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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

7 October 1985

Dear Charles,

*NBM
CDP 7/K.*

Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference

The Prime Minister will be aware that the third Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty ended successfully on 21 September with the adoption by consensus of a Final Document strongly endorsing the Treaty. You may wish to have a brief report.

Prospects for a successful outcome were poor at the stage when Mr Luce delivered the principal UK speech at the opening of the Conference in late August. Despite the increase to 130 in the number of parties to the Treaty, it was widely predicted that the Treaty would be weakened by a failure, like the one in 1980, to reach agreement.

The main bone of contention was the record of the three nuclear weapons States parties over Article VI of the Treaty, which enjoins negotiations in good faith on measures for the cessation of the nuclear arms race. Many called for a resumption of trilateral negotiations on a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban. After much argument the Final Document expressed the divergent views, thus safeguarding the interests of both the UK and USA on nuclear testing.

Article IV enjoins the parties to facilitate the fullest possible exchange of nuclear materials, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes. Despite lack of agreement among donors to launch a multilateral Technical Cooperation Fund to benefit developing States parties, a British paper suggesting improvements to existing technology transfer mechanisms formed a basis for the relevant parts of the Final Document, which recorded positive conclusions about the operation of Article IV. The existence of our paper helped to defeat an attack by certain non-aligned countries on the record of the nuclear suppliers. Mr Luce's announcement of the doubling, to \$2 million over five years, of UK technical assistance given specifically for NPT developing parties was also helpful.

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Meticulous preparation over the year before the Conference opened, including the lobbying of the chief non-aligned, was one key to the successful outcome. The understanding which FCO officials helped to set up between the Americans and the Russians to exercise mutual restraint held well despite strain.

The success of an agreed Final Document, in contrast to the 1980 Review Conference, should help to reverse the perception that the Treaty is moribund. The chances of stemming nuclear proliferation and sustaining the Treaty and its associated regime until 1995 are improved. Although the Government will continue to be criticised over its policy towards a comprehensive nuclear test ban, critics like Dr Owen have been proved wrong over the Review Conference. The Foreign Secretary intends to draw attention, on suitable speech occasions, to a success in a workaday but very important international forum: a success to which the Government made a major contribution.

Yours ever,
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