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Dear Charles

PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH TO THE SECOND WORLD CLIMATE CONFERENCE

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 31 October to Phillip Ward and the revised version of the Prime Minister's speech.

We are grateful to you for taking on board the majority of the points made in my letter of yesterday to Phillip Ward. I should however record our continued concern with the tone of the bottom paragraph on page 4. This says that "we have cared too little for our seas, our forests and our lands" and that "we have treated the air and the oceans like a dustbin". Whilst we appreciate that this might be the tone to use at such international gatherings, it does seem to us to leave the UK open to criticisms at home from, eg, Greenpeace, FOE etc that our environmental policies are ineffective. But if the DOE is content, then we are happy to let the matter drop.

Turning to the new parts of the speech, we have two comments. First, on page 14, it is alleged that because "it may be cheaper or more cost-effective to take action now rather than to wait and pay much more later some of our big companies are building off-shore oil platforms higher above the surface of the sea". I have to say that, albeit on a quick check, officials in our Petroleum Engineering Division were not aware of this. And indeed we wonder whether such action can really be worthwhile, given the relatively short production lifetime of the platforms and the possible/predicted rise in sea levels, namely at most one metre over the next 100 years. We therefore suggest that this is omitted.



Secondly, on page 16, we are rather surprised by the addition of "whatever it may be" to "current level" in our CO₂ emissions target. Does this mean that we don't know what the level is (rather obvious since it is not the end of the year) or that we will meet the target however tough it may be? In any event, we think that it is an unnecessary addition, and probably an unwise one, given that it could give rise to unnecessary questions. Again, we suggest that this is omitted.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

*Yours
John*

J S NEILSON
Principal Private Secretary