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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

17 January 1985

Dear Charles,

Anglo-German Summit: Belgian INF Deployment

Since the briefing for the Anglo-German summit was prepared Messrs Martens and Tindemans have been in Washington, where they faced strong American pressure to stick to the deployment schedule for their share of INF. The Belgians repeated their commitment to accept deployment of 48 GLCM by the end of 1987 in the absence of an arms control agreement, and said they would decide by March on the timing of the deployment of the first flight. Tindemans will now be consulting with the other basing countries. (His office told us today that he would like to meet the Foreign Secretary before the end of January.)

However, Martens appears to be looking increasingly to a compromise, possible postponing the first deployment until 1986, ie after the elections. The issue has dominated the Belgian media in recent days. German and British efforts to persuade the Government to go ahead with deployment have been reported. The Ambassador in Brussels believes the Belgians will pay particular attention to public British and German government views. This reinforces the case for raising the matter with Chancellor Kohl and concerting a line to be used at the post-summit press conference. The Prime Minister may also wish to discuss with him how to keep up the pressure on the Belgians in the run-up to their decision in March. Our tactics will need to be carefully judged. At this stage the priority is to provide evidence of Alliance pressure to adhere to the timetable which will counterbalance internal pressure the other way. It is however unlikely to be in the Allied interest to press the issue to the point where Martens is defeated in the elections due later this year, and we may in due course have to look with the US and other basing countries to see what possible compromises will be least damaging and maximise the chances of eventual Belgian deployment in full.

You may wish to add the following to the notes for the press conference:

"We both believe it is important in the context of the agreement reached at Geneva that NATO should maintain the agreed timetable for the deployment of its INF missiles, in accordance with the remarkable solidarity we have achieved

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in the last few years. We have repeatedly stated our readiness to halt, reverse or modify deployment in accordance with a negotiated agreement. But it would be wrong for the Alliance to make any concessions to the Soviet Union outside the negotiating framework. As regards the Belgian position we welcome the visits which Mr Tindemans is due to pay to our capitals and the chance this will provide to express our views directly to them."

We have not yet been able to consult the Foreign Secretary about this, but will of course brief him overnight. The Prime Minister may like to discuss the point with him on the plane.

*Yours
Peter Ricketts*

PR (C R Budd)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

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cc: PC

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

18 January, 1985

ANGLO-GERMAN SUMMIT: BELGIAN INF DEPLOYMENT

Thank you for your letter of 17 January.

As you will see from the record, the Prime Minister raised this point with the Federal Chancellor but it did not in the event figure at the Press Conference.

(C.D. Powell)

C. Budd, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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