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File

S.W.  
Nato

Copied to: Miss Stephens  
Mr. Whitmore.

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

26 January, 1982

A Possible NATO Summit Meeting

Thank you for your letter of 25 January. The Prime Minister agrees that we should accept the American proposal for a NATO Summit on 9/10 June and that, in accepting the proposal, we should take the opportunity to invite President Reagan to visit this country on 7/8 June.

I am copying this letter to David Omand (Defence).

A. J. COLES

Brian Fall, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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Handwritten initials, possibly 'AF', in the bottom right corner.

PRIME MINISTER

If we want President

①

Reagan to come here (and we do)

POSSIBLE NATO SUMMIT MEETING

we shall have to respond fully to the N.A.T.O. We could do

Answer

As you will see from the attached FCO letter, Mr. Haig has proposed that there should be a NATO summit on 9/10 June.

if we that we are much more likely to reach agreement on Poland if there is a

President Reagan will be in Europe anyway for the Economic Summit on 4-6 June and would, I suppose, visit one or two European capitals during the gap between the two meetings.

Indeed, the FCO advise that, in accepting the American proposal for a NATO summit, the opportunity should be taken to invite President Reagan to visit this country on 7/8 June.

The FCO advise that the likely advantages of a summit outweigh the danger that Poland could be a divisive issue at the time between the Americans and the Europeans.

decisions

Mr. Haig asks for a reply by tomorrow. My own feeling is that it is most unwise to take a decision of this importance without very careful consideration and that the deadline for a reply is unreasonable. Moreover, at a time when we are just moving towards the really hard decisions on Poland - which could well split the Americans and the Europeans - it is not sensible to decide firmly to hold a NATO summit meeting in June.

While a properly prepared summit could indeed demonstrate the solidarity of the Alliance, we should be able to assess the chances of achieving that much more realistically when the present Polish exercise is rather nearer to completion. We do not, of course, want to have a row with the Americans because we have reacted negatively to their proposal. I suggest that we should reply to the effect that we are much attracted by the idea of a NATO summit in June but that it is too important a matter to be rushed and that, until the Alliance has fully worked out its response to the current phase of the Polish crisis, no firm decisions should be taken. We could add, if you agree, that if a NATO summit does take place on 9/10 June we very much hope that President Reagan would be able to visit this country some time between the Economic Summit and the NATO meeting.

Do you agree that we should reply in this sense?

25 January 1982

A. J. C.



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

25 January 1982

*Don John*A Possible NATO Summit Meeting

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has received a message from Mr Haig proposing that the Spring NATO Ministerial Meeting should be transformed into a summit meeting. Mr Haig suggests that this could be held on 9-10 June, ie at the end of the week after the economic summit at Versailles, which is scheduled for 4-6 June. The intention is clearly to avoid President Reagan having to make two trips to Europe.

As you know, a NATO summit meeting in 1982 was first mooted by the Foreign Secretary at the NATO Ministerial Meeting in Brussels last month. The Prime Minister has already agreed that officials should do some preliminary work on the proposal; she took the view that there would be some advantage in a summit if, and only if, the Alliance could demonstrate total unity (Rickett's letter of 29 December to Richards).

There is obviously a danger that Poland could prove a divisive issue between the Americans and the European allies at a summit. But the likely advantages should on balance outweigh this danger. Provided it is well prepared, it should be possible for a NATO summit to demonstrate the political solidarity of the Alliance at the highest level and, perhaps, to launch new work on putting NATO's existing defence resources to better use. Transatlantic friction would only be further aggravated if the Europeans appeared reluctant to accept Mr Haig's specific proposal.

The dates proposed for the NATO summit are in the same week as those in which The Queen has been planning to invite President Reagan to visit the UK. In the light of consultation with the Royal Household we believe that, at the same time as accepting the American proposal for a NATO summit, the opportunity should be taken to invite President Reagan to visit this country on 7-8 June.

I should be grateful if you could let me know as soon as possible if the Prime Minister accepts these proposals.

/The Americans



The Americans have asked for a response to Mr Haig's message no later than 26 January.

I am sending a copy of this letter to David Omand at the MOD.

*John, ever*

A stylized handwritten signature consisting of a large 'Z' shape with a horizontal line extending to the right.

(B J P Fall)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street

25 JAN 2

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