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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

12 July, 1984

CDP 15/7

Dear Charles,

Arms Control in Outer Space

I enclose a copy of a letter to the Secretary of State from Mr George Shultz which was received here today. It sets out the current US approach to the Soviet proposal for talks this September in Vienna on arms control in outer space. As you will see, Mr Shultz is not "highly optimistic" about the chances of these talks taking place or producing results. But the Americans are evidently determined to pursue them in a constructive and positive spirit.

In the light of Mr Shultz's letter, Sir Geoffrey Howe believes that it is desirable to register with the Americans our own interest in this new and potentially important area of the US-Soviet dialogue. I enclose a copy of the letter which he has sent to Mr Shultz in reply. Mr Shultz's reference to the importance attached in Washington to the support and counsel of HMG underlines the need for Ministers to reach an early collective view on the problems of anti-satellite systems (ASATs) and arms control, on the basis of the FCO/MOD paper to which you referred in your letter of 22 July to Richard Mottram. Against the background of the special briefing for Ministers conducted [on 10 July], Sir Geoffrey Howe hopes that it will be possible to reach such a view in the near future. Meanwhile, FCO and MOD officials are continuing work on a companion paper which will address the issues of ballistic missile defence in the context of the US strategic defence initiative. It is hoped to be able to provide this second paper to Ministers within the next few weeks.

I am sending copies of this letter to Richard Mottram (MOD) and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,
Len Appleyard
(L V Appleyard)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

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Dear Geoffrey:

You will, I know, have been following closely the exchanges we have had over the past week with the USSR on arms control in space and on nuclear weapons, on which we have endeavored to keep you fully informed through normal diplomatic channels. While we await further Soviet reaction, I wanted to share with you my thoughts on how this situation could develop.

We have, as you are aware, accepted the Soviet proposal to meet in Vienna on September 18 to discuss arms control on weaponry in space, and we have further said that we will also want to discuss resumption of negotiations on offensive nuclear weapons. There are clear relationships between these issues, but we also sought in our response to the Soviet proposal last Friday to make the broader political point that it is they, not we, who are refusing to move ahead on arms control. At the same time, we have made clear to the Soviets, privately as well as publicly, that there are no preconditions attached to our willingness to attend these talks in September.

The Soviet reaction, both public and private, has to date been negative, but not conclusive. Soviet spokesmen claim there are unacceptable U.S. preconditions, but they have neither withdrawn their proposal for the September meeting, nor stated that they will not come. I remain hopeful that the Soviets will perceive their interest in the resumption of a meaningful bilateral arms control dialogue with the United States, and that they will seize upon the new opportunity offered by such a meeting in Vienna to begin that process.

As we move toward such discussions, we will want to work closely with your government and other allies. It is difficult, given recent Soviet performance, to be highly optimistic that this Vienna meeting will occur and produce results. As long as the prospect remains open, however, we will seek to encourage a positive Soviet response, and to prepare for a constructive encounter. Your support and your counsel will be most important to us.

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I am extremely grateful for the efforts you have already made to persuade the Soviet leaders to take advantage of this new opportunity. Surely they must be coming to realize the fruitlessness of their current course, and the impossibility of breaking the Alliance's solidarity on important issues. Your discussion in Moscow should certainly contribute to a more realistic Soviet appraisal of their future possibilities.

Sincerely,

/S/

George

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

12 July 1984

From the Secretary of State

George

Many thanks for your welcome letter of 6 July, providing a useful up-date on your approach to possible discussions with the Russians on outer space and other arms control issues.

As you know from my meeting with Charlie Price immediately after my return from Moscow, I found that the Soviet leaders were seemingly unwilling to engage in a real dialogue on East/West issues. They appeared to be nonplussed by the swiftness and positive nature of your response to the proposal for talks in Vienna. I also detected some anxiety about military developments in space. To my mind, this indicated at least a degree of seriousness in their proposals for talks on limitations. At the same time, they are obviously determined to resist a return to the negotiating table on wider nuclear issues under the auspices of space talks.

I am convinced that the resumption of the nuclear negotiations must remain one of the Alliance's chief objectives. At the same time, as I told Charlie Price and the House of Commons on the same day, we are still anxious that the opportunity should not be lost for a September meeting in Vienna to take place. I am grateful for your proposal of further consultations between close Allies next week in Washington. We plan to respond soon with comments on how best to prepare in substance for a useful encounter in Vienna. Meanwhile, I wonder whether there would be advantage in making clear once more to the Soviet Union that, even if they are not prepared at present to

The Hon George Shultz

/discuss



discuss arms control matters other than those affecting
outer space, you are still ready to respond positively
on the latter.

y — —
Geoffrey Howe
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GEOFFREY HOWE