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Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

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20 June 1986

*My dear Antony,*

--- Lord Zuckerman returned earlier in the week from a private Pugwash meeting last weekend; your people may like to see the attached copy of a letter which he has sent me with a preliminary report on the discussions.

I am sending copies of this letter to Clive Whitmore and Charles Powell.

*I also enclose copies of the formal statement of the Pugwash Executive Committee.*

*Yours ever*

Sir Antony Acland GCMG KCVO

*Robert*

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Sir Robert Armstrong, ~~ECB~~, CVO  
The Cabinet Office  
70 Whitehall  
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Sir Robert

17th June, 1986

See Robert

I got back last night from Geneva, and I think it would be useful if I sent you straightaway a preliminary report outlining what I learnt at the private Pugwash meeting in which I participated over the weekend. The Russian team was led by General Chervov, who was clearly there to deliver a message. As you know, he is the spokesman for the Russian Chiefs of Staff on international matters, and it is he who calls the tune on behalf of the military in the three sets of Geneva negotiations now in progress (ICEMs, IREMs, and Space). He was practically the only member of the Russian team to speak during the two-day meeting, and he listened intently to all that others said, answering all questions politely but firmly, with only a limited amount of propaganda overtones. Bob McNamara was the outstanding member of the American team, which also included a recently retired 3-star Air Force General by name of Kent, who now works for RAND in Washington, and Jack Ruina, an MIT professor who has spent years both in and out of Washington working on ABM defensive systems. He was pretty blunt about the technical shortcomings of SDI. McNamara had a long private talk with Chervov, and is immediately reporting back to Schultz, whom he regards as the only reasonable man in the present Administration. I also had some private talk with the General, and chatted to senior members of the negotiating teams of both sides at a cocktail party.

While Chervov did not outline the details of the most recent Gorbachev proposals, he made it plain - this in private - that their essential features are, first, an agreement to keep the 1972 ABM Treaty in being for 15 to 20 years, and second, to reduce the US and USSR arsenals to 8000 warheads and 1600 launchers, the latter to include tactical aircraft in Western Europe. He was insistent that these two conditions constituted what the interpreter translated as 'a watershed', the term coming up several times. This was the essence of the message he wanted McNamara to transmit to Washington. On the radio this morning, it was said that Gorbachev came out publicly yesterday with the same message. I also learnt privately from the General that Moscow, presumably as a consequence of Chernobyl, is so scared of the danger of 'accidental war' that a special unit is now being formed in the Chiefs of Staff machine to deal with the problem on a continuing basis.

.../...



Now for what he said in the open sessions.

1. The 1972 ABM Treaty must not be abrogated.
2. No space-to-space or space-to-earth weaponry.
3. SDI to be limited to research which does not 'bump' into the ABM Treaty.
4. UK and France will be negotiated with separately, but no further 'modernisation' in the meantime. Chervov accepted that Trident II is a new system. *Chervov has insisted*
5. The recent Velikoff/American scientists accord about placing three US monitoring stations in USSR, agreed in principle, but is not yet formally blessed by the USSR political authorities, since the US Government has not yet endorsed the proposals. The Russians are very interested in a CTB, and there will be another 'unofficial' meeting on the subject in Moscow next month. The Russians are not interested in proposals which legitimise testing. Testing must stop if nuclear arms-race is to end.
6. The USSR has proposed significant reductions in all forces facing each other in Europe, in accordance with a phased time-frame during which they would be reduced by a quarter by the early 90s. Units would be disbanded and demobilised and arms and equipment destroyed in accordance with agreed procedures. The reductions would be monitored by an international control commission made up of NATO, Warsaw Pact and non-aligned countries. On-site verification will be part of the process, including verification of size and form of remaining forces. Reductions should begin with strike aircraft, tanks and tactical nuclear weapons.
7. The only way to reduce mistrust was through positive steps of disarmament. During the course of the discussion of this issue, McNamara pointed out that at the time of the Cuban crisis, when the USA already deployed 5000 ICBM warheads and the USSR only 300, the USA was deterred from taking action which might precipitate the launch of a Russian missile. As McNamara put it, "the band of parity is very wide".
8. Chervov stated that the USSR had succeeded in establishing the foundation for arms-control agreements with four previous US administrations, but that the Reagan administration seems bent on its destruction, e.g. threats about SALT II and the ABM Treaty. He recognised that the NATO countries did not approve many of the statements now being made by Washington. It is all very well saying that SALT II will be abandoned, but what is the USA proposing to put in its place which will constrain the further multiplication of nuclear forces? If SALT II does go, and if the USA increases the strength of its nuclear arsenal, the USSR could easily embark on countermeasures.

Yours sincerely,

*Solly*

Solly Zuckerman



13th Pugwash Workshop on Nuclear Forces, Geneva, 15-16 June 1986

STATEMENT OF THE PUGWASH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The 13th Pugwash Workshop on Nuclear Forces was held in Geneva, Switzerland on 15 and 16 June 1986. Participants in the Workshop comprised 34 scientists and public and military figures from 18 countries (see attached list). This meeting continued a series that began in January 1980 with an initial focus on European and intermediate-range nuclear forces. The current focus is on restraining and reversing the nuclear arms race as a whole, including inter-continental and short-range as well as intermediate-range nuclear weapons.

Special attention was given at this 13th Workshop to the dangers of abandoning the SALT II limits without having negotiated a treaty replacing them with more effective constraints; to the interconnections between offensive and defensive weapons that make it impossible to control either without controlling both; to the importance and attainability of a comprehensive ban on testing of nuclear explosives; to the need for reductions of conventional forces as well as of nuclear ones; and to reducing the growing danger of accidental nuclear war.

The participants in the Workshop took part as individuals, not as representatives of their governments or other agencies. The present statement was prepared following the meeting by the Executive Committee of the Pugwash Council, which has sole responsibility for its contents. It should not be interpreted as a consensus of the Workshop participants, among whom a wide range of views was represented.

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THE EXISTING ARRAY OF ARMS-CONTROL AGREEMENTS, WHILE NOT PERFECT, HAS PROVIDED VALUABLE PROTECTION AGAINST THE DANGERS OF AN UNINHIBITED ARMS RACE. The twin centerpieces of this array of agreements are (1) the SALT II ceilings on launchers of strategic nuclear weapons and on the numbers of warheads deliverable by these and (2) the ABM Treaty's prohibitions of development, testing, and deployment of national defences against strategic ballistic missiles or of components of such defences.

THE SALT II LIMITS, ALTHOUGH NOT RATIFIED, HAVE BEEN OBSERVED IN THEIR MAIN RESPECTS BY BOTH SIDES UNTIL NOW. Assertions made by each side concerning noncompliance by the other relate mainly to ambiguities that are peripheral to the main provisions of SALT II and that have little or no strategic significance. Such assertions should not obscure the fact that both sides have dismantled significant numbers of launchers and delivery vehicles over the past 14 years in order to remain in compliance with both the SALT I and SALT II numerical ceilings.



BREAKING OUT OF THE SALT II CEILINGS NOW WILL BRING NO STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES TO EITHER SIDE BUT INCREASED COSTS AND DANGERS TO BOTH. Without SALT II, the existing global arsenal of about 20,000 strategic nuclear warheads could easily grow to over 30,000 within 5 years. Much of the increase would occur in categories of weapons that arouse first-strike fears (thus augmenting instability in time of crisis and increasing the chance of accidental nuclear war) or that compromise future arms-control prospects by making verification more difficult. The current global inventory of perhaps 30,000 "nonstrategic" (shorter-range) nuclear weapons probably would grow as well.

THE SALT II LIMITS SHOULD BE RETAINED UNTIL REPLACED BY A NEW AGREEMENT FOR DEEP REDUCTIONS OF OFFENSIVE STRATEGIC FORCES. The partial restraints provided by SALT II are far better than no restraints at all, and the painstakingly negotiated categories of weapons in the SALT II Treaty provide the quickest route to a framework for the reductions in which both sides have expressed strong interest.

DESPITE CLAIMS OF IMPRESSIVE TECHNICAL PROGRESS ON STRATEGIC DEFENSE, THE CAPABILITY TO PROTECT POPULATIONS FROM NUCLEAR ATTACK REMAINS COMPLETELY OUT OF REACH. Nuclear weapons are so powerful, people so vulnerable, and the performance of complicated defenses so unpredictable that no amount of progress in lasers, tracking, computing, and so on can transform the dream of population protection into a reality. We are stuck with deterrence by the threat of mutual destruction, not by political choice but because of the characteristics of modern weapons.

THE MOST PLAUSIBLE GOAL OF STRATEGIC DEFENCE PROGRAMMES IS PROTECTION NOT OF PEOPLE BUT OF RETALIATORY NUCLEAR MISSILES AND OTHER MILITARY TARGETS. Even this limited aim cannot succeed unless cooperative arms limitation prevents further offensive build-ups; but pursuit of defences undoubtedly will stimulate such build-ups and make arms limitation impossible.

THE IDEA THAT STRATEGIC DEFENCES ARE NEEDED TO "ENHANCE" DETERRENCE IS WRONG. Assuming rational behavior, deterrence is already robust. The weaknesses in deterrence--which relate to irrational behavior during a crisis, unintended escalation, and accidental war--would be aggravated rather than ameliorated by deployment of hair-trigger space-based or "pop-up" strategic defences.

MAINTAINING THE ABM TREATY IS ESSENTIAL TO KEEPING A LID ON THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE. The treaty has not yet been seriously undermined, but it is threatened. Maintaining the treaty will require concerted and cooperative effort by the United States and the Soviet Union to protect it from piecemeal erosion, radical reinterpretation, or outright abrogation.



IN ADDITION TO PRESERVING THE ABM TREATY AND THE SALT II LIMITS, THE ARMS-CONTROL REGIME SHOULD BE AUGMENTED WITH A BAN ON TESTING AND DEPLOYING ANTI-SATELLITE (ASAT) WEAPONS, A COMPREHENSIVE BAN ON TESTING OF NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVES (CTB), AND MUTUAL REDUCTIONS OF CONVENTIONAL FORCES IN EUROPE. ASAT weapons and ballistic-missile defense are intertwined in ways that make it nearly impossible to limit either without limiting both. A CTB would help end the dangerous illusion (which helps drive the arms race) that nuclear weapons have uses toward which their design needs continuing refinement. Reductions in conventional weaponry and troops in Europe would diminish the excuses for deploying nuclear weapons there. All these measures are adequately verifiable.

THERE HAS BEEN NO PROGRESS IN THE GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS SO FAR, YET MOST OF THE INGREDIENTS OF A FAR-REACHING ARMS-CONTROL AGREEMENT ARE NOW ON THE TABLE, WAITING TO BE PICKED UP. Existing proposals have addressed the main long-standing obstacles to such an agreement, including verification provisions, coverage of cruise missiles, the treatment of forward-based systems, and the means of accounting for British and French forces. A comprehensive approach to arms reductions has never been as available as it is today.

THE CHANCES OF ACCIDENTAL NUCLEAR WAR ARISE FROM MISTRUST AND SUSPICION AS WELL AS FROM THE POSSIBILITIES OF MISINFORMATION, IRRATIONAL IMPULSES, AND TECHNOLOGICAL FAILURES IN TIME OF CRISIS. Systematic attention is needed equally to the human and technological dimensions of this danger.

THE ONLY COMPLETE SOLUTION TO THE DANGER OF NUCLEAR WAR IS THE ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. THIS MUST REMAIN OUR ULTIMATE GOAL.



THIRTEENTH WORKSHOP ON NUCLEAR FORCES  
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, 14 AND 15 JUNE 1986

List of Participants

Academician Dénes Berényi, Institute of Nuclear Research of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (ATOMKI), Debrecen, Hungary.

Prof. Herbert Bertsch, Institut für International Politik und Wirtschaft der DDR, Berlin, GDR.

Prof. Dr. Egbert Boeker, Physics Institute, Free University, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Dr. Alexander E. Bovin, Izvestia, Moscow, USSR.

Prof. Francesco Calogero\*, Physics Department, University of Rome, Italy.

Colonel-General N.F. Chervov, General Staff of the Armed Forces of the USSR, Moscow, USSR.

Prof. Marian Dobrosielski, former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, University of Warsaw, Poland.

Academician Nicolai T. Fedorenko, former Deputy Foreign Minister and former Permanent Representative of the USSR to the United Nations, Moscow, USSR.

Prof. Bernard T. Feld\*, Professor of Physics, M.I.T., Cambridge, MA, USA.

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Prof. Dorothy Hodgkin\*, Nobel laureate, President of Pugwash, Oxford, UK.

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Mrs. Wang Zhiyun, Chinese Delegation to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, Switzerland.

Lord Zuckerman, former Chief Scientific Advisor to the British Government, London, United Kingdom.

OBSERVER :

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\* Members of the Pugwash Executive Committee

Geneva, June 15, 1986



