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NOTE OF PART OF A DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE, MR. CYRUS VANCE, AT 10 DOWNING STREET ON 23 MAY 1979 AT 10.00 A.M.

Present:

The Prime Minister	Mr. Cyrus Vance
The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary	His Excellency the American Ambassador
The Lord Privy Seal	
Mr. B. G. Cartledge	

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SALT 2

The Prime Minister asked Mr. Vance about the non-circumvention provisions in SALT 2, which seemed to her unusual and presumably went beyond the implied terms of non-circumvention. She also asked Mr. Vance to confirm that the protocol to SALT 2, covering ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) and sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs) would come to an end in 1981. Mr. Vance confirmed that this was the case and said that President Carter would stress publicly that the protocol would not be extended, and that it could not continue without reference back to Congress. The Prime Minister said that if there was no question of extending the protocol in order to prevent the Soviet Union from improving the weapons systems covered by it, there should therefore be no constraints on the acquisition by the UK of the technology we needed. The Prime Minister said that she had, however, noted Mr. Vance's reference to the possibility of coming back to Congress on the question of extending the protocol; this implied that extension might be possible. Mr. Vance explained that although it was a constitutional fact that the protocol could not be extended without Congressional assent, this certainly did not mean that the Administration would go back to Congress with a request for extension.

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Mr. Vance went on to say that he agreed with the Prime Minister that the Soviet Union was engaged in a considerable programme of improvement to its weapons systems. The US response to this was to strengthen all three legs of its strategic triad. So far as ground-launched missiles were concerned, the Americans were developing the MX system and the mobile basing mode. For sea-launched systems, the Americans were going ahead faster with the Trident 1 missile and the Trident 1 submarine; in addition, forward planning and purchasing was well advanced for the Trident 2 system. In the air, the Americans were developing their air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) and increasing their range. This all added up to a \$30 billion programme and it would be difficult to persuade the US taxpayer that, SALT 2 notwithstanding, expenditure of this order was necessary.

Lord Carrington said that it would be very helpful from the point of view of UK public opinion if Mr. Vance could lay emphasis on the US modernisation programme when he spoke to the Press. Misgivings in the UK about SALT 2 were not related to the actual provisions of the treaty - of which very few people were aware - but to the psychological climate which some people thought might be created by the treaty and which might inhibit the kind of modernisation effort which Mr. Vance had described. Mr. Vance fully accepted this and said that he would speak to the Press accordingly later in the day.

The Prime Minister said that her understanding was that the limitations on GLCMs and SLCMs imposed by the protocol to SALT 2 meant that the UK could not acquire this technology from the United States. Mr. Vance said that this was not necessarily the case. Systems on which a numerical limitation was imposed were not necessarily excluded from technological transfer. The inclusion of the word "necessarily" in the protocol was needed in order to prevent the non-circumvention

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provisions from being meaningless: but, in practice, this formulation would create no impediment or problem so far as the transfer of GLCM and SLCM technology was concerned. Mr. Vance pointed out that the non-circumvention provisions now constituted a clause in the treaty itself. He described the negotiating history which lay behind this. The Prime Minister asked whether technology transfer could take place even while the protocol remained in force. Mr. Vance said that it could and pointed out that the protocol formed part of the SALT 2 treaty. In addition to these two documents, there would also be an exchange of letters on the Backfire problem and a document entitled "Common Understandings" which would be designed to establish authoritative, agreed interpretations of the treaty and thereby avoid the ambiguities which had surrounded SALT 1.

The Prime Minister said that she understood that SS 16s would now be ruled out but that it would be possible to convert the SS 20 into an intercontinental missile by adding to it a third stage. Mr. Vance said that he thought that any attempt by the Soviet Union to cheat in this way would be readily detected.

CTB

Turning to the Comprehensive Test Ban treaty, the Prime Minister said that she was very worried about the possibility that the Soviet Union could decouple nuclear tests of up to 10 kt by conducting the explosions in underground caverns and that they could also conduct tests up to this level during periods of seismic disturbance, thereby escaping detection. The Prime Minister said that she believed that tests of up to 10 kt should therefore be excluded from the provisions of a CTB treaty so that stockpile testing could continue satisfactorily. The Prime Minister went on to say that she was

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also concerned about the possibility that the Soviet Union would make elaborate preparations, towards the end of the treaty period, for a comprehensive testing programme so that this could be carried out as soon as the treaty expired.

Mr. Vance replied that these concerns were not shared by the scientific community, at least in the US. American scientists believed that the planned installation of 10 seismic stations on Soviet territory would pick up evidence of any significant Soviet testing programme. American scientists were also confident that it was not necessary to conduct proof testing of the nuclear stockpile during the three-year period covered by the treaty. The US military were also now prepared to accept this. The United States would keep her testing laboratories fully operational so that stockpile testing could be resumed as soon as the three-year period was over. On the question of decoupling, Mr. Vance said that there were also differences of view between scientists. Mr. Vance said that if the treaty were to suffer from the defects which the Prime Minister had mentioned, President Carter certainly would not sign it. Mr. Vance went on to suggest that it might be helpful if US scientists could get together with their UK counterparts to discuss these matters.

Lord Carrington mentioned the problem which had arisen over Soviet insistence that the UK, like the US and the Soviet Union, should provide 10 national seismic stations (NSS). Since everybody knew that the UK had no intention of conducting nuclear tests on UK territory or UK dependent territory, these very costly installations would be impossible to defend politically. The Prime Minister asked about Soviet motives in sticking out for 10 UK NSS; there was clearly more to it than mere reciprocity.

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Mr. Vance expressed the view that the Soviet Union might budge from its insistence on 10 NSS for the UK but thought that they would not agree to less than five. Lord Carrington suggested that the criterion for the number of NSS for which each signatory would be responsible might be that of land mass area. Mr. Vance commented that on this basis the UK would be entitled to only half of an NSS. He said that the United States would argue, at the forthcoming US/Soviet Summit, that the NSS issue should be de-linked from all the other verification issues in the treaty negotiations. The Prime Minister asked whether the Russians had perhaps got cold feet about concluding the treaty. Lord Carrington said that the difficulties they were creating seemed to stem primarily from their bureaucratic methods and general awkwardness.

B.M.

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