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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

cc/c  
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Prime Minister

27 November 1984

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Dear Charles,

Mr

East/West Relations: Call by Soviet Ambassador

The Soviet Ambassador called on Mr Luce on 26 November. He had originally asked to see the Prime Minister but agreed that, in the light of his request for an urgent meeting, Mr Luce should see him on her behalf.

The Ambassador said he had been instructed to explain further details of the recent announcement that Mr Shultz and Mr Gromyko would meet on 7-8 January. The new talks which the United States and Soviet Union were entering would be aimed at resolving problems relating to the entire complex of nuclear (both strategic and medium range) and space questions. The Geneva meeting's purpose would be to decide how the talks should take place. Popov went on to stress that:

- (a) the initiative for the Geneva meeting had come from the Russians. The Americans had agreed to the talks, which would aim to secure real progress by reducing the risks of nuclear war, stopping the arms race, and improving international relations;
- (b) they were "absolutely new talks". Both sides attached importance to having a clear understanding of the aims and subjects of the negotiations. These would be all-embracing, as was dictated by the need to avoid further destabilisation and a new round of the arms race;
- (c) the key was a solution of space questions. A space race would prevent any serious talks on a reduction in strategic weapons. It would also be a catalyst for a race in other directions. The matters for discussion in Geneva were organically related and this was how they should be taken at the talks.

Popov added that the Soviet Union was prepared to seek radical solutions. It remained to be seen if the US would take a more realistic position than in the past. The Soviet Government hoped the British Government would try to influence American policy on arms control questions, which had a central

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importance for the Europeans. If the United States was seeking to maintain military superiority rather than equality, which was the Soviet aim, there would be no positive results from the negotiations.

Mr Luce said the British Government welcomed the announcement of the January meeting. They were concerned to see agreement on constraints on outer space weapons and reductions in nuclear arms. He assumed there were no preconditions for the talks. The British Government also hoped that there could also be progress in the other arms control negotiations, including CDE, MBFR and CW. He referred to the forthcoming visits by Mr Gorbachev and Mr Gromyko, when arms control would in both cases be high on the agenda. Popov agreed that the Gorbachev visit would be important for the development of UK/Soviet relations.

Popov clearly had specific instructions on how to present the Shultz/Gromyko meeting. He read carefully from prepared notes. He did not refer (even in response to Mr Luce's reference to preconditions) to the Soviet demand for a removal of Cruise and Pershing II, nor to the START and INF talks as such. It seems the Russians now intend to present these as a thing of the past and, whatever the cause of the breakdown of the talks, as having been superseded by their own new initiative.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram at the MOD and Richard Hatfield in the Cabinet Office.

*Yours ever,*

*Colin Budd*

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Private Secretary

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