

T 166/83
OPS



Subject on
Foreign Policy,
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Pt 3

PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

OTTAWA, K1A 0A2

October 25, 1983

**PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE**
SERIAL No. T 166/83

Dear Margaret,

During your most welcome official visit to Canada last month we devoted a considerable amount of our time to the theme of East-West relations and international security. You will be aware of my concern about the current unsatisfactory state of affairs and I am writing today to inform you of my intention to try to ameliorate this situation in the days and weeks ahead.

In doing so, I want to emphasize to you that my point of departure is one based on Canada's long standing and continuing firm commitment to the principles and purposes of both NATO and NORAD, which I view as the very bedrock of Canada's foreign and defence policies. Renewed evidence of this is reflected in our decision to permit the testing of air-launched cruise missiles in Canadian airspace, despite considerable domestic public opposition, and our four-square support behind NATO'S 'two-track' decision on INF; a decision which Canada supported completely at the outset in December 1979 and will continue to abide by fully. The collective security provided by NATO has proven invaluable to us all before during unsettled times as I am sure it will again.

The Rt. Honourable Margaret Thatcher, M.P.
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London, England

What is required at this stage, however, is something that goes beyond our enduring commitment to NATO and firmness of resolve. As I see the situation at the present time, the political climate between East and West is not good indeed is rather troubling. This is particularly the case following the Korean airliner tragedy and against the background of NATO's likely imminent deployment of intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe. While there have been several troughs, including some rather deep ones, in our relationship with the East in the past, I believe there are vital new elements in this equation going beyond the lack of progress in arms control negotiations that bear consideration at this time for the potential threat they contain to our mutual security. The first relates to the situation in Moscow where General Secretary Andropov appears ill and seems to be encountering considerable difficulty in establishing his political control. Added to the possibility that there may be increasing militarization of the Soviet system underway is the relatively recent Soviet position of having achieved rough parity of nuclear forces which may lead Moscow not to back away, as it has in the past, from any new real or perceived crisis.

The third, and perhaps most important element, is that at this critical juncture of heightened tension and uncertainty in Moscow we are attempting to manage this relationship largely in a political vacuum, devoid of any real high level political dialogue of the type that is essential to understanding and dealing with the concerns and intentions of the other side. At this time there is an evident mutual loss of confidence in one another. While we may be sure of what we are saying and what we intend our words to mean, there is a real possibility, precisely because of this mistrust and absence of dialogue, that the East at a distance may misread, misinterpret or miscalculate our true intentions.

The conclusion I draw from this appreciation of the above confluence of circumstances is that there is an urgent requirement for those western leaders in a position to do so to apply themselves: to the task of arresting the downward trendline in relations; to the restoration of a better climate based on increased confidence; to the reinstatement of high level East-West dialogue; to the need to inject real political impetus into stalled arms control negotiations, such as MBFR; and to the necessity of taking a more global approach to nuclear arms control with regard to both horizontal and vertical proliferation.

At Williamsburg we agreed to devote our full political resources to reducing the threat of war. This is the necessary moment, I believe, when these resources should be put into play. Our publics, who are obviously disturbed by the current situation, expect as a minimum that their political leaders will make such an effort. I, for my part, intend to do so.

I will make public some of my concerns during an address to an International Conference entitled 'Strategies for Peace and Security in the Nuclear Age' being held at the University of Guelph in Ontario on October 27. My speech will also allude in the most general of ways to some of the preliminary thoughts I have been considering for possible remedial action. These will include the need to stabilize East-West relations as a first step by reinstating high level political dialogue; ways of ensuring that all five nuclear weapon states engage in negotiations aimed at establishing global limits on their strategic nuclear arsenals; possible endeavours to encourage non-nuclear states in the direction of containing horizontal proliferation; as well as the need for the West to get off the defensive on the MBFR negotiations and to put forward substantive and constructive proposals aimed at breaking this longstanding deadlock, an objective for which I would seek your support.

I wish to emphasize that it is not my intention to insert myself into the important bilateral arms control negotiations now taking place between the USA and the USSR. As I also said in the House of Commons October 24 I do not think it would be right to include U.K. and French nuclear forces in the current INF negotiations.

I would like to stay in close touch with you on this matter and would be most pleased to receive your comments on what I have had to say above. I plan on taking this subject up personally with a number of allied leaders early in November including Chancellor Kohl and President Mitterrand. As we will be meeting again at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in New Delhi for a number of days later in November I believe this will provide us with an opportune occasion for an in-depth discussion of our own on this vital subject.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be "Queen", written in dark ink.