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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

16 November 1984

Dear Colin,

Prime Minister's Visit to the United States

I wrote to Len Appleyard on 14 November enclosing a copy of a message from President Reagan in which he pointed out that he would not be in California on 22 December when the Prime Minister planned to be passing through.

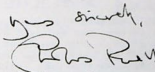
I subsequently spoke, on the Prime Minister's instructions, to the United States Ambassador and explained that the Prime Minister's aircraft was in any case routed through Washington. It would therefore be equally convenient for her to meet briefly there if that suited the President. Ambassador Price rang back the next day to say that he had spoken to the President who had not taken aboard the fact that the Prime Minister could manage a meeting elsewhere than California and would look at the idea again. He then rang back once again this morning to say that consideration was being given in Washington to making the 22 December meeting at Camp David a more substantial one, on the lines of a seminar, replacing the need for a visit in February. The President might then visit London briefly in May on his way to or from Bonn. Ambassador Price also mentioned a State Visit later in the year. I did not respond at all to this last point.

I discussed all this with the Prime Minister. She drew the conclusion that clearly 22 December was not an ideal time for the President. Nor would she wish to have an extended meeting then since there would not be adequate opportunity to prepare fully for it. Moreover, her programme for Peking and Hong Kong was now clearly going to be extremely heavy (see Peter Rickett's letter of 14 November to me). In the light of this she would prefer not to pursue the idea of a meeting with the President in December but to concentrate on the proposed February meeting. Our aim should be to agree and announce dates for this as soon as possible.

JL

I have subsequently conveyed the Prime Minister's views to Ambassador Price and to David Hannay in Washington.

There is also the question of the story in today's Times about a possible meeting between the President and the Prime Minister. We intend to take the line that naturally the Prime Minister hopes to see the President reasonably soon but no dates have yet been fixed. We shall add unattributably that the most likely time is early next year. Although a possibility would be a brief meeting on the Prime Minister's return journey from China this would not in practice be very convenient.

Yours sincerely,  
  
Charles Powell

Colin Budd, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.