

010 Deployment comes?

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Prime Minister

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PM/83/5

PRIME MINISTER

You have since agreed that the briefing on INF issues should be postponed until the weekend of 29 February. A.S.C. 14/1

Is it that late? not

Alliance and Nuclear Matters

1. Events within the Alliance and in relation to the nuclear debate are gathering pace. INF negotiations resume in Geneva on 27 January. Vice President Bush will be in London on 9/10 February. We need to establish the British position on several especially important issues, but there is not much time. I therefore welcome the fact that arrangements have been made to complete the briefing on the arms control issues, and (with those colleagues principally involved) to discuss cruise missile deployment dates and the dual key question, all of which were unfinished business before Christmas.

2. If for any reason (for example, preoccupation with the Franks report which is due to be published on 18 January) the resumed briefing on arms control were to slip, I nevertheless hope that it could be reinstated as soon as possible. The meeting of MISC 7 (provisionally set for 27 January) would then be the moment to deal with the timetable for cruise missile deployment and the question of dual key. There would in my view also be advantage in spending some time, perhaps at Chequers, thinking inter alia about the substance of the INF negotiating position and how to respond to current Soviet tactics, in preparation for Vice President Bush's visit. He will certainly expect to be in a position to report your views to President Reagan. We therefore need to clear our minds beforehand.

3. I am minuting separately on the related question of arrangements for improving the handling of the Government's public case on nuclear strategy and arms control.

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4. I am sending a copy of this minute to Michael Heseltine and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'FP', written in a cursive style.

(FRANCIS PYM)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

13 January, 1983

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