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10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

6 March 1990

Dear Stephen,

Thank you for your letter of 5 March, covering then note of the conversation with Blackwill. I think it would be useful for the Foreign Secretary to mention it to the Prime Minister: and to prepare the way, I have alerted her to the problem, although not shown her the letter.

To my mind, the affair underlines the dangers of the telephone as an instrument of international diplomacy. It is not good for conveying nuance. It might be a good idea for Andrew Wood to go back to Blackwill and say:

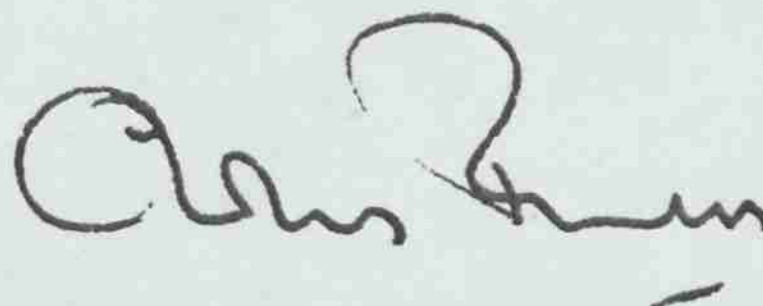
- No. 10 have been consulted and are flabbergasted at the impression Blackwill has derived from this conversation.
- as the President will know from experience (but Blackwill who has never met the Prime Minister may not) ideas and thoughts tumble out from the Prime Minister to be tested in discussion.
- in this particular case it was certainly obvious to me that the Prime Minister was making two points about the Soviet Union: first that we should not isolate the Russians from discussions about the future of Europe, but involve them through the CSCE: and second that, looking to the much longer term, the only country in Europe which would command comparable resources to a united Germany - and therefore able to balance it within a larger European framework - was the Soviet Union. References to an entente cordiale were to our attempt to draw closer to the French.
- far from commending demilitarisation of the GDR, the Prime Minister criticised Genscher's apparent support for this and opined it would not be acceptable to the West or to the Russians.
- we noted the President's emphasis on NATO rather than the CSCE as the prime framework for Europe's security and of course agree with it. It was to avoid any misunderstanding on this point that the Prime Minister stressed the NATO aspect in her second conversation with the President.

b

The point about relations with the Germans does of course have some substance to it, although it seems to me a bit hysterical in the form relayed by Blackwill. We do have a problem and need to sort it out before and at the Anglo-German Summit. I have spoken to Teltschik about this. The problem is, of course, aggravated by the way in which the Americans have been overly solicitous of German ambitions and sensitivities, leaving the rest of us to say the unpalatable things which have to be said.

If Wood cares to add that Blackwill's innuendo ("private thinking in No. 10") that No. 10 is inhabited by a combination of Dr. Strangelove and General Curtis B. Lemay, in contrast to the cool, rational thinkers of the FCO and NSC, has been greeted with some surprise in view of the Prime Minister's consistent and successful record of managing East/West relations over the last eleven years, that would be fine with me.

Yours sincerely,



(C. D. POWELL)

J. S. Wall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.