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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London S.W.1

2 April 1980

*Dear Michael,*

President Carter's Message of 27 March  
to the Prime Minister: A NATO Summit Meeting

At their meeting at Chequers on 28 March the Prime Minister and Chancellor Schmidt discussed President Carter's messages proposing a NATO Summit meeting in May or June. As you know, the Foreign Secretary and Herr Genscher drafted a reply.

The Germans, who wanted to reflect further on this over the weekend, have now told us that they are content with the draft. The Chancellor is being advised to reply to the President in similar terms.

... I enclose a copy of the text agreed with the Germans. This can be sent direct to the White House, subject to a final check which you have arranged to make tomorrow with Herr Schmidt's office.

The Foreign Secretary realises that President Carter may not find the answer entirely to his liking. But as was agreed when the matter was discussed at Chequers, there would be a serious risk of arousing false expectations if a NATO Summit was unable to produce anything more than a reiteration of the existing Allied positions. It would be worse still if a Summit meeting, far from improving Alliance solidarity, merely drew attention yet again to the differences between the Allies. In the circumstances, therefore, Lord Carrington believes that the suggestion that the Heads of Government should discuss this at the Venice Summit and that this should be followed up at the NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting in Ankara later in the same week is the right one.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Brian Norbury (MOD).

*Yours own  
Paul*

(P Lever)

M O'D B Alexander Esq  
No 10 Downing Street

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Fairly please.

*Parage*

~~DRAFT~~ TEXT OF ~~REPLY~~ TO PRESIDENT CARTER *(to be sent by direct line)*

Your message of 27 March arrived very opportunely on the eve of my meeting with Helmut Schmidt, and we were able to have a very good talk about it. He will be replying separately but I think we found ourselves in agreement on the substance of the problem.

First of all, it is clearly very important for the Atlantic Alliance this year to show the unity and resolve which the situation requires. It must be right to begin now to consider the best way of achieving this.

Your suggestion for an Alliance Summit in May or June is very attractive. Both the London Summit Meeting in May 1977 and the Washington Summit in May 1978 did an enormous amount of good for the Alliance at the time. But in the present situation the idea seems to Helmut <sup>and me</sup> and me to raise three difficulties.

He is always concerned to avoid focussing too much public attention on France's role in the Alliance.

First, as you yourself point out, there is the problem of the French. You know their traditional attitude to these summits, and how they have handled the discussion of Afghanistan in the Alliance so far. Helmut <sup>and I</sup> ~~and I~~ <sup>or we all</sup> are very doubtful whether ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> would be willing to attend a summit in Washington or in Brussels, or even an up-graded meeting in Ankara, which is another possibility, as is a meeting in Paris itself. <sup>and</sup> Yet to hold a meeting of the other Heads of Government with <sup>and</sup> the President of France ~~missing~~ would, we both think, be a great pity.

The second problem is that of the Turks. They attach great importance to the choice of Ankara for the Foreign Ministers' meeting in June and would be greatly disturbed if this were in any way damaged or downgraded through a summit held in another place. But a NATO summit in Ankara would create very serious security problems for the Turkish Government.

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Schmitt  
Paris

Third, there is the question what will be the right move in the East/West context. Our information is that the East Europeans are far from solidly behind Moscow. We should not give the Russians an excuse for a Warsaw Pact counter-summit which could enable Moscow to tighten discipline in the opposition camp.

For all these reasons ~~Helmut and I~~ <sup>we</sup> are inclined to suggest an alternative approach in two stages. The first would be the Venice Summit <sup>on 23/27 June</sup> where ~~you and we~~ <sup>we</sup> have ~~already~~ <sup>all</sup> agreed that the first day should be devoted to political questions. Ohira has since written to all of us expressing his interest in close coordination of his position with ours. <sup>Myself, Giscard</sup> ~~Valery~~ will definitely be present. Thus we have the makings of a really close and intimate discussion concentrating on the essentials.

The second stage would be the regular meeting of Foreign Ministers of the North Atlantic Treaty powers which is already on the calendar for 25/26 June. ~~Helmut and I~~ <sup>we</sup> envisage that the Foreign Minister of the Alliance present in Venice would go on from there to Ankara and give an account of the Venice talks which could then be reflected fully in an upgraded communique. This would give great satisfaction to the Turks and <sup>make possible and</sup> ~~permit the~~ <sup>necessary</sup> ~~fine tuning~~ <sup>adjustment</sup> of the signal which these meetings send to the East. <sup>Schmitt</sup> ~~Helmut~~ <sup>I</sup> and I absolutely agree with you about the <sup>need to give a tangible demonstration of</sup> ~~objective~~. <sup>Western solidarity</sup> It is only a question of what is the best way to achieve it.

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