

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T32A183

Despatched at
21/1220Z

US Declassified

IMMEDIATE 211203Z MAR 83

FM CABINET OFFICE

TO THE WHITE HOUSE

BT
SECRET

FOLLOWING FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM THE PRIME MINISTER.

BEGINS:-

DEAR RON,

THANK YOU FOR YOUR MESSAGE OF 14 MARCH IN WHICH YOU SET OUT YOUR PRESENT THINKING ABOUT THE INF NEGOTIATIONS.

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.

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 U.S 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 BEFORE LONG ON THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE.

YOURS EVER,

MARGARET.

ENDS
BT