

OPS

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T132/797

Subject filed on defence - May 79
TNF Modernization

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

fg.
- 15/41

November 1, 1979

SECRET

Dear Madame Prime Minister:

As the Alliance enters the final phase of its deliberations on theater nuclear force modernization and arms control, I think we can all be proud of the quality and intensity of NATO consultations on this subject. In my judgment, the crucial December decisions will mark a watershed in the Alliance's resolve. They will demonstrate the determination in each of our countries to maintain a credible ladder of deterrence and simultaneously to show our publics that we will take the initiative to negotiate a significant reduction in the level of these weapons.

Because our cooperative efforts have been going so well, I was deeply concerned to learn that the Dutch are considering a proposal to cut the size of NATO's modernization program significantly. This would jeopardize the consensus each member of the Alliance has tried so hard to build, and I want you to know that I have written Prime Minister Van Agt to ask him not to introduce the Dutch proposal into the Alliance in the upcoming consultations. Any assistance you can give in this regard would also be helpful.

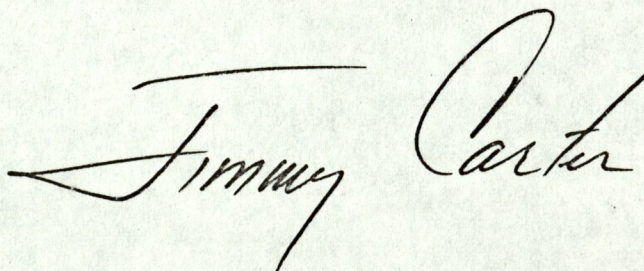
At the same time, we all need to help the Dutch with their political problems to the extent we can so that they can participate in the TNF program. In this regard I know you agree with me that we need to give all our publics vivid evidence of reduced NATO reliance on nuclear weapons and of the Alliance's dedication to the objectives of arms control.

SECRET

That is why I am attracted to the idea that as an integral part of the NATO decision to deploy 572 long-range theater nuclear force warheads in Europe, we could reduce our nuclear stockpile by 1,000 weapons. Such a step would be a concrete demonstration that through TNF modernization, we are not engaging in a nuclear build-up. It would also demonstrate our commitment to arms control, provide an opportunity to give MBFR a push forward with a streamlined NATO proposal, respond to Brezhnev's unilateral steps, and rationalize our nuclear stockpile. This possibility will be discussed at the next round of Alliance consultations on TNF.

We are approaching a crossroads. I am confident that by continuing to work together closely we will fully meet the challenge and move to a decision in December that will provide for needed improvements in NATO defenses and build a strong foundation for Alliance arms control efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jimmy Carter". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

The Right Honorable
Margaret R. Thatcher, M.P.
Prime Minister
London