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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

4 December 1985

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Dear Charles,

MBFR

In his letter to you of 15 November, reporting UK/US/FRG agreement on a Western proposal at MBFR, Len Appleyard said that the Foreign Secretary was arranging for the proposal to be put to the NATO Council on 18 November, with the aim of tabling before the end of the current round on 5 December.

On 29 November, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) formally endorsed the proposal, following ten days of intensive trilateral and intra-Alliance consultations. The proposal that has finally been agreed does not differ in any significant way from that trilaterally agreed in Washington on 12/13 November. The Council has now instructed the Ad Hoc Group, in the person of Michael Alexander, to present the proposal formally to the Eastern representatives at the Plenary Session on 5 December.

The Foreign Secretary is arranging for Parliament to be informed by means of an inspired question to be answered on 5 December. Most of the publicity for the launch will be generated in Vienna, where Michael Alexander will be giving a Press Conference after the Plenary Session. News Department here are issuing a statement in the Foreign Secretary's name and will do what they can to maximise interest amongst the media, stressing the British role in formulating the Western proposal; they are in touch with your Press Office.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram and to Michael Stark.

Yours ever,
Colin Budd

(C R Budd)

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

15 November 1985

mt Prime Minister
CDD 15/11

Dear Charles,

MBFR

When President Reagan wrote to the Prime Minister on 29 October supporting the proposal made by her and Chancellor Kohl for a new Western initiative in Vienna, he asked for further work on aspects of verification, risks in relation to mobilisation, and the number of US forces to be taken out of Europe in the initial reductions phase. Agreement with the Americans on these points was reached at meetings between UK/US/FRG officials in Washington on 12/13 November.

American misgivings about verification and mobilisation are to be met by increasing, to a total of 30 in each year, the number of inspections permitted under the package of verification measures; a specific provision will be introduced allowing either side to exceed the manpower ceilings in the event of violations or of unforeseen threats to vital security interests. These changes, together with work in NATO on the options for reacting to various threat scenarios, satisfied American misgivings.

On the numbers for initial US reductions, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff had advised the President that the loss of 13,000 men would necessitate deep cuts in military capabilities important to a credible NATO deterrent. The maximum they were prepared to envisage was 5,000, which would mean the Soviet Union reducing by 11,500 (rather than the 30,000 in the Anglo/German proposal). There was no flexibility in the American position, the President having endorsed the military advice, which had been supported by all the Agencies.

The Foreign Secretary regards the changes over verification and mobilisation as improvements. The reduction in numbers for initial withdrawals is disappointing. It will make the chances of progress even slimmer than they were and will enable the Russians to argue that major verification measures are being proposed in concert with insignificant reductions. The public impact of a reduced offer will be less but the West should nonetheless be able to recapture the initiative.

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The Foreign Secretary is arranging for the trilaterally agreed proposal to be put to the NATO Council on 18 November. It will therefore still be possible for President Reagan to mention the subject to Mr Gorbachev in Geneva if he wishes to do so, for example in the context of Soviet allegations of Western inaction over conventional arms control. And the target for tabling the proposal in Vienna before the end of the current round on 5 December should be met.

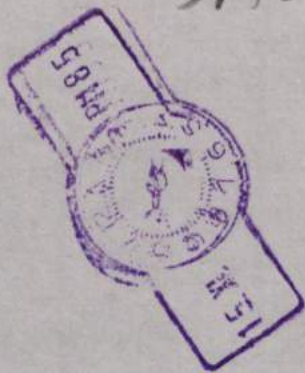
I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram and to Michael Stark.

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

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing St

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SALT : DEFENCE A7.



Handwritten text in purple ink, appearing to be a signature or name, possibly "James" or "Jameson".