



SUBJECT  
cc Mr. H. S.

he re  
C. Sir P.C.

## 10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 June 1984

BT

### Foreign Policy : Possible Conflict of Principles

At a meeting on another subject here today the Prime Minister raised a question of a possible conflict of principles in foreign policy. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Mr. Douglas Hurd, Sir A. Acland and Sir J. Leahy were present (among others).

The Prime Minister said that Britain stood for the upholding of international law and respect for national sovereignty. We therefore believed it wrong except in the most extreme circumstances to violate the borders of another state or to intervene in its internal affairs.

But others were not so scrupulous. Some blatantly interfered in the internal affairs of sovereign states, or worked from within to impose regimes against the will of the peoples concerned or openly violated national borders. Did these practices entitle us to intervene and if so, at what point and in what circumstances? It might not be right to stand on the principles in paragraph 2 above if the consequence was the massive violation of another people's human rights.

The Prime Minister detected an intellectual vacuum in this area of international affairs. The issues could become acute if, for example, the United States at some future point intervened militarily in Nicaragua. We therefore needed to analyse the problem and develop a respectable intellectual basis for our policy towards it.

She said that she proposed to hold a seminar at Chequers in September to discuss this question. She would be grateful if the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary could provide a paper in due course. It was also desirable to consult outside experts (Michael Howard was mentioned).

I should be grateful if you could in due course suggest some outside experts who might be consulted - and a list of people, both from Whitehall and outside, who might attend the seminar.

I am copying this letter to Hugh Taylor (Home Office).

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