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Prime Minister.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

You should be aware of
the in case it is raised
during the Summit meeting.

5 June, 1984

A.F.C. $\frac{5}{6}$

Dear John,

Following the Libyan shooting incident, we are proposing to take steps to put an end to the illegal possession of weapons by certain diplomatic missions, and in particular the carriage of arms by the US Marines at the American Embassy.

Hitherto the police have been content to turn a blind eye to this practice, although it is in fact contrary to British law. However, in the new circumstances we believe that it would be very much harder to defend making an exception for the Americans, especially since to do so would seriously prejudice the prospect of bringing into line other diplomatic missions which we know or suspect likewise illegally hold weapons. Accordingly, after discussion with the police, who agree that we should now seek to enforce the law uniformly with all missions, we have told the American Embassy that henceforth the US Marines may not be armed. Mr Streater responded that it would create considerable difficulty for his Government and that he expected to be instructed to come back to us in an attempt to find some compromise.

It is therefore possible that the issue might be raised in bilateral talks during the course of the Summit. Sir Geoffrey Howe recommends that if the subject is raised with the Prime Minister, she should emphasise the importance of a consistent application of British law to all Diplomatic Missions. The Prime Minister's decision to grant the American request that two of the President's protection officers should be armed at the Summit does not alter the position. The US Ambassador said in making this request that it was wholly exceptional and would not be taken as setting a precedent. He is clear that approval was given on that basis.

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

Yours ever,

Peter Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

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