

SUBJECT

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T/18/83

Defence ASJ  
✓ cc R. Bow 22  
R. Moltran  
R. Hatfield

US Declassified

A. J. C. 21/2

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OO WHITE HOUSE

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S E C R E T

FROM CABINET OFFICE LONDON 181954Z FEB 83  
TO IMMEDIATE WHITE HOUSE  
TELEGRAM NUMBER MISC 066 DATED 18 FEBRUARY 1983

MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT REAGAN:  
DEAR RON,

THANK YOU FOR YOUR MESSAGE OF 16 FEBRUARY ABOUT THE INF  
NEGOTIATIONS.

GEORGE BUSH'S VISIT TO LONDON WAS EXTREMELY HELPFUL TO US AND  
HIS TOUR OF EUROPE AN OUTSTANDING SUCCESS.

I ENTIRELY SHARE YOUR VIEW THAT THE TIMING OF A MAJOR NEW  
INITIATIVE INVOLVING A PROPOSAL FOR FIXED LIMITS ABOVE ZERO  
ON INF WEAPONS WILL NEED TO BE CONSIDERED VERY CAREFULLY.  
I AGREE THAT THIS IS NOT A STEP TO BE TAKEN BEFORE THE GERMAN  
ELECTIONS. BUT I DO BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE STRONG GROUNDS  
FOR CONSIDERING SUCH AN INITIATIVE VERY SOON AFTER THOSE ELECTIONS.

I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE STATEMENT  
YOU PROPOSE TO MAKE ON 22 FEBRUARY. MY VIEWS ARE AS FOLLOWS.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO EUROPE HAS AROUSED PUBLIC  
EXPECTATIONS THAT WE ARE NOW CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF AN  
INTERMEDIATE STEP ON THE ROAD TO OUR FINAL OBJECTIVE, THE ZERO  
OUTCOME. THE PHRASE HE USED, WHICH CAUGHT THE PUBLIC IMAGINATION,  
WAS THAT THE ZERO OPTION WAS "NOT A TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT PROPOSAL".  
I THINK IT MOST IMPORTANT THAT YOUR STATEMENT ON 22 FEBRUARY  
SHOULD REINFORCE THAT POINT. WHILE IT SHOULD NOT INFLATE  
EXPECTATIONS, I HOPE IT WILL NOT ONLY TAKE THE FORM OF A CLEAR  
AND BASIC RE-STATEMENT OF THE US POSITION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS  
BUT ALSO BEGIN TO INDICATE HOW THAT POSITION MIGHT BE DEVELOPED.  
THIS WILL MAINTAIN THE TREND OF GROWING UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT FOR  
THE WESTERN POSITION WHICH THE VICE-PRESIDENT'S VISIT DID SO MUCH  
TO ENCOURAGE.

YOU MIGHT CONSIDER STRESSING THAT NATO, WITH NO INF DEPLOYED,  
IS TODAY AT THE LEVEL OF THE ZERO OPTION: THAT WE DO NOT WANT TO  
MOVE FROM THAT SITUATION BUT THAT WE HAVE BEEN FORCED TO PREPARE  
OURSELVES FOR THIS BY THE SOVIET UNION'S LARGE-SCALE DEPLOYMENT  
OF INF: AND THAT IF ONLY THE RUSSIANS WOULD ACCEPT THE AGREEMENT  
WHICH THE US HAVE OFFERED THEM, NATO COULD REMAIN AT THE ZERO  
LEVEL AND BE JOINED THERE BY THE SOVIET UNION. THAT REMAINS  
THE BEST PROSPECT OF REMOVING A WHOLE CLASS OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS  
FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH.

IT WILL THEN BE IMPORTANT, I THINK, TO STATE THAT AMBASSADOR  
NITZE HAS INSTRUCTIONS TO EXAMINE URGENTLY AND WITH THE UTMOST  
CARE ANY SERIOUS SOVIET INITIATIVE. BUT IT WOULD BE A PITY TO  
LIMIT OUR WILLINGNESS "TO CONSIDER ANY REASONABLE ALTERNATIVE,"  
TO IDEAS WHICH WILL PRODUCE "THE SAME RESULT". I BELIEVE THAT THAT  
WOULD LOOK TOO MUCH LIKE A RIGID ADHERENCE TO THE ZERO OPTION.  
I WOULD MUCH PREFER A STATEMENT THAT THE UNITED STATES IS  
PREPARED TO DISCUSS IN GENEVA ANY PROPOSAL CONSISTENT WITH THE  
PRINCIPLES TO WHICH THE ALLIANCE SUBSCRIBES.

THE KEY PRINCIPLES SET OUT IN YOUR MESSAGE SEEM TO ME TO BE  
RIGHT. BUT I HOPE THEY WILL BE EXPRESSED IN THAT CLEAR AND  
SIMPLE LANGUAGE WHICH YOU ALWAYS USE TO SUCH GOOD EFFECT. YOU  
WILL WANT YOUR STATEMENT TO REACH AND INFLUENCE A WIDE PUBLIC  
ACROSS THE WORLD.

I SHOULD PREFER THE SECOND PRINCIPLE TO READ "THE BRITISH  
AND FRENCH STRATEGIC SYSTEMS ARE BY DEFINITION EXCLUDED FROM THESE  
BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS AND CANNOT THEREFORE BE TAKEN INTO  
ACCOUNT". I ALSO SUGGEST THAT THE FOURTH PRINCIPLE MIGHT REFER  
TO "LIMITS WHICH, BY ESTABLISHING A BALANCE, WOULD MAINTAIN THE  
UNITED STATES' COMMITMENT TO DETERRENCE IN EUROPE".

I HAVE ONE FURTHER POINT WHICH IS, OF COURSE, ENTIRELY FOR YOU  
TO DECIDE. YOUR MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE OF EUROPE, IN WHICH YOU  
STATED YOUR READINESS TO MEET ANDROPOV TO SIGN AN AGREEMENT ON  
THE ZERO OUTCOME, PLAYED A MOST USEFUL ROLE IN IMPRESSING WESTERN  
PUBLIC OPINION DURING GEORGE BUSH'S VISIT. BUT I THINK IT MAY BE  
WORTH REFLECTING ON WHETHER REITERATION OF THAT PROPOSAL WILL HELP  
THE KIND OF MESSAGE YOU HAVE IN MIND FOR 22 FEBRUARY. YOUR READ-  
INESS TO MEET ANDROPOV FOR THIS PURPOSE IS NOW A MATTER OF RECORD AND,  
FOR THE REASONS I HAVE ALREADY SUGGESTED, I AM INCLINED TO THINK  
THAT YOUR MESSAGE WILL BE MOST EFFECTIVE IF ITS EMPHASIS IS ON  
YOUR READINESS TO CONSIDER ANY REASONABLE PROPOSALS WHICH ARE  
BALANCED AND VERIFIABLE.

I HOPE THAT YOU WILL FIND THESE SUGGESTIONS HELPFUL. WE ARE  
AT ONE ON THE OBJECTIVES. YOUR STATEMENT ON 22 FEBRUARY WILL BE  
VERY IMPORTANT AND I AM GLAD TO HAVE HAD THIS EXCHANGE OF VIEWS.  
ABOUT IT. HELMUT KOHL'S REACTION TO YOUR IDEAS WILL BE MOST  
IMPORTANT. I AM SURE THAT AT THE PRESENT TIME WE SHOULD BE VERY  
MUCH INFLUENCED BY HIS VIEWS.

MY PERSONAL BEST WISHES TO YOU AND NANCY. I AM SURE THAT YOU  
WILL HAVE A WONDERFUL TIME DURING THE QUEEN'S VISIT. I KNOW HOW  
VERY MUCH SHE IS LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.

YOURS EVER,

MARGARET

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