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From the Private Secretary

24 May, 1986.

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT REAGAN:
COMPLIANCE WITH ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS

I sent you with my letter yesterday a copy of the message from President Reagan to the Prime Minister about the decision which he had reached on future compliance with the SALT II Treaty. I suggested that we should need to consider carefully the terms on which we commented on the President's statement when it was made on 27 May.

In case it is helpful, I have sketched out the sort of line which it seems to me we ought to take. You will find it enclosed. I am confident that it would be acceptable to the Prime Minister. Incidentally, the Prime Minister sees no point in trying to persuade the President to change his decision which is quite clearly a firm one.

I am sending copies of this letter and its enclosure to John Howe (Ministry of Defence) and Michael Stark (Cabinet Office).

C.D. Powell

A.C. Galsworthy, Esq., CMG,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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PROPOSED LINE IN RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT REAGAN'S STATEMENT
ON COMPLIANCE

The United Kingdom has frequently made clear its belief in the importance of strict observance of the SALT II limits. We have drawn to the Soviet Union's attention on a number of occasions the need to comply strictly with arms control agreements, and be seen to do so. We have done this most recently in a message to Mr. Gorbachev which the Lord President has taken to Moscow.

The President's statement makes clear that if the Soviet Union brings itself unambiguously into full compliance with its obligations under the SALT II Treaty between now and the end of the year, the President will take this into account in deciding whether the United States should itself exceed the SALT II limits. This is a clear opportunity for the Soviet Union to respond positively, and we support the United States' appeal to them to do so.

We still hope therefore that it may be possible for the United States to avoid itself exceeding the SALT II limits at the end of the year. We would much regret it if the provisional decision to do so had to be implemented.

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