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Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

You will want to
see the supplementaries
at B.

31 January 1983

Dear John

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Nuclear Issues: Briefing for the Prime Minister

At her meeting at Chequers yesterday to discuss nuclear issues, the Prime Minister asked for briefing on a number of points which arose during the discussions. This is required in time for Prime Minister's questions on 1 February.

I attach a briefing pack, which I shall be submitting in parallel to Mr Pym. It is divided into three sections:

- (a) a copy of the speaking notes used by Patrick Wright and David Gillmore in their briefing yesterday on START and INF respectively;
- (b) points for supplementary questions for use in the House. These cover in particular two issues on which the Prime Minister requested a line: deterrence and the Nitze/Kvitsinsky exchange in the margins of the INF negotiations in the summer of 1982;
- (c) a list of 'devil's advocate' questions and proposed line for answers.

We will continue to keep the list of 'devil's advocate' questions under review with the MOD and expand, revise and add to the list as necessary. It would be helpful to know of any particular points which the Prime Minister wishes to deal with in greater detail.

I am sending copies of this letter to PS/Mr Heseltine and PS/Sir R Armstrong.

Yours ever,
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(B J P Fall)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street



NUCLEAR ISSUES

TEXT OF BRIEFING FOR THE PRIME MINISTER AT CHEQUERS: 30 JANUARY 1983

A. INF

1. The rationale(s). As Prime Minister aware, concern in Europe in 1970's over implications of strategic nuclear parity (consecrated in SALT) for effectiveness of US nuclear umbrella (extended deterrence). PM explained on TV importance of Schmidt Alastair Buchan Memorial Lecture. These concerns reinforced by two important factors:

(i) obsolescence/vulnerability of NATO's existing LRINF capability (F1-11s and Vulcans);

(ii) development of large SS20 programme at range just beneath SALT II floor (5500 kilometres).

2. The 1979 Decision and the Integrated Decision Document (IDD).

Both these strands, interlinked though separate, addressed in work of two NATO groups (HLG and SCG). Their work brought together in IDD. Objectives were to enhance coupling of US strategic capability to defence of Europe and to counter latest threat to Europe created by SS20 deployments. Hence 13 December decision enshrined in communiqué: "'2-track approach'". Alliance did not at that juncture put forward a proposal on numbers. Internally, however, it was agreed that somewhere between 200 and 600 warheads would meet the Alliance requirements for coupling. Some officials argued that the figure could be even lower than 200.

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3. The Zero Option. US/Soviet meeting in Geneva in October 1980. Very much pro forma: in shadow of US presidential elections. Arrival of President Reagan in White House. New defence programme. Announcement of US major review of arms control policy. Zero option decision not reached until November. President's speech on 18th. Opening of first round of negotiations in Geneva in December. Worth noting that zero option of considerable political/propaganda advantage to West. This remains the case in many respects (viz threat of launch on warning). But in logic, zero option is hard to square with basic Alliance concerns of late 1970s about US extended deterrence and decoupling. Nor does zero option help problem of obsolescence.

4. Negotiations So Far. US negotiating position based on zero option approach tabled in form of formal agreement in February 1982. Essential elements well known to all. No need to go into details. But worth noting that approach was global, ie the zero ceilings would be applied worldwide and would include Soviet systems in Far East in the same way as Soviet systems within range of Europe.

5. Soviet approach tabled in May 1982 quite different. Characterised by following:

- (i) regional approach leaving Soviet Far Eastern deployments unconstrained;

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- (ii) inclusion of aircraft;
- (iii) counting based on launchers not warheads;
- (iv) inclusion of third party systems in counting base.

Data tabled by Soviet Union carefully rigged to illustrate the fundamental contention which is vital to their case, namely that balance exists; bogus counting. The Prime Minister is aware of details (FBl-11s, F4s, A6 and A7 included on Western side with Fencer SU 24 excluded; in addition inclusion of British and French systems). Mr Genscher particularly fond of making the telling point that if balance existed in 1979 as Russians say, it cannot possibly exist now since they have deployed about 200 new missiles since then.

6. Russians proposed initially a 2-stage reduction to 600, then 300 launchers/aircraft. Subsequently, amended this to single stage reduction to 300 launchers/aircraft. But on basis of same counting rules.

7. During Summer round, Soviet and US negotiators discussed privately and without commitment alternative scheme. Details not wholly clear but basically idea was limited deployment of US cruise/no Pershing in exchange for reductions to equivalent levels of Soviet SS20s in range of Europe; freeze on Soviet systems in the Far East; exclusion of third party systems; ceilings set on aircraft but at high level. US informed us privately of these discussions. Some concern

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in certain quarters in Washington that Nitze had gone beyond instructions. However, when negotiations resumed in October, Kvitsinsky made clear at once that he had no authority from Moscow to continue private discussions on these lines. Russians determined to sit tight on basic position in hope that Western public opinion would make Soviet concessions at negotiating table unnecessary.

8. In November 1982 Russians suggested in negotiations that they might be ready to accept sub-ceiling on missiles. They suggested figure of 162. But made clear that this would include in American count UK and French systems which, according to Soviet data, were at level of 162, ie proposal would effectively block cruise/Pershing deployments. This proposal made public by Andropov in his speech on 21 December. Has been followed in Europe and US by public questioning of viability of zero option in short term. Need to demonstrate Alliance readiness to look constructively at serious alternatives. PM's broadcast on 16 January and statement in House on 18 January disarmed critics who alleged rigidity in our approach.

9. Position of other Euro Allies of course crucial. Italians: apparently remain rock solid. Not a major public issue. Germans: Kohl firm on dual track decision, ie deployments by end '83 if no results in Geneva. SPD increasingly turning against idea of deployment even if no result in Geneva. Belgians: equivocal but not unhelpful; but no work

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yet started on GLCM base. Dutch: in spite of change of Government must be reckoned unlikely to grasp nettle and will continue to equivocate about final decision.

Options

10. For some time it has been clear that zero option unlikely in short term to be negotiable. MOD and FCO officials have discussed very privately with certain Americans possible alternatives based on concept of interim arrangement as first step. In essence this would involve no concession whatever on basic Alliance principles agreed in 1979. But figure for SS20s and Cruise/Pershings would be set at 300 warheads. Figure of 300 is useful because Russians have already proposed this (though not for warheads) and because it is roughly half currently planned deployments of 572.

11. We have been informed extremely privately that a proposal to this effect, submitted by a very limited group of officials in Washington, has been endorsed by Mr Shultz and that there has already been at least one discussion with the President, with Weinberger and Clark from NSC in attendance. Our information is that Weinberger is opposed to this. In our view, some of Weinberger's advisers are using spurious arguments (eg negative impact on European public opinion and inadequate target coverage of 300 warheads).

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12. Additional option would be to accept something similar to Soviet proposal for a geographical split, ie ceilings on warheads capable of striking Europe and freeze on Far East systems. Some indications that Germans are thinking of move on these lines. We believe, however, that at this juncture at least US should continue to stick to single global ceiling. Indications of Japanese disquiet. China factor may also be important.

B. LINE TO TAKE AT MEETINGS WITH KOHL AND BUSH

13. Clear hints from Washington that Bush will look to Prime Minister for view on options for a new move in INF negotiations. Our recommendation would be that a new initiative is desirable; that it should be on the lines already being considered in Washington; that we should continue on basis of global approach (keeping option of geographical split under consideration for possible use eg later in year); and that the timing be discussed soon with the Americans and Germans.

14. German Government's collective position however far from clear. Recent indications are that:

Kohl, while not necessarily against a move, might prefer for electoral/tactical reasons to sit tight on zero option until 6 March.

Genscher for party political reasons may prefer move before elections.

Strauss clearly on record as favouring move off zero option.

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In the end believe Americans will, at least as regards timing if not substance, be guided by Kohl's own views.

15. Do not believe it would be right to move now to a position involving geographical split. Russian position unlikely to stand still. If at a later stage this year there are indications that the Russians might accept major elements of the Western position (eg West's counting systems, in particular the exclusion of third party systems) an arrangement involving fixed and equal US/Soviet ceilings on systems in or targettable on Europe, combined with a freeze on Soviet systems in the Far East plus perhaps reciprocal US rights, might be an attractive option. It of course raises problems (eg with the Japanese, possibly with Congress). We need in any event to keep some further flexibility up our sleeve. All the arguments point to not using it now.



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STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATIONS AND REDUCTIONS

TEXT OF BRIEFING FOR THE PRIME MINISTER AT CHEQUERS: 30 JANUARY
1983

1. First I will remind you briefly of the background to major international arms control efforts over the past two decades. Second, I will recall the main elements of the US/Soviet Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) and Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaties and rehearse the origins of the present Strategic Arms Reductions Talks (START). Third, I will discuss the respective US and Soviet positions, the stage which the negotiations have now reached on the eve of the third round of talks, and some of the possible future US negotiating options.

A BACKGROUND

2. The present nuclear arms control negotiations have evolved from a pattern of arms control activities over the past two decades. Between 1961 and 1979 the negotiated arms control process produced some eighteen separate arms control agreements (not all bilateral and not all exclusively nuclear). The Cuba missile crisis in 1962 created the political conditions which led to the Partial Test Ban Treaty the following year. This, together with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968, were the most important landmarks of the 60s. In 1967, President Johnson and Mr. Kozygin reached agreement in principle to move on to discussions on the limitation of strategic nuclear offensive and defensive weapons. The word "strategic" is of course carefully defined in the SALT agreements: essentially it applies to weapons which can strike the United States from Soviet Territory (or waters) and vice-versa. These discussions were postponed when the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia in August 1968. But by the end of 1969 the SALT I Talks had begun, against the background of sharply divided views in the US

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Congress and public over whether to develop an anti-ballistic missile deployment in the US. This heralded the 70s as the decade for arms control on strategic nuclear weapons, opening with the ABM Treaty and the interim agreement limiting strategic offensive arms (SALT I) - both in 1972, and closing with the signing of SALT 2 in Vienna in 1979.

3. To complete the arms control picture during this period, I should mention the Biological Weapons Convention of 1972; the opening of the MBFR negotiations in Vienna in 1973 and the conclusion of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, these last two bearing on conventional force levels and confidence-building measures respectively.

SALT I AND ABM

4. The ABM Treaty, amended by a subsequent protocol, limits the Russians and the Americans to one ABM deployment, each of not more than a hundred ABM launchers, so restricted and located that they cannot provide a nationwide ABM defence. The Russians chose to put their ABM system around the National Command Authority in Moscow. The Americans chose to defend their ICBM field at Grand Forks, North Dakota, but did not subsequently build the ABM system. The Treaty is of unlimited duration, and reviewed at five year intervals. A routine US/Soviet review of it was completed this year. The continuing integrity of the ABM Treaty is in our interest, because if Soviet capability to defend against strategic missile attack was not severely limited, it would have serious implications for our own (and French) small independent deterrents and their credibility.

5. The SALT I Treaty of 1972 froze, at then existing but unequal levels, the number of Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM) and Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBM) launchers which were either operational or under construction on each side. At the same time, it permitted an increase in SLBM launchers up to an agreed level for each part, subject to the dismantling or destruction of a corresponding number of /older

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older ICBM or SLBM launchers. American ICBMs were fixed at 1,054 and Soviet ICBMs at 1,618: American SLBMs were fixed at 710 (working from a base level of 656 SLBMs) and Soviet SLBMs at 950 (from a base level at that time of 740). Heavy bombers, in which the Americans were greatly superior, were not included. In a unilateral statement during SALT I, the Soviet Union asserted that if other NATO allies increased the number of their modern ballistic-missile-firing submarines, the Soviet Union would have the right to increase its SSBNs accordingly. The US declared that it did not accept this claim. The SALT I Treaty was an interim agreement for five years. But both sides continue to treat it as in force as you can see from the figures in Chart 1. The Russians honour the relevant dismantling provisions, and regular meetings to discuss the operation of the Treaties are still held in the Joint Standing Consultative Commission (created by the ABM Treaty).

SALT 2 TREATY

6. The principal American objective in SALT 2 was to provide equal ceilings on strategic nuclear delivery vehicles for each side, that is ICBMs, SLBMs and heavy bombers; to begin the process of reduction; and to impose restraints on qualitative developments which could threaten future stability. The main ceilings were 2,400 on each side, to be lowered to 2,250 within eighteen months, with further sub-ceilings on Mirv-ed ballistic missiles and heavy bombers with long-range cruise missiles. The Mirv-ing of ICBMs and SLBMs was also limited. There was a restriction on the development of new types of ICBMs (to one new type each). There was also a protocol, which expired at the end of 1981, designed in particular to prevent deployment or flight testing of certain types of cruise missiles and Air-to-Surface Ballistic Missiles pending resumption of negotiations on what at the time was conceived as SALT III. SALT 2 also banned the construction of additional fixed ICBM launchers, or the relocation of existing launchers. The Backfire bomber was not

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explicitly covered in SALT 2, but was the subject of a separate agreement at the time of signature in 1979, limiting production to thirty per year. A joint statement of principles charted the pattern for future negotiations under "SALT 3".

7. Although the SALT 2 Treaty was never ratified by Congress (and there is some doubt whether Congress would have agreed even before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan which finally put paid to any chance of ratification), the Americans have since reaffirmed that they would not be the first to undercut existing arms control agreements. Until the recent controversy over MX basing, neither side has seriously accused the other of so doing in relation either to SALT 1 or SALT 2.

START

8. The Reagan Administration's position on entering office was that the SALT 2 Treaty was fatally flawed, in particular in relation to its provisions (or lack of them) on heavy missiles (the Russians having been allowed to keep SS18 with no reciprocal rights for the Americans to build heavy missiles, though there were of course no plans to do so); on verification (particularly problems over encryption by the Russians of flight test data); and on the Backfire bomber (which the Russians claimed was not strategic because it did not have the range for the return flight to US; while the Americans argued that in certain flight profiles and with, for example, air-to-air refuelling it could strike US). It was also claimed that SALT 2 would do little to prevent the theoretical vulnerability of US ICBMs to a disarming but limited first strike by Soviet ICBMs, particularly the Mirv-ed heavy SS18. (A modern heavy ICBM missile is defined as any ICBM with a launch weight and throw-weight greater than 90,000 kgs and 3,600 kgs respectively, which are estimates based on the Soviet SS19. The only modern heavy ICBM on either side is the Soviet SS18. The MX would fall below these weight ceilings.) President Reagan initially concentrated on modernising the US

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strategic armoury. This made some Europeans uncomfortable at the thought that the Americans might be more interested in winning the arms race than bringing it under control. In fact none of the strategic programmes President Reagan inherited - MX, the B1 supersonic bomber, or the D5 Trident Missile - would have been precluded by SALT 2. But by the time of his November 1981 speech to the Washington Press Club, President Reagan had made clear his readiness to resume arms control negotiations with the Russians. Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) began in Geneva in June 1982. President Reagan stated as his goal a significant reduction of the most destabilising systems (ICBMs), the number of warheads they carry and their overall destructive potential. The most significant change from SALT was the objective of deep cuts in the strategic inventory on both sides.

9. The essential elements of the US negotiating position are as follows. Phase 1: each side to reduce from the present level of more than 7,500 warheads to 5,000 warheads on no more than 850 ICBMs and SLBMs. Because the Soviet Union deploys more missiles (2,400) than the US (1,700), the Soviet Union would have to cut twice as many missiles. Further restraints would limit the Russians to a maximum of 110 SS18 heavy ICBMs within this total. Of the 5,000 warheads permitted to each side, no more than 2,500 should be on ICBMs. All these reductions are to be accomplished over an eight year period. In addition the Americans would be prepared for equal but separate limits on number of heavy bombers, providing Backfire is included. In a second phase the Americans would propose to reduce total throw-weight on ballistic missiles on each side to equal ceilings below current US levels at 1.9 million kilograms; a ban on all heavy missiles; and further constraints on slow flying systems, including cruise missiles. President Reagan recently added into the US position an offer to negotiate certain nuclear CBMs, such as prior notification of all test missile launches, and notification of major military exercises.

10. The Soviet position is as follows. A freeze on all intercontinental systems. A reduction from SALT 2 levels

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down to equal ceilings on each side of 1,800 ICBMs, SLBMs and heavy bombers by 1990. The Russians have however not disclosed how they would break down their figure of 1,800 as between the relevant categories. They have also proposed unspecified limits on warhead numbers; no increase in deployments of US forward-based systems in Europe including Pershing 2 and GLCM; a ban on long-range cruise missiles and limits on numbers of deployed modern SSBNs. Other elements in the Soviet position are proposals for ASW-free sanctuaries for SSBNs, limitations on the operating areas of aircraft carriers and of bomber aircraft, and compensation for Chinese nuclear systems.

C US NEGOTIATION OPTIONS

11. Although the START negotiations have been going for a shorter period of time than the INF talks, the scope for agreement, on the face of it, may be greater. Subject to a resolution of the primary counting unit (warheads versus launchers) and of the position on heavy bombers (separate or integrated ceilings, and a decision on Backfire), it would seem as if the progression from SALT 2 ceilings of 2,250 through Soviet ceilings of 1,800 to US ceilings of 850 missile launchers (plus provision for bombers) is well within the field of the negotiable.

12. To sum up, viewed as a series, strategic talks have marked a progression: from a crude freeze on missiles in SALT I; through equal ceilings and marginal reductions on missiles and heavy bombers in SALT 2; toward steep cuts and the inclusion of Backfire in START I; with the prospect, in START II, of also limiting aggregate missile throw-weight and more definitive arrangements for strategic cruise missiles. But for the moment the American assessment is that the Russians are holding the START negotiations hostage to progress over INF.

13. The possibility that President Reagan might aim for the swift conclusion of a simple framework agreement on START nearer the elections (like the Vladivostock Agreement in 1974) should certainly not be excluded. At the heart of the matter,



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agreement would probably have to involve some trade-off between the American interest in limits of aggregate Soviet missile throw-weight and the Russian desire to curtail the full potential of US cruise-missiles, especially longer range SLCMs.

14. We need to keep close in touch with the Americans on this. So far they have kept us pretty well informed of what is going on. But, if the President does decide for political reasons to make a concerted effort to reach an interim agreement of some kind before the US Presidential electoral process begins in 1984, we have a strong national interest in keeping a close eye on a number of aspects, particularly

- a. non-circumvention provisions (including transfer to third parties);
- b. any provision affecting third party systems;
- c. potentially damaging constraints on US Forward-Based Systems (FBS) which could have implications for the INF negotiations.



INTERMEDIATE RANGE NUCLEAR FORCES (INF)

A. Deterrence

The INF modernisation programme is designed to ensure adequate deterrence against aggression. Deterrence has kept the peace in Europe. Our objective has been, and will remain, to ensure that Soviet planners never misjudge Western resolution or capabilities. Must avoid giving Soviet Union temptation to start a military adventure in Europe in the hope that this can be done without unacceptable risk.

B. INF Modernisation and Deterrence

The objective of the INF Modernisation is to reinforce the link between the United States and Europe. The Soviet Union must not believe that use of force in Europe can be confined to European territory outside the Soviet Union. Deployments therefore designed to deter any aggression at whatever level in Europe.

INTERMEDIATE RANGE NUCLEAR FORCES (INF)

UK POSITION

We strongly support the proposal put forward by NATO: the zero option. If the Russians dismantle their SS20, SS4 and SS5 missiles, we shall forego the plans for cruise and Pershing II missiles. This is a radical proposal for the elimination of the class of sub-strategic or intermediate range nuclear weapons which is of most concern to both sides, that is the missiles which can reach Western Europe from the Soviet Union and vice versa. The zero option would be much the best solution to the problem of INF missiles. But in the absence of zero we must have a balanced agreement and balanced numbers.

SOVIET OFFER TO REDUCE INF MISSILES IN EUROPE

We have made it clear, publicly and to the Russians, that their statement may be a step in the right direction, if it means that they recognise that SS20 missiles must be reduced. But to demand a continuing Soviet monopoly of such longer range INF missiles would be unacceptable.




INCLUSION OF BRITISH SYSTEMS IN GENEVA INF NEGOTIATIONS

The NATO position, fully supported by all the NATO Allies, is that the negotiations concern the intermediate range land based missiles of the United States and the Soviet Union. Inclusion of the independent British force, which is strategic and sea-based, would be contrary to this principle and in addition would grant the Soviet Union superiority over the US. The Russians, moreover, want to include them in the INF negotiations because unless these systems are counted it is impossible to sustain the Russian argument that a balance exists. (see also supplementary on inclusion of British systems in START)

NATO SHOULD DELAY ITS DEPLOYMENT PROGRAMME IF THERE ARE SIGNS OF PROGRESS IN INF NEGOTIATIONS

NATO sincerely hopes that the Russians' response to their offer will allow the Alliance to cancel the Modernisation Programme. But there is no question of abandoning or postponing the first deployments at the end of this year if the zero level is not successfully negotiated.



"ZERO OPTION" IN THE INF NEGOTIATIONS UNFAIR TO THE
RUSSIANS.

The NATO position rightly takes account of the massive imbalance between the US and the Soviet Union in land-based INF missile systems. That the Soviet Union will, if they accept the American proposal, have to dismantle their INF missiles is the consequence of the unrestrained build-up of Soviet INF over the last few years.

RUSSIAN MORATORIUM

The unilateral Soviet moratorium does not solve the INF imbalance. A moratorium agreed by both sides would freeze that imbalance in intermediate-range nuclear forces, which is about four to one in favour of the Soviet Union. It would not reduce the threat posed by the Soviet long range land-based missile systems. NATO at present has none of these.

RUSSIAN CLAIMS OF EXISTING BALANCE IN INF

The Russians' claims are bogus when like is compared with like. Any objective comparisons between systems of similar operational capability on both sides reveals a wide and growing disparity of nuclear systems in the European theatre in favour of the Soviet Union. The ratio of the Warsaw Pact's intermediate range nuclear forces to the equivalent NATO forces is currently about four to one.




DANISH PARLIAMENTARY VOTE TO SUSPEND FUNDS FOR INF
BASING

The Danish parliamentary vote does not affect either the NATO twin-track decision on INF modernisation and arms control or the Danish Government's support for that decision. Nor will the vote affect practical preparations for INF basing (in which Denmark is not in any way participating)

INF: NITZE/KVITSINSKY EXCHANGES: SUMMER 1982

US Government did not instruct US chief negotiator to discontinue exploration of alternatives discussed privately with Soviet negotiator. Nitze has authority to explore any flexibility in Soviet position. This is in line with President's reaffirmation that serious proposals from Soviet Union would be looked at carefully. It was Soviet side which at outset of autumn negotiating round broke off discussions initiated in summer. Thus, slight indications of Soviet flexibility in the summer round of negotiations unfortunately not borne out in subsequent experience.



HMG AWARE OF INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS/AGREEMENT BETWEEN US
AND SOVIET INF NEGOTIATORS IN GENEVA IN MID 1982?

It is for the Governments of the United States and the
Soviet Union to comment about ideas exchanged informally
between Ambassadors Nitze and Kvitsinsky.

(If pressed: During a visit to London in 1982 Professor
Rostow talked of signs of movement at Geneva but made it
clear that they had led nowhere).

DUAL-KEY

For about 20 years no US nuclear weapons based in the UK have been on a double-key arrangement. But successive Governments have been satisfied that our national interests are protected by the arrangements for joint decision. Any use of the cruise missile bases in an emergency would be a matter for joint decision between the British and American Governments in the light of the circumstances prevailing at the time. This arrangement also applies, for example, to the bases at which US F-111 aircraft (which have been assigned a nuclear role by NATO and like cruise missiles have the range to reach the Soviet Union) are stationed in this country. The Government have satisfied themselves that the current arrangements remain effective.

STRATEGIC ARMS REDUCTION TALKS (START)

UK POSITION

We strongly support the United States' proposal for reductions of one third in the total numbers of ballistic missile warheads in the strategic arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union. The numbers of ballistic missiles would be cut in half. The American proposals rightly concentrate on the most destabilising element of strategic forces, that is the intercontinental ballistic missiles.

US PROPOSALS FOR START UNFAIR TO RUSSIANS BY
CONCENTRATING ON ICBMs/IGNORING CRUISE MISSILES AND
BOMBERS

Not at all. US proposals concentrate on most destabilising elements - ballistic missiles, particularly land-based ballistic missiles. But the Americans have made clear their willingness to include in negotiations other classes of system.



INCLUSION OF UK/FRENCH IN SYSTEMS IN START

The British Polaris force is equivalent to a very small percentage of the Soviet strategic force and is clearly of marginal significance to strategic arms control. The Government have made it clear that if the present situation were to change significantly, and for example the Soviet threat to us were greatly reduced, they would be prepared to look again at the position of British forces in relations to arms control.

FATE OF SALT II

The Americans have made it clear that pending the outcome of the new START negotiations they will continue not to undercut the unratified SALT II treaty, provided that the Russians continue to do the same.

MODERNISATION OF US STRATEGIC FORCES

We welcome the modernisation of the triad of US strategic nuclear forces, the land-based missiles, the sea-based missiles and the aircraft. The modernisation programmes were sanctioned by President Carter's Administration. As long as the Russians have strategic nuclear forces the US forces continue to form the foundation of NATO's strategy of deterrence. The American forces must therefore be kept credible.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES' VOTE TO CUT FUNDS FOR MX
PRODUCTION

How the US strategic land-based forces are modernised is a matter for the United States Administration and Congress to decide. We would not presume to offer them better advice than they already have in Washington. The important point is that the Russians should continue to believe in a US ability to retaliate: In that way NATO will continue to deter any aggression.

STRATEGIC ARMS CONTROL AND MX

The MX missile, which was sanctioned by the Carter Administration, is fully compatible with the provisions SALT II. There will be no increase in the total number of US land-based missiles because older missiles will be retired. Indeed the United States has offered, in the Strategic Arms Reduction talks in Geneva, radical proposals for deep cuts in strategic nuclear missiles for both sides.

MX IN DENSE PACK COMPATIBLE WITH SALT II ?

The US Administration have stated repeatedly that it is and I know that this is a point that they have considered carefully. The issue of MX basing is in any case currently being reconsidered in Washington.



SOVIET TESTING AND THREAT TO DEPLOY NEW ICBM

I cannot see a legitimate security need for the Soviet Union to deploy a further intercontinental ballistic missile. She has deployed three types of new missiles, the SS17, the SS18 and the SS19 forces, since the American Minuteman ICBM force was deployed over a decade ago. The throw-weight of Soviet strategic missiles, that is a measure of the missiles' potential for destruction, is more than twice that of the Americans'.

US READY TO REDUCE SUBMARINE LAUNCHED BALLISTIC MISSILES AS PART OF START AGREEMENT?

Yes. The United States proposals for the START talks would require the retirement of much of their existing force of Poseidon submarine launched ballistic missiles.



NUCLEAR FREEZE UK POSITION

A freeze in INF at current levels would be unacceptable given the massive Soviet superiority. At the strategic level the US Administration has made clear its desire to go well beyond mere limits of strategic systems at their current level, and to make significant reductions. We support their efforts to achieve radical cuts in the existing strategic arsenals. A freeze would reduce the incentive for the Soviet Union to negotiate such cuts.

US OVERKILL?

There is no link between the size of the superpowers' nuclear arsenals and the likelihood of their being used. For the maintenance of the Alliance's confidence to withstand nuclear blackmail its nuclear forces must be modernised as necessary to preserve their capability to deter aggression.



NEUTRON WEAPONS (ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPONS)

The US has decided to assemble enhanced radiation weapons and to retain those on its own territory. There has been no discussion of deployment in Europe. The US has said it will consult its NATO allies if the question of European deployment arises.



MR GROMYKO'S PROPOSAL FOR A COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN

The Government wish to see the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva continue its examination of the outstanding issues of verification and compliance for a comprehensive test ban. We do not believe that Mr Gromyko's proposals, reflecting only that measure of agreement achieved in the 1977-80 trilateral negotiations, help to resolve those issues.

SWEDISH AND SOVIET PROPOSALS FOR A BATTLEFIELD NUCLEAR WEAPON FREE ZONE IN CENTRAL EUROPE.

We believe that a battlefield nuclear weapon free zone would not increase our security, or East/West stability. The territory of a zone could be targetted by nuclear weapons stationed just beyond its limits. Such a zone would not raise the nuclear threshold, which depends on the strength of NATO's conventional defences. We believe that the priority should remain the balanced reduction, rather than the redistribution, of nuclear weapons in Europe.



CHEMICAL WEAPONS (CW)

Britain decided in 1969 to destroy all its chemical weapons stocks. The Americans retain a limited CW stockpile. The Soviet Union has developed a large, modern chemical force which is not matched on the NATO side. The Americans have kept open the options of modernising their chemical capability. NATO's first priority is to seek a total ban on CW through a negotiated convention in the Committee on Disarmament.



INF: QUESTIONS FROM THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

Question 1

If the existence of Soviet SS20s with no corresponding Western systems to match them constitutes an unacceptable threat to the West, how have we lived safely through the last few years?

Answer

NATO's earlier LRINF e.g. British Vulcan bombers and US F111s, have either been phased out or are ageing and increasingly vulnerable to Soviet air defences. Meanwhile Soviet SS20s have grown to their present level of 1,000 warheads. As men like Helmut Schmidt and Henry Kissinger have pointed out, this situation risks becoming very unhealthy for European security and stability. Even in peace-time, we have seen the effect of the SS20 programme on public confidence. In the event of major crisis it could give rise to dangerous Soviet miscalculations or at the very least a temptation to apply coercive pressure on Western Europe. The price of freedom is eternal vigilance and a continuous readiness to keep the deterrent in good repair.



Question 2

Is it not the case that any use of Cruise missiles based in Britain would cause the Russians to retaliate with SS20s against British cities? If so, are not these cities more rather than less likely to be attacked than if the Cruise missile were not introduced?

Answer

We can be sure that many sites in Britain, including our cities, are already on the Russians' target list and would stay there even if Cruise missiles were not deployed here. This makes it all the more important that we should maintain our ability to deter any and every sort of threat. Cruise missiles will help us do so by underlining for an aggressor the fact that he would lose far more than he could hope to gain. No NATO weapon will ever be used except in response to attack.



Question 3

Is there not something in the Soviet argument that an attack on the Soviet Union by Cruise and Pershing II missiles based in Western Europe is just as much 'strategic', in Soviet eyes, as attacks on the Soviet Union by American SLBMs or other intercontinental weapons?

Answer

In this sense Soviet nuclear weapons which can reach NATO territory anywhere in Europe are also strategic for the European country concerned. Under the North Atlantic Treaty an armed attack against one member whether in Europe or North America, is an armed attack against them all. NATO security is thus indivisible, even if Warsaw Pact security is not.



QUESTION 4

WOULD NOT THE AVAILABILITY OF AMERICAN-OPERATED INF SYSTEMS IN WESTERN EUROPE ENABLE THE UNITED STATES TO USE THESE RATHER THAN AMERICAN STRATEGIC SYSTEMS, THUS IN EFFECT FIGHTING AN AMERICAN WAR IN EUROPE?

ANSWER

If the Americans had any such idea the last thing they would do would be to station in Europe missiles whose key feature is their ability to reach Soviet territory. The Russians have said that any US weapon reaching their territory would be regarded as coming from the United States. The problem of INF missiles in Europe is a potent reminder that NATO's security is indivisible. In any event the use of cruise missile bases in the UK in an emergency would be a matter for joint decision in the light of circumstances prevailing at the time.



QUESTION 5

IN 1979 IT WAS THE EUROPEANS WHO WANTED THE UNITED STATES TO DEPLOY NEW INF SYSTEMS AND THE AMERICANS WHO WONDERED WHETHER THESE WERE REALLY NECESSARY. IF EUROPE IS NOW QUESTIONING THE NEED, WHY SHOULD THE AMERICANS BE CHANGING SIDES IN THE ARGUMENT?

ANSWER

In the years immediately preceding the 1979 decision both the US and all the European allies rightly foresaw a need to modernise LRINF in order to maintain deterrence. The European governments have not now changed their minds about the need for new missiles in the absence of agreement on the zero option.




QUESTION 6

GIVEN THE LOCATION OF THE PERSHING II LAUNCH SITES, WOULD NOT THE UNITED STATES HAVE TO FIRE THEM ALMOST AS SOON AS HOSTILITIES STARTED, LEST THEY BE OVERRUN? IF SO, DOES THIS NOT LOWER RATHER THAN RAISE THE THRESHHOLD OF ESCALATION?

ANSWER

Pershing II missiles will replace, on a one-for-one basis, existing US nuclear missiles in West Germany - the Pershing I missiles. The mobility of the Pershing II missiles prevents them from becoming attractive targets for any pre-emptive strike. Their ability to reach Soviet territory is an important element in our ability to deter initial hostilities, because they diminish the risk that a would-be aggressor might calculate that he could get away without unacceptable risks.



Question 7

How can we possibly expect the Soviet Union to accept that no account should be taken, in the INF talks or in the START talks, of British and French nuclear systems which in the case of Britain are integrated into NATO's forces and planning?

Answer

The British Polaris force is a strategic deterrent of last resort. It is already of minimum size viable for that purpose. It is excluded from the INF negotiations on US and Soviet sub-strategic land-based missiles by definition, just like comparable American (and Soviet) missile firing submarines.

In the START talks the Polaris force is not on the agenda. In terms of strategic nuclear weapon launchers and warheads it represents only a very small fraction, a mere 2.3% and 2.2% respectively of the 2,700 Soviet launchers and 8,500 Soviet warheads. If the present situation were to be significantly changed, we should of course be prepared to look again at British systems in relation to strategic arms control. In the meantime, the priority must be to reduce the arsenals of the superpowers.



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Question 8

If part of our argument is that the West must match the East level by level and roughly type by type, why are we not urgently developing a chemical warfare capability to match that of the Soviet Union?

Answer

It has never been NATO policy to match the Warsaw Pact weapon for weapon, but to ensure that deterrence works at all levels. Britain gave up her chemical weapons in 1969. The Soviet Union continues to modernise its chemical weapon capabilities. The US has maintained limited stocks of chemical weapons, but has kept open the option to modernise its capability if necessary. Our overriding objective in the immediate future is to seek a comprehensive international ban through an arms control convention. Britain and other Western countries have tabled concrete proposals in the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva. Success in this will depend on Soviet willingness to accept reasonable provisions for inspection and verification. [We were pleased to see Vice-President Bush announce a new US initiative during his visit to Europe.]

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31 JAN 1983

