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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

23 September 1985

BC

As you will be aware the Prime Minister has invited Mr. Macfarlane to talks at Chequers on 28 September. Mr. Macfarlane has not yet confirmed that he can manage that date. Nevertheless, it would be prudent to start to put together some briefing material for the occasion. At the same time the Prime Minister would wish knowledge of the visit to be kept as restricted as possible, at least for the time being.

The main subject for discussion will of course be the forthcoming US/Soviet Summit. The Prime Minister's message to the President and his reply form the basic documents for the meeting. But there will undoubtedly be a number of other subjects to cover. These include at least the present state of discussions on United Kingdom participation in SDI research, the Middle East, South Africa, Ptarmigan, Northern Ireland and Franco-US nuclear co-operation. There may be other subjects which you think should be added.

Given that this will be a long conversation rather than a meeting in the normal sense, I suggest that you should not put in formal briefs but rather a number of letters on each of the main subjects suggesting the general approach which might be used with Mr. Macfarlane.

I understand from Len Appleyard that the Foreign Secretary will definitely not be in the United Kingdom on 28 September. The Prime Minister will therefore see Mr. Macfarlane alone, with me.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence) and Michael Stark (Cabinet Office).

Charles Powell

Colin Budd, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.