

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

Comprehensive Test Ban

1
I agree with Lord Carrington -
With regard to Mr. Pym's point previous advice has shown it is vital that the Ban be not renewed after 3 years

In his minute to you dated 11th September, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs suggests that you and your MISC 7 colleagues might agree, without discussion, to the policy he proposes. He wishes to tell the Americans early next week that when the CTB negotiations resume on 24th September we have decided to restate to the Russians the previous Government's offer of one national seismic station (NSS) in the United Kingdom; and if this does not resolve the problem, to tell the Russians that the alternative is our withdrawal from the Separate Verification Agreement.

2. Your colleagues are likely to agree with this policy, and on balance (just) I recommend that you do too. But you may wish the final decision to be taken at MISC 7 on 19th September, rather than out of committee. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office confirm that the timing would still just fit. The decision is an important one, with implications for our relations with the Americans which (as Lord Carrington's paragraph 5 points out) could affect the two other issues which MISC 7 will be considering on 19th September: Polaris replacement and Theatre Nuclear Forces.

3. My only hesitation arises from the fact that Lord Carrington's options do not include offering (and paying for) two NSS, although (as he notes) MISC 7 on 24th May did include that as a possibility in its conclusions. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office negotiating judgment is that such an offer would hardly cut more ice than offering one; that it would be harder to defend on technical grounds; and that it would suggest we could be pushed further. On the other hand it is just arguable that we should limit any damage to our nuclear relations with the Americans if we are seen to have made some movement even though it is most unlikely to do the trick and we could not allow ourselves to be pushed further.

[Signature]
(John Hunt)

13th September 1979