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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

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6 June 1990

Dear Charles,

START; UK INTERESTS

The Defence Secretary has seen Stephen Wall's letter to you of 6th June with advice on the approach the Prime Minister might take on START during her visit to the Soviet Union.

He is a little nervous that the UK might get drawn into a dialogue, alongside the treaty negotiations, in which (given how little real scope we have for manoeuvre) we might be uncomfortably squeezed, or give the Soviets needless scope for manipulation. It also seems questionable whether we are likely to help our long-term co-operation with the US by raising the topic direct with the Soviets when they have advised against. Ultimately, we have to rely on the US to negotiate in our interests on the non-circumvention clauses.

While recognising that the issue is finely balanced, the Defence Secretary's own inclination would be for the Prime Minister not to raise the issue and simply to be ready to play the hand much as Sir Anthony Acland suggests in paragraph 11 of his telegram No. 1327 of 4 June.

A copy of this letter goes to Stephen Wall (FCO), and Sonia Phippard (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,
Sonia Webb.

(S WEBB)
Private Secretary

Charles Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

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