



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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Yes ms

Prime Minister

Agree this separate message from the Foreign Secretary to Shultz? It is consistent both with what you said to Nitze and Dear Charles, with the draft of your own message to the President

10 February 1986

US Response to Gorbachev Proposals

WITH CDP

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Thank you for your letter of 5 February about the Prime Minister's discussion with Ambassador Nitze. You record her as saying that she would like to study in detail US views on how to respond to the Gorbachev proposals before making definitive comments.

A copy of the talking points on which Mr Nitze drew (the piece of paper to which you refer in your letter) is enclosed. He provided it during the extended discussions with the Foreign Secretary and Mr Renton on 6 February.

Mr Nitze will attend a meeting of the North Atlantic Council on 12 February at the end of his European tour; a meeting of NATO's Special Consultative Group will later the same day consider the American ideas for the INF negotiation. Final decisions are liable to be taken in Washington any time thereafter. It would therefore be valuable if our representatives at the NATO Meetings were able to state a definitive view. The Foreign Secretary thinks in addition, in order to ensure that British advice is given full weight, our views should be put direct to Washington. If the Prime Minister agrees, he intends to do this in a message to Secretary Shultz; a draft is enclosed. In order to meet the deadline for the NATO meetings, a decision is needed by close-of-play on 11 February at the latest.

The Prime Minister told Mr Nitze that in any event she intended shortly to let the President have a message setting out her views on arms control at the next US/Soviet Summit. I am responding separately to the redraft enclosed with your letter of 6 February. The Foreign Secretary's view is that there would be advantage in separating comment on the American response to Gorbachev from the more general message to the President; that the latter should nevertheless follow soon; and that the terms of the Prime Minister's own response to Gorbachev should then be decided, and a message to Gorbachev despatched not long after the Americans have replied to him. Other Allies are likely to be responding to Gorbachev on much the same time-scale.

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There are two main purposes to the message to Secretary Shultz:

- (a) To reinforce the unacceptability of the Soviet linkage of UK forces to an INF agreement, and at the same time to underline, implicitly but firmly, our concern that the President might accept our and French forces being brought into the nuclear reductions process on any but the conditions we have already set;
- (b) to respond with considered comments on the Soviet proposal for a zero-zero INF agreement in Europe. The draft recognises the problem in backing away from previous public statements (and we know Kohl has already endorsed the idea to the President). But there are, as you know, serious military arguments in the other direction. It therefore seems wise to register our preference for some deployments, while not making this necessarily a sticking point for us. These points are also picked up in the separate message to President Reagan.

In addition, the Foreign Secretary intends to use this message as the medium to convey to Shultz the detailed paper on handling the SDI, the main points of which are summarised in the separate message from the Prime Minister to President Reagan.

Yours ever,

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DSR 11 (Revised)

DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despach/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM: Secretary of State

Reference

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO: Hon George Shultz
Secretary of State
Washington DC

Your Reference

Top Secret

Secret

Confidential

Restricted

Unclassified

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

As the Prime Minister has told the President separately, she and I were delighted to see Paul Nitze in London last week; we were grateful to the President for taking the initiative in consulting over his proposed response to the Gorbachev proposals of 15 January. Paul will have reported on his meetings with us on 5 and 6 February, but you will want to have the definitive comment which the Prime Minister promised to let him have when we had studied your decision in detail.

CAVEAT.....

In general we share your analysis of the Gorbachev proposals. Like you, we see them as most likely designed primarily for political and propaganda impact. The President would be right to counter by taking at least as positive a line in response. In any case the possibility of there being sufficient flexibility in the Soviet position to enable real progress to be made at the negotiating table must be tested. They must be pressed to turn positive sounding but ambiguous statements into firm positions at Geneva, Stockholm and Vienna. Gorbachev's line on verification may in particular provide such opportunities.

Enclosures—flag(s).....

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As the Prime Minister told Paul Nitze, we think you are right to try to set aside in practice the concept of elimination of nuclear weapons. As we both know, this can only be considered in the event that a proper balance in conventional forces becomes a realistic prospect. We would strongly advise you to continue to insist on giving priority to implementing the principle of fifty per cent reductions of Soviet and US strategic nuclear weapons. That said, we hope that the President's response will also give prominence to the need to do more about the conventional imbalance, and will press Gorbachev over the negotiations on CW, MBFR and CDE. He relegated all of them to a minor place at the end of his message to Western leaders, and he needs to be reminded that for us they remain of vital importance - and that his fine words now need to be converted into action, particularly over an agreement to ban chemical weapons.

We agreed that the conditions attached to Gorbachev's INF proposal are unacceptable. We were glad to hear from Paul Nitze that the President believes, as we do, the demand for Britain and France to accept a freeze on their nuclear weapons as part of a "first stage" INF agreement is a total non-starter. We explained to Paul our strong misgivings over your saying anything to Gorbachev about the involvement even at some future stage of the UK and France in nuclear reductions. You will be familiar with our own conditions for considering how we might contribute, as set out in my speech to the UN General Assembly in 1983. As you know, we are not prepared to go beyond that statement, and as I explained in my letter to

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you on 23 December, we are convinced that to do so would be a dangerous mistake. We hope that the President will not give Gorbachev any encouragement to believe those conditions are likely to alter in the foreseeable future; or that ^{there is} any difference of opinion between us as to their importance. As we confirmed to Paul Nitze, the extent of Soviet defensive capabilities is a determining factor for our deterrent.

You will be aware, from Alliance discussion since the 1979 decision, that we have in the past had misgivings over a zero-zero outcome for LRINF. On balance ^{agreement} we would still prefer to see an interim / along the lines you proposed in Geneva on 1 November, which would preserve a balance of some forces in Europe and avoid the dangers of decoupling the US strategic guarantee ~~from~~ the common defence. However, we recognise that, now Gorbachev has picked up the zero-zero concept (albeit only applied in Europe), our previous public statements make it less easy to dismiss the idea even in the form he has advanced it. There will be opportunities in Geneva to explore the Soviet position further, and their commitment to zero-zero may turn out to be no more than another propaganda move. We hope that in such further exchanges you will bear in mind our continued preference for an agreement which would take account of the military rationale for the Alliance decision to deploy Pershing II and cruise missiles in Europe. In any case reductions of at least fifty per cent in SS20's in the central and eastern USSR, as well as equal global entitlements for the United States and the Soviet Union, and constraints on shorter-range nuclear forces in order to

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guard against circumvention, are essential conditions.

The Prime Minister will herself be making some of these general points when she replies to the message Gorbachev addressed to her. Meanwhile she will be discussing the issues with President Mitterrand when they meet on 12 February.

As you will know, the Prime Minister has also responded to the President's request for advice on handling the SDI which you conveyed when you saw her here last December. The basic ideas which she has outlined in her letter to the President have been expanded in a more detailed paper which she has agreed I should let you have. This I now enclose, in the hope that it will help you and your colleagues in handling an undoubtedly tricky problem; and that it may contribute towards that arms control progress we all wish to see.

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Talking Points [transmitted by Amb. Nitze, 6 Feb.]

INTRODUCTION

-- President has made certain decisions. Before deciding on his final course of action, he wanted us to share his views with you and obtain your views and your advice. He thought this might be best done in as low-key a manner and with as little publicity as possible.

-- In our study of the Gorbachev proposal, the following points emerged:

- A) The proposal was designed primarily for its political and propaganda impact.
 - 1) Delivered to all of us virtually simultaneously with carefully-orchestrated press and TV exploitation.
 - 2) Attempts to trump President's emphasis on the eventual goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons by setting an apparently specific time schedule.
- B) First stage calls for all the things of benefit to the USSR. Most of things of more general interest to the West are reserved for stages 2 and 3.
- C) Proposal appears to open new ground in INF, but this is negated by unacceptable conditions:
 - 1) non-transfer provision;
 - 2) demand for UK and French freeze and declaration of intent to join in stage 2;
 - 3) No coverage of Asia systems; and
 - 4) Linkage to CTB.
- D) On START, their position is unchanged. They continue to insist on their unacceptable definition of strategic weapons as systems capable of striking territory of the other side. Would include on our side weapons deployed to protect our allies.

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- E) On space/defense, an initial reading suggested there were some changes: the word research was omitted from the English text, but in Russian text the word "sozdaniye" (create) is used, which Soviet negotiators at Geneva claim includes "purposeful" research.
- F) Their apparent forward movement on verification needs to be tested as to the specific applications to which they are prepared to agree, before we can judge whether there is anything really useful here.

CONCEPT

-- US pleased that Soviet Union agreed with our goal of elimination of nuclear weapons.

-- Continues to be our goal -- when possible consistent with security of US and Allies.

-- To accomplish, we have proposed and continue to advocate first steps by US and USSR bilaterally, specifically by implementing the principle of 50% reductions of nuclear weapons, applied appropriately to like weapons, and by promptly reaching an interim INF agreement.

-- When the bilateral first steps have been completed -- that is the forces of the US and USSR have been reduced, and discussions for additional reductions are underway -- we can envision subsequent steps which could involve the UK, France and China, so that all can move to zero nuclear weapons in a balanced and stable manner.

-- Our immediate focus should remain on bilateral first steps toward the prompt accomplishment of the 50% reduction and interim INF agreement.

-- Significant differences exist between the US and the Soviets on the elements that would constitute an equitable agreement.

-- In keeping with the November summit Joint Statement, we intend to accelerate our efforts to find common ground with the Soviets.

-- We are pleased that the Soviets recognize our long-held position that verification of negotiated agreements is critical.

-- We intend to pursue Mr. Gorbachev's overture on verification.

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-- We cannot agree with specific details in the phased Soviet plan, particularly the subsequent phases. Among other things, it would divert efforts from and create difficulties for the critical bilateral work. Moreover, it would immediately involve other sovereign nations and would still depend upon the results of first steps now in process in Geneva.

-- For this reason, we see no profit in negotiating on a framework going beyond the bilateral first steps.

NY -- While the goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons remains, such elimination requires conditions that include:

- Correcting conventional and other force imbalances,
- full compliance with existing and future treaty obligations,
- peaceful resolution of regional conflicts in ways that allow free choice without outside interference, and
- a demonstrated commitment by Soviet leadership to peaceful competition. /B

-- It is also our view that elimination of nuclear weapons would not obviate the need for defenses against such weapons to protect against cheating or breakout.

NST

-- We are not inclined to change our proposals of last November in those areas where the Soviets have shown no motion, nor even addressed meaningfully those proposals.

-- Accordingly, we intend no new initiatives in either START or Defense and Space at this time.

-- We are considering new initiatives in the INF area for an Interim Agreement along the following lines:

-- Elimination of all US and Soviet LRINF missiles west of Novosibirsk (and Barnaul) coupled to initial reductions in SS-20s in the central and eastern USSR of at least 50%; we would also seek a commitment to reduce subsequently to zero.

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-- Associated with this, the US would propose a global LRINF warhead ceiling under which we would retain the right to match any SS-20 warheads remaining outside Europe with systems in the US or elsewhere outside of Europe. In this regard, Soviet systems which are reduced would be destroyed; US systems could be withdrawn to the US unless, or until, they were in excess of the equal global ceiling (we would retain the right to convert the PII to Pl-B).

-- Also associated with LRINF, we would propose an equal SRINF ceiling at current Soviet levels or to freeze SRINF at the levels of the sides as of 31 December 1982.

-- Finally, the US would introduce the basis for mutual exploration of a verification regime as an integral part of this proposal.

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