



HMC

Bates and Pa @ 16/4

UNITED KINGDOM DELEGATION
VIENNA.

TELNO
148

1 July 1986

Most imaginative, for a
variety of reasons I think

061/579/2 the ideas in para 11 are
more negotiable within
the Alliance than those in

Chenery

Ingenious - much food
for discussion on 7/7.

T L A Daunt Esq CMG para 12.
AUSS
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Copy to Minister (for his
w/e brief)

3/7

Dear Timothy,

CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL IN EUROPE : THE WAY AHEAD

1. I imagine that you will shortly be exchanging views with the Americans on the joint US/UK contribution to the High Level Task Force working paper on the framework and negotiating fora for conventional arms control from the Atlantic to the Urals. (At least I assume from UKDEL NATO telno 208 that it will be a joint contribution). No doubt thinking in London has already advanced a good way since the Secretary of State's meeting on 20 June but you may like to have some further thoughts from Vienna.

Comm. 502

2. Unlike the French (Paris telno 622, paragraph 4), I consider that the questions of substance and of fora are intimately linked and will have to be considered together: the choice of fora will certainly affect the substance we wish to see negotiated. The subject in any case is a vast one and involves, directly or indirectly, very many aspects of our defence policy. This letter will inevitably, therefore, stray somewhat beyond matters for which I am directly responsible.

Political Background

3. It may be worth listing at the outset a number of points which seem to me important and relevant, but which I do not propose to argue in detail. These also give my reactions to some of the questions raised in Bruce Cleghorn's annotated agenda for the 20 June meeting but not discussed there:

- ✓ (a) It cannot be in HMG's interests to have a matter as vital to our national security (and the collective security of the Alliance) as conventional force levels on the Central Front subject to determination in a forum where the neutral and non-aligned nations are represented. That seems to me to be true whether one is looking at the narrowly military aspects of the question or whether one is trying to keep open

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the long-term prospect of negotiating a sensible arms reduction agreement. Stated so bluntly, this assertion would no doubt be unwelcome to the French; but

- (b) One is bound to suspect that the French are primarily interested in political theatre. It is important that the French have decided to re-enter the conventional arms reduction game. There can be no question of trying to eject them. However the French should not be allowed to set the rules entirely to suit their own convenience. The other members of the Alliance have acquired considerable experience of arms reduction negotiations in recent years. They have also gained some ground at the East's expense. This should not be cast aside simply to satisfy Paris;
- (c) Neither HMG nor any of the other leading Western Governments are interested in making the sweeping concessions, eg on verification, which would make a substantial arms reduction agreement possible in the near future (the same goes, of course, for the Eastern side); but
- (d) The same governments (perhaps with the exception of the French) wish to keep open the possibility of achieving an East-West agreement on arms reductions. They see this prospect as being desirable both in the interests of Alliance management and of achieving in the long term enhanced security at lower cost;
- (e) To this end the same governments wish, so far as possible, to maintain the "acquis" from the MBFR negotiations in Vienna; but
- (f) Given the Halifax statement, the parallelism between this and the Budapest Appeal, and the involvement of the French Government, the West will not be able to make progress towards a Central Front agreement a pre-condition for more general progress with the Atlantic to the Urals concept;
- (g) The Alliance must have a clear idea of the direction in which it is headed by the time the CSCE follow-up meeting assembles in Vienna on 4 November. The Eastern side is certain to engage in a "grandstanding" exercise then. We must be in a position to respond with something more than silence, criticism or "watch this space". Ideally, we should announce the "bold new steps" anticipated in the Halifax statement;

/(h) Partly



(h) Partly for this reason and partly because of the nature of the beast, it might be unwise to concentrate our efforts exclusively on the High Level Task Force. It is important that HMG decides its objectives soon and that we then try to convince our main partners, bilaterally or trilaterally, of the merits of our ideas. Whatever the procedure adopted we are desperately, almost impossibly, short of time if we are to agree a proposal in time for action in November;

(i) We are doomed to work in the first instance with the Germans and the Americans - as we did last year. There must be considerable doubt about whether the motives and ambitions of the French are compatible with, let alone the same as, our own. If the Germans are already committed in some way to the French, then we should start with the Americans.

This assumes that the US are well interested in working in this area.
Framework and Fora

4. It seems clear, given the overlap between Halifax and Budapest and the expectations which have been aroused, that within the foreseeable future the West will be discussing with the East the mandate for a negotiation à 35 on security issues from the Atlantic to the Urals. It follows, however, from 3(a) and 3(e) above that special treatment for force reductions on the Central Front is required. In other words we need a zonal approach of some kind. In this, as in much else, my views run parallel to those in Annex B of Paul Lever's submission of 18 June. It follows, however, from 3(f) above that I do not share the view in that Annex that agreement can be "required on the Central Front" before we go any further.

5. One way of meeting what seems to me to be the requirements would be for the West to announce (preferably in Vienna in November) its willingness to see established a CSCE Committee of the Whole (? Committee for European Security) dealing with security problems from the Atlantic to the Urals (ie a successor to the CDE - whether or not that Conference had been successful). The Western spokesman would, however, go on to say that the problems of arms reductions and limitations (as opposed to those of arms control) on the Central Front (and for that matter on the flanks) posed special problems in today's conditions and were of special concern to the members of two Alliances. The West therefore proposed the simultaneous establishment of a Sub-Committee (? Sub-Committee for the Central Front) (to be followed in due course perhaps by others) dealing with those problems. This Sub-Committee would be a successor to the present MBFR forum and would be open only to members of the two Alliances. The West would be announcing later the same day "bold new steps" for discussion in that Sub-Committee (see paragraphs 8 to 12 below). (I realise that there has heretofore been no provision in CSCE procedures for the formal establishment

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of groups with limited membership. However, such groups have regularly functioned on an informal basis. The present case is one where we might hope to secure general recognition of the need for a new departure.)

6. The Western spokesman would then set out our proposals for the work of the Committee for European Security (this would in fact be what the experts call CDE I(b)). These, like our proposals for the work of the Sub-Committee for the Central Front would be for a first-phase agreement. The spokesman would say that there seemed to be much work to be done by the 35, taking up where Stockholm had left off, in the field of confidence-building measures. Its work should start as soon as possible and be carried out in parallel to that in the Sub-Committee. The spokesman would say that, if the Committee for European Security made progress, its work would obviously have a favourable impact on that of the Sub-Committee for the Central Front. Agreement in the Sub-Committee would be conditional on prior agreement in the larger committee (see paragraph 14 below) but not vice-versa. If both committees succeeded in concluding first-phase agreements and if these were successfully implemented, then one could consider bringing their work more closely together, though not combining them.

7. If all this worked out, one might be left with a structure on the lines of the attached annex. It would seem to be sensible - or at least practical - to aim for both Committee and Sub-Committee to be based in the same city: Vienna would have obvious attractions, but Geneva, Stockholm or Berne would all serve.

"Bold New Steps"

8. If this approach is to carry conviction, and if our other political requirements are to be met, it would seem desirable to announce simultaneously some striking proposals for consideration by the Sub-Committee for the Central Front. This should be done in the MBFR forum in Vienna in parallel with the opening of the CSCE Follow-Up Meeting. This would give the strongest possible emphasis to our views on continuity of the two fora. (If there is no desire for a high profile one could, of course, simply reiterate our present position, formalising it perhaps by having a Minister table a fully worked-out draft agreement based on our 5 December approach - Spence's letter 081/628/2 of 12 December 1985 to Richard Clarke refers).

9. The French would presumably absent themselves from any occasion in the MBFR forum. But it would be up them whether or not they would attend the successor Sub-Committee for the Central Front. One would hope that the structure outlined above - and their own apparent recognition that the problems of the Central Front require special treatment (Paris telno 622, paragraph 6A) - might make it difficult for them to refuse. But in the last resort, and assuming we could gain US and German support, we might have to pursue ideas along these lines within the Alliance

/in



in the face of French opposition. They are unlikely to concede the argument until a very late stage.

10. The requirement for "bold new steps" could be met either: (a) by a considerably developed version of our present MBFR position; or (b) by a completely new proposal. An idea under each of these headings is set out below. Both are for first-phase agreements; both would include our present verification package essentially unchanged; both would therefore be unnegotiable with the East but, I hope, embarrassing for them (above all because they would demolish the argument that the West's verification regime was incommensurate with the reductions proposed); both would take account of the Budapest Appeal and of the Atlantic to the Urals concept; both would certainly be "bold" and "new"; both would be extremely difficult to negotiate with our major Allies (and no doubt within Whitehall); but neither is intrinsically more revolutionary than acceptance of a 25% cut across the board which the Department seems inclined to contemplate.

A Development of our Present MBFR Position

11. The main elements would include:

- (a) Withdrawal from the reductions area of 30,000 US and 60,000 Soviet ground forces within two years of the date of signature of an agreement. (These numbers are approximately those which the West was proposing as recently as 1978. They also fudge the ratios issue. Any numbers which are politically impressive and negotiable within the Alliance would, in principle, serve);
- (b) Withdrawals to be in combat units together with organic equipment. (This the West has never offered in the past);
- (c) Withdrawn US forces and equipment to return to the United States; Soviet forces and equipment to move east of the Urals;
- (d) The reduction period to be followed by a numerically specified no-increase commitment of 3 years duration. Armaments will be excluded from the no-increase commitment;
- (e) The agreement to be verified in the present NGA by AMS 3-8 of the West's package of 30 January 1986. AMS 1 and 2 to be dealt with in the Committee for European Security (see also paragraph 14 below);
- (f) The agreement to expire at the end of the 3 year no-increase commitment unless there is agreement by all parties to extend, to renew, or to re-negotiate.

/A New



A New First-Phase Proposal

12. The main elements would include:

- Frank?
Sunderland?*
- (a) Agreement that each nation with forces deployed in the NGA should take a 10% reduction in its ground forces located between the Atlantic and the Urals. (Rough figures would be: US - 22,000; USSR - 125,000; UK - 14,000);
- how is this calculated?
Total British army? ✓*
- (b) The reductions would be taken in combat units together with organic equipment;
- (c) Those participants with foreign-based forces in the NGA would take not less than the first 30% of their reductions in those forces. Withdrawn forces would be returned to their country of origin and disbanded;
- (d) The Soviet Union and the USA would complete their reductions in the first two years after signature of the agreement, the remainder of the participants in the following two years. (The figures for withdrawals from the NGA would be very roughly: USSR - 40,000; US (who would have to take the bulk of their reductions from within the NGA) - 20,000).
- (e) Points (d), (e) and (f) of the previous proposal would also apply, mutatis mutandis.

Points Common to Both Proposals

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be to Se -
g. a. 1959.*

13. Neither tactical nuclear forces nor tactical air forces would be included in either of these first-phase proposals. The West would accept that these forces would be covered in second or follow-on phases if the first phase was successful. These proposals also ignore French ideas on first and second echelon forces and suggestions that we should try to get at "offensive" materiel. Efforts to catch specific weapon systems or capabilities are, in my view, almost certain to turn out to be excessively complicated and to be self-evidently unnegotiable. They are bound to be regarded by, and denounced by, the other side as an effort to derive unilateral advantage.

14. It would be made plain at the same time as the West tabled its amended, or new, first-phase proposal for reductions on the Central Front that our verification proposals (or at least the standards of confidence they aim to achieve) are in their essentials unnegotiable. If in due course the Committee for European Security succeeded in reaching a first-phase agreement which was successfully implemented, things might be different.

/Our



Our verification package is designed for the present NGA and that would remain its area of application. But the West would not be prepared to finalise a Central Front reductions agreement until measures had been agreed in the larger committee giving the West some kind of oversight as to the situation in the Soviet Union west of the Urals. (The position as regards verification in the Western Military Districts might turn out to be somewhat anomalous. But the Russians will point out that the position of the continental US is even more anomalous!) In this connection, it would be vital to ensure that the principles underlying verification arrangements negotiated in the larger forum were consistent with what we wished to see emerge in the smaller forum, eg inspections must be as of right and routine.

15. The fact that vastly larger reductions would be offered under the proposals above than we are now discussing, and that equipment would be included, would be justified on the grounds that withdrawal of Soviet forces east of the Urals would go a considerable way towards solving the geographical problem. Moreover, in the climate that would obtain if the other requirements set out above were met, a greater measure of risk would be justified. I do not myself think that the abandonment of prior agreed data would be any more risky under the expanded version of our present position than it is already. As for the second proposal above, even on Soviet data, it would force the Eastern side to make disproportionately large reductions. Nonetheless you may feel that a proposal along these lines would necessitate reopening the data issue.

16. If some form of Consultative Commission is inherited from Stockholm or established by the Committee for European Security, it should follow the same pattern as the parent bodies, eg a group drawn from the 35 to monitor agreements negotiated in that body and a sub-group to monitor agreements emerging from Central Front negotiation.

17. It should perhaps be noted that somewhere down the road envisaged in these proposals - as in the proposal that we should endorse 25% reductions across the board - lies, at least in logic, endorsement of the goal of getting all Soviet troops out of Eastern Europe and therefore all US troops out of Western Europe.

Conclusion

18. It is extremely difficult to imagine an agreement on force reductions on the Central Front emerging in the foreseeable future from the proposals sketched out above. Indeed, the Soviet Government (though not perhaps their Eastern partners) would probably profess to regard the initiatives in paragraphs 11 and 12 above as provocative. The subsequent negotiation in the Sub-Committee for the Central Front might well be brief or highly intermittent, ie a form of suspended animation (which the French seem to favour) could easily ensue while efforts were focused on

/the



the work of the larger committee.

19. But by following the route sketched out in this letter we would:

- (a) Give ourselves a headline-catching initiative (or two) without conceding too many hostages to fortune;
- (b) Preserve to a considerable degree the "acquis" of the MBFR negotiation (viz the legitimacy of the first-phase approach; asymmetry; initial reductions in US and Soviet forces; and the paramountcy of verification) without appearing to make acceptance of our ideas a condition for progress elsewhere; and
- (c) meet the French half-way (ie on the importance of the CSCE machinery) without conceding to them the burial of the MBFR approach which they seem to want.

20. None of this is to say that the ideas above are free from drawbacks. But I have so far been unable to think of any which do not have more!

Yours ever

Michael

M O'D B Alexander

cc: Sir J Graham. Bt GCMG, UKDEL NATO, Brussels
J M Edes Esq CMG, UKDEL Stockholm
P J Weston Esq CMG, Paris
J O Kerr Esq, Washington
M A Arthur Esq, Bonn

ANNEX

CSCE (35 members meeting at
regular intervals)

Committee(s) for European
Cooperation
(35 members meeting periodically
cf Ottawa, Budapest, Berne)

Committee for European Security
(35 members in permanent session
while negotiations last)

Sub Committee for the Central
Front
(19 or 20 members in permanent
session while negotiations
last)

Sub Committees for Northern
and Southern Flanks (membership
to be determined; to be
established only if success
achieved on Central Front;
in permanent session while
negotiations last)

