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SUBJECT: THE MINISTER'S  
PERSONAL MESSAGE  
SERIAL No. T34183

S E C R E T

March 23, 1983

US Declassified

Dear Margaret:

Since the commencement of the INF negotiations, and particularly in recent months, our two governments have taken every appropriate opportunity to consult with each other concerning the conduct of the talks. Now I again invite your views so as to insure that we maintain the best possible and most united position and thus counter Soviet efforts both to delay or prevent the NATO deployment or to block any real progress in Geneva.

Based upon our previous consultations, the situation at the negotiating table in Geneva, and the deployment schedule for the Pershing II and GLCM missile, I have directed a review of the U.S. negotiating position. That review is now complete, and before I make final decisions, I would greatly appreciate your personal views on the tentative conclusions I have reached.

The United States continues to believe that the zero-zero outcome is the optimal solution.

The United States also remains firmly committed to both tracks of the NATO 1979 decision. Without an agreement that satisfies the criteria established in that decision, the United States will deploy LRINF land-based missiles as planned by NATO.

However, while maintaining the other essential elements of the current U.S. position, and we would hope, as an interim step toward the ultimate elimination of all LRINF land-based missiles, the United States could agree to terminate deployment at one of a number of discrete levels provided that the level chosen is militarily viable and satisfies the criteria mentioned earlier and provided that the Soviet Union agrees to reduce its corresponding LRINF land-based missile forces to an equal level.

I am seriously considering directing Ambassador Nitze to make the following proposal to the Soviet Union in Geneva before the end of the current round of negotiations on March 29. He would notify the Soviet Union that the United States is prepared to negotiate an interim agreement to the effect that the U.S. would stop its deployment at a finite (but as yet unspecified) number of warheads, on LRINF land-based missiles on launchers if the Soviet Union reduces the number of warheads on its LRINF missiles on launchers to an equal level on a global basis.

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The United States would view such a proposal as a serious interim step on the road to the total elimination of this class of weapons. We would do so in the hope that the Soviet Union could join us in this view.

It is my tentative judgment that it would be best not to deal in specific numbers at this time, since to do so would invite preemptive Soviet criticism during the recess. If presented in general terms, they would be in the position of criticizing a proposal before it had been presented in detail. As an earnest of our good faith, I believe it would also be useful to propose that the talks resume May 10th or 17th vice June 2nd.

Given the short time remaining before the end of this negotiating round, I would greatly appreciate your personal views on this approach as soon as possible so that I can benefit from them before making a final decision. In addition, I suggest that a principals only meeting of the SCG be convened in Brussels on March 25 to further our consultations.

I plan to make a general statement about our willingness to negotiate an interim LRINF solution during a speech I am scheduled to make on March 31.

Margaret, our close collaboration in implementing the December 1979 decision has demonstrated the vitality and strength of the relationship between our two nations. I have full confidence that this important collaboration will continue throughout this year.

Sincerely,

/s/

Ron