



SECRET

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

17 March 1983

28A

Jew Tshu

Yes

INF

Prime Minister

Agree message to President Reagan?

A.T.C. 18/3

Thank you for your letter of 14 March enclosing a copy of a further message from President Reagan to the Prime Minister.

The message contains a welcome confirmation that the President is reviewing the INF negotiating position with a view to introducing an interim proposal. The Embassy in Washington reports that the State Department have put proposals which are very close to our own ideas to the White House; the President has not yet discussed these with principal advisors. But Mr Weinberger and some of his team have been promoting the idea that any proposal for an interim agreement should be tied to prior Soviet agreement that the zero option is the long-term objective. This would kill any prospect for Soviet agreement to an interim solution, and nullify the impact of an interim step on public opinion.

The President's request that there should be no public calls from European capitals for change in the US negotiating position is no doubt aimed more at the Germans and Italians than at ourselves. Mr Pym entirely shares President Reagan's point, and spoke strongly to this effect with the German and Italian Ambassadors in the margins of an EC Presidency working lunch in London yesterday. Chancellor Kohl, Herr Genscher and Signor Colombo have all made recent public statements which can be interpreted as calling for change. Yesterday the CDU disarmament spokesman (in what appears to have been an unauthorised statement) specified what he thought the new US negotiating position should be.

Our advice is that the Prime Minister should respond to the President to make it clear that:

- a. It remains our view that an interim proposal should be offered soon, ie ideally before the recess in the INF talks at the end of this month;
- b. We accept the need for caution over public statements about INF and related matters: this goes for the Americans too;

/c.

SECRET



- c. The condition for an interim agreement apparently favoured by Mr Weinberger (paragraph 2 above) would abort the exercise (The Prime Minister raised this point with Vice-President Bush on his recent visit.)

/ I enclose a draft message from the Prime Minister to the President which has been agreed with the Ministry of Defence. We have heard today in confidence from the Americans that President Reagan is due to address the INF interim proposal decision at a meeting of the National Security Council tomorrow. It would therefore be particularly timely if the Prime Minister's reply could be despatched first thing tomorrow morning.

Given the time factor, Mr Pym has not yet seen the draft reply. I shall be showing it to him in the box tonight.

I am copying this letter and enclosure to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office) and Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

You are,
R B Bone

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

SECRET

DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despach/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:

Reference

Prime Minister

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

~~Top Secret~~

Secret

~~Confidential~~

Restricted

Unclassified

President Reagan

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

Thank you for your message of 14 March in which you set out your ~~current~~^{present} thinking about the INF negotiating ~~position~~^{one}.

CAVEAT.....

I warmly welcome your decision to review the negotiating position with a view to introducing an interim proposal in Geneva. As you know, we believe there are strong grounds for taking an initiative very soon which will offer the Russians an interim agreement fully consistent with the principles set out in your speech to the American Legion on 22 February. Ideally this should be introduced before the current negotiating round concludes. // The zero option would remain our longer-term objective. But as I told Vice-President Bush, I think that any attempt to make the proposal for an interim arrangement explicitly conditional upon prior Soviet acceptance of the zero option as the eventual outcome would nullify the purpose of the interim proposal and would therefore be a mistake.

Enclosures—flag(s).....

/Meanwhile

Meanwhile, I wholeheartedly agree with the need for caution over public statements at this delicate juncture for INF. We need to be aware of the effect such statements can have on one another's public opinion. For our part we shall certainly avoid any implication that the US Administration is reluctant on INF arms control: this would be untrue in itself and damaging in terms of public presentation on both sides of the Atlantic. I shall, as you suggest, continue to look for opportunities to underline in public our full satisfaction with Alliance consultation. May I say how much I value being kept in close touch with your thinking in this way, and your undertaking of further consultation on this important issue before long