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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

21 November 1980

Dear Sir Robert,

Thank you for your letter of 6 November in which you told me of your recent conversation with Mr. Nixon in New York.

The concerns that you discussed are very much in my mind. The advance of Soviet influence in the Third World is a problem to which the West has yet to formulate an adequate response. I outlined in my speech in the Guildhall on 10 November, of which I enclose a copy, the sort of policies about which we need to be thinking.

We hope to discuss this subject with Mr. Reagan's people before and after the inauguration. It will be important for President Reagan to put his full weight behind the existing mechanisms for consultation among the members of the Alliance. Until I see how our discussions go and we have gauged the views of the new US Administration, I should prefer to stay my hand about Mr. Nixon's idea of a new group. As you say, one difficult point will be whether to include some of the other major Allies, who might become less co-operative in existing fora if a new one were set up without them.

/Meanwhile

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Meanwhile it seems to me that the problem raised in your letter is very much the kind of subject that might be suitable for one of the Anglo-American discussion meetings at Ditchley Park. Have you thought of writing to Sir Philip Adams to suggest it to him?

Yours sincerely
Raymond Beckett

Sir Robert Thompson, K.B.E., C.M.G., D.S.O., M.C.