cc P.C. ho

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

14 February, 1986.

US RESPONSE TO GORBACHEV PROPOSALS

Thank you for your letter of 14 February clearing up the mystery of the President's message which never arrived. I think that the only outstanding action is for the Embassy in Washington to make sure that the White House know that the Prime Minister had not seen the President's message when she sent hers. I should be grateful if you could arrange for this to be done.

(C.D. Powell)

C.R. Budd, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

CDPC

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

14 February 1986

Dear Charles,

US Response to Gorbachev Proposals / attached

Len Appleyard wrote to you yesterday enclosing a copy of President Reagan's letter to NATO Heads of Government, the Prime Minister's copy of which never arrived. For the record, I now enclose a fair copy, delivered to us by the American Embassy today.

The American Embassy are extremely apologetic. They received the text of the message by telegraph on 5 February while Ambassador Nitze was calling on the Prime Minister. On return from No 10, "Mr Nitze's party" (presumably Ambassador Price himself) reported that the Prime Minister had had a copy of the President's message in her hands during the discussion. They not unnaturally jumped to the conclusion that the message had been transmitted direct from the White House to the Cabinet Office, and did not think it necessary to transmit another copy (they did not have and have never received an "original" signed by the President). The Embassy acknowledge that Ambassador Nitze's party jumped to the wrong conclusions and that what they saw the Prime Minister refer to was some document other than the President's message.

Yours ever,

Colin Budd

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
PS/10 Downing Street

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Dear Margaret:

AS YOU KNOW, I ESPECIALLY VALUE OUR CANDID AND CONSTRUCT VE DIALOGUE ON ISSUES OF COMMON CONCERN. IN THAT SPIRIT, I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU MY THOUGHTS ON HOW BEST TO RESPOND TO THE SOVIET UNION'S MOST RECENT ARMS CONTROL PROPOSALS. I WOULD WELCOME YOUR OWN VIEWS.

I HAVE LONG ADVOCATED THE ULTIMATE ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. LAST NOVEMBER, THE UNITED STATES MADE A FAR-REACHING PROPOSAL DESIGNED TO BRING US CLOSER TO TH1S EVENTUAL GOAL OF ZERO NUCLEAR WEAPONS. THIS PROPOSAL INVOLVED ALL THE AREAS OF THE GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS AND IT ENJOYED WIDE SUPPORT FROM OUR ALLIES. THE FACT THAT THE NEW SOVIET LEADERSHIP IS NOW TRYING HARD TO BE SEEN AS DEALING CONCRETELY WITH NUCLEAR REDUCTIONS IS A TR1BUTE TO THE SUCCESS OF OUR OWN COMMON EFFORTS. IT ALSO MAY PRESEN US WITH NEW OPPORTUNITIES AS WELL AS NEW CHALLENGES.

MANY OF THE SPECIFIC ELEMENTS OF THE MOST RECENT SOVIET PROPOSAL REMAIN CLEARLY UNACCEPTABLE TO WESTERN SECUR1T

SUBJECT cc MASTER
OPS
DEFENCE
Arms Control PT7

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T34/86

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INTERESTS. WE OBVIOUSLY MUST CONTINUE TO REJECT THOSE MEASURES THAT WOULD MAKE NO REAL CONTRIBUTION TO SECURITY AND STABILITY. INSTEAD, WE MUST KEEP THE NEGOTIATING FOCUS ON OUR OWN ARMS CONTROL PROPOSALS AND OBJECTIVES. AT TE SAME TIME, IN RESPONDING TO THIS PROPOSAL, IT IS IMPOR ANT THAT WE EXPIORE ANY POSSIBILITY FOR PROGRESS. BY NOTING APPARENT SOVIET AGREEMENT TO OUR OBJECTIVE OF SUBSTANTIAL NUCIEAR REDUCTIONS AND BY ELABORATING OUR OWN STEPS FORWARD FOR ACHIEVING THAT END, WE CAN CHALLENGE THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP TO SEE WHETHER THEIR PROPOSAL ADVANCES THE PROCESS OF ACHIEVING SUBSTANTIAL MUTUAL REDUC IONS AND LIMITS WHICH ARE EQUITABLE, VERIFIABLE, AND STABILIZING.

IN THIS REGARD, I WOULD RESPOND THAT WE ARE PLEASED THAT THE SOVIET UNION AGREES WITH OUR ULTIMATE GOAL OF MOVING TO THE TOTAL ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, CONSISTENT WITH OUR OVERAIL REQUIREMENTS FOR SECURITY AND STABILITY. TO DO THIS, THE FIRST STEPS MUST BE TAKEN BILATERALLY BY THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET UNION. THE U.S., THEREFORE, BELIEVES THA OUR IMMEDIATE FOCUS SHOULD REMAIN ON THE PROMPT ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THESE FIRST STEPS, ESPECIALLY THE IMPIEMENTATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF 50 PERCENT REDUCTIONS APPROPRIATELY APPLIED AND AN INTERIM INF AGREEMENT. WE SEE NO BENEFIT IN NEGOTIATING THE SPECIFIC DETAILS PROPOSED IN THE SUBSEQUENT PHASES OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL AT THIS TIME. THIS WOULD ONLY DIVERT TIME AND ATTENTION FROM THE IMMEDIATE AND NECESSARY WORK AT HAND.

IN RESPONDING AS OUTLINED ABOVE, I WOULD ALSO MAKE IT C EAR THAT THE U.S. VIEWS THE EVENTUAL ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AS A SERIOUS GOAL THAT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE. IT WILL REQUIRE MORE THAN JUST A PROCESS WHICH REMOVES THE WEAPONS, IN THAT IT WILL ALSO HAVE TO ADDRESS THE CONDITIONS THAT HAVE MADE THE WEAPONS NECESSARY. WE MUST, FOR EXAMPLE, CORRECT CONVENTIONAL AND OTHER FORCE IMBALANCES AND PROBLEMS, ENSURE FULL COMPLIANCE WITH

EXISTING AND FUTURE TREATY OBLIGATIONS, SEEK PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF REGIONAL CONFLICTS IN WAYS THAT ALLOW FREE CHOICE WITOUT OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE, AND OBTAIN A DEMONSTRATED COMMITMENT BY THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP TO PEACEFUL COMPETITION.

IN THE NUCIEAR AND SPACE TALKS, I AM NOT INCLINED TO CHANGE OUR POSITIONS IN THOSE AREAS IN WHICH THE SOVIET UNION HAS FAILED TO INDICATE ANY MOTION ON THEIR PART, OR EVEN ADDRESSED FULLY OUR PROPOSALS MADE ONLY LAST NOVEMBER. IN START, THEREFORE, I WOULD REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO THE PRINCIPLE OF 50 PERCENT REDUCTIONS, APPROPRIATELY APP IED. IN THE DEFENSE AND SPACE AREA, I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THA THE KIND OF BROAD LIMITS ON RESEARCH INTO STRATEGIC DEFENSES WHICH THE SOVIET UNION CONTINUES TO DEMAND WOULD BT

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NOT SERVE WESTERN SECURITY INTERESTS, CANNOT BE VERIFIED, AND MUST NOT BE INCLUDED IN ANY AGREEMENT.

IN THE INF AREA, I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE FIRMLY THAT THE BEST SOLUTION REMAINS THE GLOBAL ELIMINATION OF THE ENTIRE CLASS OF U.S. AND SOVIET LAND-BASED LRINF MISSILES. WE SHOULD MAKE IT PERFECTLY CLEAR THAT WE ARE FULLY PREPARED PROMPT Y TO NEGOTIATE AN EFFECTIVE, VERIFIABLE AGREEMENT TO THA END AND WITHOUT ANY ADDITIONAL CONSTRAINTS. HOWEVER, SINCE THE SOVIET UNION CONTINUES TO REFUSE TO JOIN US IN MOVING IMMEDIATELY TO SUCH A GLOBAL, ZERO-ZERO SOLUTION, I AM INCLINED TO PROPOSE THE ELIMINATION OF U.S. AND SOVIET LRINF IN EUROPE, COUPLED TO INITIAL REDUCTIONS OF AT LEAST 50 PERCENT IN SS-20'S IN ASIA, WITH SUBSEQUENT REDUCTIONS ALSO BRINGING THEM TO ZERO. THESE REDUCTIONS AND LIMITS WOULD NOT BE CONTINGENT ON RESTRICTIONS ON THE FORCES OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OR FRANCE.

THE ISSUE OF NUCLEAR TESTING SHOULD BE KEPT SEPARATE FROM OUR NEGOTIATING EFFORTS IN THE NUCLEAR AND SPACE TALKS. AS LONG AS WE RELY ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS AS AN ELEMENT OF DETERRENCE, WE MUST CONTINUE TO TEST IN ORDER TO ENSURE THEIR SAFETY AND CAPABILITY. WE ENVISION A CONTINUED ROLE FOR SUCH A DETERRENT UNTIL CONDITIONS EXIST UNDER WHICH WE COULD CONTEMPLATE THE ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

NUCLEAR REDUCTIONS ALONE, PARTICULARLY IN THE MANNER NOW PROPOSED BY THE SOVIET UNION, ARE NOT ENOUGH TO ENSURE A MORE SECURE PEACE. RATHER, ANY JOINT EFFORTS MUST INVO VE CONCURRENT PROGRESS IN IMPROVING THE STABILITY O THE OVERALL EAST-WEST SECURITY BALANCE, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON STEPS TO REDRESS EXISTING CONVENTIONAL IMBALANCES, TO ACCOMPLISH A VERIFIABLE, GLOBAL BAN ON CHEMICAL WEAPONS, TO STRENGTHEN CONFIDENCE-BUILDING

MEASURES, AND TO IMPROVE THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION REGIME.

THEREFORE, I PLAN TO UNDERSCORE TO MR. GORBACHEV THE CONTINUING COMMITMENT OF THE U.S. AND ITS ALLIES TO PURSU EARLY, MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE PROGRESS WITHIN THE ONGOING MULTILATERAL MBFR AND CDE NEGOTIATIONS, AS WELL AS CW NEGOTIATIONS AT THE CD. I WOULD TAKE NOTE OF MR. GORBACHEV'S POSITIVE PUBLIC STATEMENT, BUT MAKE CLEAR THAT SOVIET NEGOTIATORS IN THESE TALKS HAVE YET TO MEET BASIC WESTERN CONCERNS.

I WILL ALSO REAFFIRM TO MR. GORBACHEV OUR STRONG INTERES IN EXPLORING WITH THE SOVIET UNION THE POSSIBILITIES FOR CURBING PROLIFERATION OF CW CAPABILITIES AND FOR DEVELOPING SOME FORM OF BILATERAL RISK REDUCTION MECHANISMS.

OUR GUIDING OBJECTIVE IN ALL OF THESE AREAS SHOULD BE THE NEGOTIATION OF MEANINGFUL, VERIFIABLE AND EQUITABLE ARMS CONTROL MEASURES THAT CAN EACH STAND ALONE ON ITS OWN MERITS AT EACH AND EVERY STAGE OF ANY LARGER PROCESS.

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IN OFFERING THESE THOUGHTS I WOULD STRESS THREE ESSENTIAL POINTS.

FIRST, IT IS VITALLY NECESSARY THAT ANY NEW ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS INCORPORATE STRINGENT VERIFICATION, INVOLVING MEASURES FAR MORE COMPREHENSIVE AND EXACTING THAN IN ANY PREVIOUS AGREEMENT. WE WELCOME THE IMPLICIT SOVIET RECOGNITION OF THIS POINT SUGGESTED BY THOSE PARTS OF MR. GORBACHEV'S PUBLIC STATEMENT DEALING WITH ON-SITE INSPECTION AND OTHER COOPERATIVE MEASURES THAT MAY BE NECESSARY.

SECONDLY, EAST-WEST NUCLEAR ARMS REDUCTIONS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A COMPARABLE REDUCTION IN THE THREAT OF CONFRONTATION. CONCRETE PROGRESS IN OTHER AREAS OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS -- INCLUDING NON-NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL, REGIONAL TENSIONS, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND BILATERAL TIES -- IS ESSENTIAL TO THE LONG-TERM RESOLUTION OF OUR BASIC SECURITY CONCERNS.

IN THIS REGARD, I CANNOT ACCEPT THE SOVIET CONTENTION THAT REGIONAL CONFLICTS HAVE NO CONNECTION TO THE OVERALL SECURITY SITUATION. ON THE CONTRARY, I BELIEVE THAT ANY CONSIDERATION OF ARMS CONTROL ONLY UNDERSCORES THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROPOSAL I MADE A THE UNITED NATIONS LAST OCTOBER FOR A COMPREHENSIVE AND FLEXIBLE APPROACH THAT WOULD PERMIT THE U.S. AND SOVIET UNION TO WORK TOGETHER, IN

CONJUNCTION WITH THE PEOPLES DIRECTLY INVOLVED, TO RESOLVE REGIONAL CONFLICTS THAT HAVE DAMAGED EAST-WEST RELATIONS.

FINALLY, IN RESPONDING TO MR. GORBACHEV, I WILL MAKE CLEAR BT

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THAT THE U.S. CAN MAKE NO COMMITMENTS FOR OTHER NUCLEAR POWERS, AND THAT WE CANNOT AGREE TO ANY BILATERAL U.S.-SOVIET ARRANGEMENT WHICH WOULD SUGGEST OTHERWISE. THE U.S. POSITION REMAINS THAT THE NEGOTIATION OF LIMITATIONS ON THIRD COUNTRY NUCLEAR SYSTEMS MUST BE SOLELY THE RESPONSIBIITY AND PREROGATIVE OF THOSE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED. IT WOULD, OF COURSE, REMAIN TO THOSE GOVERNMENTS TO DETERMINE WHETHER AND WHEN THEIR OWN SECURITY INTERESTS WOULD BE SERVED BY PARTICIPATION IN FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS, PROVIDED SUBSTANTIAL U.S.-SOVIET REDUCTIONS HAD BEEN ACHIEVED IN A FIRST STAGE AND THAT MEANINGFUL STEPS DEALING WITH THE SECURITY THREATS POSED BY CONVENTIONAL, CHEMICAL AND OTHER ARMS HAD ALSO BEEN ACCOMPLISHED.

I ASK THAT YOU TREAT THESE IDEAS ON A SENSITIVE, CONFIDENTIAL BASIS. I WILL BE RESPONDING TO GENERAL SECRETARY GORBACHEV SOON AND LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR OWN THOUGHTS AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY.

GIVEN THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE NEW SOVIET PROPOSAL SEEKS TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON THE QUESTION OF LIMITATIONS AND REDUCTIONS BY NUCLEAR POWERS OTHER THAN THE U.S. AND SOVIET UNION, WE WILL OBVIOUSLY WANT TO CONSIDER CAREFULLY WITH YOU HOW BEST TO HANDLE PUBLICLY THIS NEW SOVIET TACK IN SUCH A MANNER AS TO PROTECT OUR COMMON AND RESPECTIVE INTERESTS.

IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE TAKEN PAINS TO PRESENT THIS NEW INITIATIVE IN SO MANY ALLIANCE CAPITALS, I BELIEVE THAT IT IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT THAT WE WORK TOGETHER IN COORDINATING OUR RESPECTIVE POLITICAL RESPONSES TO THEIR LATEST MOVE. TO CONTINUE THE CLOSE CONSULTATIONS WITHIN THE ALLIANCE ON THESE EAST-WEST ISSUES THAT WE HAVE ENJOYED IN THE PAST, I HAVE ASKED AMBASSADORS NITZE AND LEHMAN TO MEET WITH THE NAC ON FEBRUARY 12 TO HEAR BOTH YOUR VIEWS AND THOSE OF OTHER ALLIES DIRECTLY.

AS I INDICATED TO GENERAL SECRETARY GORBACHEV IN GENEVA LAST NOVEMBER, I AM UNDER NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE MAJOR DIFFERENCES THAT REMAIN BETWEEN THE U.S. AND SOVIET UNION ON THE FULL RANGE OF ISSUES, BUT I AM DETERMINED TO WORK ENERGETICALLY TO FIND PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS TO THOSE PROBLEMS. AS IN THE PAST, YOUR COUNSEL AND SUPPORT WILL BE GREATLY APPRECIATED.

SINCERELY,

/S/

RONALD REAGAN

CCPC

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

18 February 1986

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Dear Charles,

The Reagan Message Which Never Arrived

Thank you for your letter of 14 February, asking us to ensure that the White House understand the true position.

John Kerr had a word with the White House on 14 February, via the NSC, and explained the facts of the matter then.

Yours ever,

Colin Budd

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

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No.10 Downing Street