

SUBJECT.

PRIME MINISTER'S

SECRET

Prime Minister

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T41/83

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March 29, 1983

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Dear Margaret:

I much appreciate the very positive reactions I have received to suggestions put forward in my letter of March 22 to you and our other allied colleagues for a new initiative in the INF negotiations. Based upon these responses and upon the discussions at last Friday's special Consultative Group meeting, we are now proceeding in the manner I outlined to you in that letter.

This Tuesday, March 29, Paul Nitze will inform his Soviet interlocutor that the United States is prepared to negotiate an interim agreement in which the United States would accept a limit at a finite, but yet unspecified number of warheads on INF land-based missile launchers, provided the Soviet Union is prepared to reduce the number of warheads on its LRINF missile launchers to an equal level on a global basis. He will explain that the United States views this proposal as a serious initial step toward the total elimination of this class of weapons, and that we hope the Soviet Union joins us in this view. The U.S. proposal to eliminate these systems entirely would, of course, also remain on the table, along with the new alternative proposal for an interim agreement.

I have concluded that we should not put forward a specific number in the context of the interim proposal at this time. In leaving the number open I believe that we can demonstrate flexibility, complicate Soviet efforts to criticize our proposal, and open an avenue for possible further development of our position. As I suggested to you earlier, Ambassador Nitze will also suggest that the negotiations resume May 10 or 17, as opposed to June 3.

On Wednesday, March 30, I intend to invite your Ambassador in Washington to meet with me so that I can officially inform him of the new arms control initiative. We will use this meeting as an occasion to issue a public statement announcing the new initiative and, at the same time, release the NATO special Consultative Group Chairman's statement endorsing the proposal. My speech on the following day will provide our publics with the full context of our arms control activities against which this new initiative is best understood.

(together with
all NATO
Ambassadors)

SECRET

Your counsel and that of our other allied colleagues has been of invaluable help to me. Our recent consultations have again demonstrated the strength of our common determination to implement fully NATO's December 1979 decision. I am particularly pleased that we have taken this new step in the INF negotiations with such clear evidence of your support, and that of our other allies.

Sincerely,

/s/

Ron