

Subject on Defense: INF Pt 4

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FM FCO 101100Z OCT 83  
TO FLASH BONN  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 501 OF 10 OCTOBER  
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PRIME MINISTER'S  
PERSONAL MESSAGE  
SERIAL NO. T149/83

1. PLEASE DELIVER THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO CHANCELLOR KOHL URGENTLY, THE BACKGROUND TO WHICH YOU WILL KNOW FROM ORAL DISCUSSIONS LAST WEEK.

BEGINS

DEAR HERR CHANCELLOR

I UNDERSTAND FROM MICHAEL HESELTINE THAT MANFRED WOERNER AND HE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING YOUR CONCERN THAT THE DELIVERY OF CRUISE MISSILES TO BRITAIN AT THE BEGINNING OF NOVEMBER IS LIABLE TO BE USED BY OPPONENTS OF DEPLOYMENT TO EMBARRASS YOU IN THE FORTH-COMING BUNDESTAG DEBATE. MICHAEL HESELTINE HAS PASSED ON TO ME YOUR SUGGESTION THAT WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO DELAY THE ARRIVAL OF THE EQUIPMENT HERE UNTIL AFTER THE BUNDESTAG DEBATE HAS TAKEN PLACE. CAP WEINBERGER HAS ALSO BEEN IN TOUCH WITH HIM ABOUT THIS.

I HAVE GIVEN YOUR SUGGESTION VERY CAREFUL THOUGHT, AND I HAVE ALSO HAD A MESSAGE ABOUT IT FROM RONALD REAGAN. I FULLY UNDERSTAND THE TESTING PERIOD WHICH YOUR GOVERNMENT FACES OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS AND I KNOW HOW IMPORTANT IT IS FOR ALL OF US THAT THE BUNDESTAG DEBATE SHOULD GO WELL. I KNOW, TOO, HOW MUCH PERSONAL EFFORT YOU ARE DEVOTING TO THIS END. I RECOGNISE THE DANGER OF ENABLING THE CRITICS OF DEPLOYMENT TO ARGUE THAT BY ALLOWING IT TO GO AHEAD ON THE PRESENT TIMING WE ARE PREJUDICING THE OUTCOME OF THE GENEVA TALKS AND ANTICIPATING THEIR FAILURE. ON THE OTHER HAND, I AM VERY WORRIED ABOUT THE RISKS INHERENT IN MAKING ANY CHANGE TO THE TIMETABLE WHICH, IF IT BECAME KNOWN, COULD CREATE THE IMPRESSION THAT OUR COLLECTIVE RESOLUTION WAS BEGINNING TO FALTER. THIS COULD NOT ONLY STRENGTHEN THE HAND OF OUR CRITICS AT HOME: IT COULD ALSO TEMPT THE RUSSIANS TO THINK

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THAT, BY SOME PROPAGANDA MOVE, THEY COULD MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR BOTH OF US TO ACHIEVE DEPLOYMENT BY THE AGREED DATE OF 31 DECEMBER. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT ALL THIS WOULD BE MORE DAMAGING THAN ANY ALLEGATIONS YOU MAY HAVE TO FACE THAT WE ARE FAILING TO TAKE THE GENEVA TALKS SUFFICIENTLY SERIOUSLY.

IT IS VERY DIFFICULT JUDGEMENT TO MAKE: BUT ON BALANCE I BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF ALL OF US, INCLUDING THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC, TO STICK TO THE AGREED TIMETABLE WHEREBY DELIVERIES OF THE MAIN EQUIPMENT TO THE UNITED KINGDOM WILL START AT THE BEGINNING OF NOVEMBER.

I AM SURE YOU WILL UNDERSTAND THAT I DO NOT REACH THIS CONCLUSION LIGHTLY: AND THAT IT REFLECTS RONALD REAGAN'S CONCERN AS WELL AS MY OWN. IF YOU STILL FELT THAT THIS COURSE WOULD CREATE INSUPERABLE POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES FOR YOU YOU WOULD NO DOUBT WANT TO CONSIDER EXPLAINING THE PROBLEMS TO RONALD REAGAN. WE COULD THEN ALL LOOK AT THE QUESTION AGAIN TOGETHER. BUT IT IS CLEAR TO US THAT THE BULK OF THE EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING THE LAUNCHERS, MUST ARRIVE AT THE BEGINNING OF NOVEMBER. EVEN IF THE DELIVERY OF THE MISSILES AND WARHEADS THEMSELVES DID NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL 22 NOVEMBER (WHICH WOULD BE THE VERY MOST WHICH WE HERE COULD CONSIDER, WHATEVER THE OUTCOME OF YOUR DEBATE) I UNDERSTAND THAT SUCH AN ADJUSTMENT WOULD BE OPERATIONALLY VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE AMERICANS.

LET ME ASSURE YOU AGAIN HOW AWARE I AM OF THE VERY REAL DIFFICULT YOU FACE BUT FOR ALL THE REASONS I HAVE GIVEN I BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF BOTH OF US - AND OF THE ALLIANCE AS A WHOLE - FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM TO STICK TO THE EXISTING TIMETABLE. I VERY MUCH HOPE THAT ON REFLECTION YOU WILL AGREE THAT THIS IS THE RIGHT WAY TO PROCEEDS.

WITH BEST WISHES,  
YOURS EVER,  
MARGARET THATCHER.

ENDS

HOWE  
LIMITED  
HD/DEFENCE  
PS  
PS/MR LUCE  
PS/PAUS  
SIR J BULLARD

MR WRIGHT  
MR CARTLEDGE  
MR JAMES 2

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