nuclear weapons. How far is this feasible? What arguments can we use to move matters in this direction?
 - (iv) now that proposals for zero-zero INF in Europe have

been tabled publicly and apparently accepted in principle by the US and the Soviet Union, it may well be that this is the only INF agreement on offer. But arguably an interim agreement which would leave each side with higher levels of weapons in Europe would suit us better. How would we present the case for this?

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- (v) the issue of interpretation of the ABM Treaty will clearly be central in coming months. The Camp David Four Points did not deal specifically with the question of development and testing. Generally we have supported a restrictive interpretation of the Treaty. We have to balance our view on this with the tactical consideration that pressure on the Americans to reach accommodation with the Russians on interpretation of the Treaty makes it more likely that the issue of eliminating strategic nuclear weapons will again come to the fore. How can we reconcile these considerations? What line should we take in discussion with the Americans?

I am copying this letter to John Howe (Ministry of Defence) and Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,
Charles Powell

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