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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

13 November 1986

CDP 15/11

Dear Charles,

SALT Limits

You will remember that the Foreign Secretary raised this subject during his meeting with the Prime Minister yesterday evening.

He understands the reasons for her reluctance to raise the issue at Camp David. Nor does he think it necessary for her to give it any undue emphasis. It was however clear from his conversation with Nitze yesterday that the Americans have held off from technical breakout until after her visit in order to give her another opportunity to raise it. The Foreign Secretary is concerned that silence on her part will be taken - and publicly interpreted - to mean her consent. There is no doubt that, given recent publicity and Parliamentary interest, she will be pressed by the media and the Opposition after Camp David to say whether she raised the SALT issue. He believes that it would be prudent to be in a position to confirm that the subject had been raised, and that her previous statements on the issue continued to represent her point of view.

We understand that Chancellor Kohl pressed the President in favour of continued compliance during his recent visit to Washington. There is also significant support for that view on both sides of the US political divide.

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/ I enclose a short speaking note on the SALT limits on which the Prime Minister could, if she agrees, draw during her US visit, as and when opportunity arises.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Howe (MOD) and Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

*Yours ever,  
Colin Budd*

(C R Budd)  
Private Secretary

C D Powell ESq  
No 10 Downing St

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SPEAKING NOTE FOR PRIME MINISTER'S USE IN US:  
14/15 NOVEMBER

#### SALT LIMITS

1. The Alliance has hung together well since Reykjavik. Crucial to avoid splits now. With Summit in doubt, Russians will try to stimulate Allied criticism of present US negotiating stance. Must not allow them to get away with this.

2. Soviet task will be easier if the US now exceed previous force ceilings. In announcing break-out in May President undertook to take account of developments in Geneva negotiations which could alter situation. He has good reasons to emphasise that progress was made at Reykjavik. The more that is done the more that would seem to justify the reconsideration promised by May statement.

3. Believe technical factors already exist which favour a period of continuation of interim restraint; and that little cost involved in this case, if any.

#### BACKGROUND

4. Two S5BNs now due for overhaul. US Navy favours dismantling rather than overhauling one. This would keep the US within SALT sub-limits, even with deployment of 131st B52. They then could keep open option of dismantling second submarine in mid-1987 as further bombers come into service.