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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

8 January 1985

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Dear Charles,

Public Statement on Shultz/Gromyko Meeting

We agreed on the telephone this evening that the Government's substantive response to the outcome of the Geneva meeting should be made from No 10 following the Prime Minister's meeting with Mr McFarlane tomorrow morning.

We had prepared a number of points which could serve as the basis for a statement. I enclose a copy: they have been agreed with MOD officials. They may of course need some adjustment in the light of any joint statement issued following the Geneva meeting. But they may be useful to you in drafting a statement following Mr McFarlane's call.

I am sending copies of this letter to Denis Brennan (MOD), Richard Hatfield and Bryan Cartledge (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

Peter Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)  
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq  
10 Downing Street

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After the earlier Soviet walk-out from the START and INF talks, we welcome the Geneva meeting as a renewal of a serious dialogue between the United States and Soviet Union on vital arms control issues. It was never to be expected that a single two-day meeting would resolve the serious differences which exist between the two Superpowers in this complex and difficult area.

[If appropriate] We therefore believe that the decision to hold further meetings will help to pave the way for serious negotiations.

The next stage in this long process must be substantive negotiations on the whole range of nuclear arms and space issues. As the Prime Minister agreed with President Reagan last month, East-West negotiations should aim to achieve security with reduced levels of offensive systems on both sides. Deployments of defensive systems would also have to be a matter for negotiations. The renewed emphasis on arms control presents us with a fresh opportunity for worthwhile agreements.

But negotiations for arms control cannot exist in a vacuum. It is rather one aspect of the wider political process and for a successful outcome to the negotiations a sound basis of East-West confidence is essential. An increase in confidence between the two Alliances requires patience and perseverance. But it is only the path to realistic and verifiable arms control. As the Prime Minister has stated at Camp David, with President Reagan's agreement, our aim throughout will continue to be the maintenance of balance, not achieving superiority; and the enhancement, not the undermining, of deterrence.

The Prime Minister has also made it clear, to both President Reagan and Mr Gorbachev, that there is no question of the UK, or indeed the other European Allies, being split from the United States on these matters. NATO will not allow Soviet propaganda to succeed in driving wedges between the Western democracies.

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