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Prime Minister

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PRIME MINISTER

Meeting at Chequers on 30 January: Arms Control Issues

BACKGROUND

At your briefing meeting on 20 December which concentrated on the United Kingdom nuclear understandings with the United States, it was agreed to resume discussion early in the New Year in order to concentrate on current arms control negotiations, particularly the intermediate nuclear force (INF) negotiations in Geneva. Meanwhile supplementary briefing on our understandings with the Americans and the nuclear weapons systems covered by those understandings was provided in the notes by officials annexed to my minute of 25 January.

2. The need to focus on the INF negotiations has become more urgent because of the impending visit to the United Kingdom on 9 February of the Vice President of the United States, Mr Bush. The INF negotiations are entering a critical phase and it has been made clear in Washington that Mr Bush (who will have visited Bonn and other European capitals first) is hoping to learn from you personally what the British Government considers that the next steps in these negotiations should be.

3. Mr Bush's visit will also be an opportunity to raise other related nuclear issues with him, notably the timing of the deployment of the United States ground launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) in the United Kingdom; and public concern about the question of control over the GLCMs once they are deployed here. A series of decisions on these latter questions was taken at MISC 7 on 27 January, but the Chequers meeting will provide an opportunity to explore the background further if you so wish. The primary objective of the meeting however is to decide what is to be said to Mr Bush about INF.

4. The following have been invited to attend.

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FCO

Secretary of State
Sir Julian Bullard (in Sir Antony Acland's absence)
Mr Patrick Wright
Mr David Gillmore

MOD

Secretary of State
Chief of the Defence Staff
Mr Clive Whitmore
Mr John Blelloch
Colonel J Cross

Cabinet Office

Sir Robert Armstrong
Mr David Goodall
Mr Roger Facer

Mr Roger Jackling will also be present.

HANDLING

5. You will wish to invite the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to introduce the subject. He will then ask Mr Gillmore to give a presentation on the INF negotiations. This will cover the political and strategic background; the stage which the negotiations have now reached; and the attitude to them of our principal allies. It will also contain an account of the latest (very secret) thinking in Washington and Bonn on the form which a new Western offer in the negotiations might take and offer advice (agreed with the Ministry of Defence) on what the British response to the American ideas should be.

6. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary would then like to ask Mr Wright to give a short presentation on the Strategic Arms Reductions Talks (START). This is not an area on which fresh decisions are required from the British Government at the moment; but Mr Wright will describe the various options which the Americans are considering and which need careful monitoring from the point of view of their possible impact on British interests.

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7. When the foregoing discussion has been concluded you might find it useful, in the light of the conclusions reached at MISC 7 on 27 January, to discuss exactly what should be said to Mr Bush about the political pressures here to strengthen the dual control arrangements over United States nuclear weapons based in the United Kingdom, including the growing demand for "dual key" control over GLCMs.

8. It would not be appropriate to raise specifically with Mr Bush the need to update the provisions of the Murphy-Dean agreement of 1958 relating to the procedures for implementing the United Kingdom/United States nuclear understandings, since he will not be familiar with the agreement and is leaving Washington for Europe on 30 January. I will raise this on the Cabinet Office-White House channel which has been used for these subjects before.

9. You will wish to bear in mind the sensitivity of the "dual key" issue in the run-up to the Federal German elections on 6 March and the consequent importance of saying nothing to Chancellor Kohl (who will be in London on 4 February) which might weaken his resolve to stand by the NATO "two-track decision" of December 1979. If time permits you might like to ask the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence officials present to remind you of the political considerations within the Alliance which led up to that decision.

10. Finally, you might invite the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Secretary of State for Defence to advise on how best to present to the Americans and Germans our decision to opt for deployment of GLCMs to the United Kingdom in November (instead of the early summer as at present planned) and on what should be said about this to Dr Kohl and Mr Bush.

CONCLUSIONS

11. You will wish to reach conclusions on the following points.

- (i) the line to take with Mr Bush about the next steps in the INF negotiations;
- (ii) whether anything needs to be said to him about the START negotiations;

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- (iii) what to say to Mr Bush about dual control;
- (iv) what should be said to Dr Kohl and Mr Bush about the November deployment of GLCMs.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

28 January 1983

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