



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

23 July 1986

*Dear Charles*

Arms Control: President Reagan's  
Proposed Response to Mr Gorbachev

In the light of your record of 23 July of the Prime Minister's discussion with Mr Nitze, and of Mr Renton's subsequent exchange today, I now enclose a draft message for the Prime Minister to send the President in order to underline some of the points made in discussion here. The draft message also includes a short and welcoming reference to the President's speech on South Africa.

The draft message picks up the key areas for comment in the proposed reply from the President to Gorbachev, including the issue of other nuclear powers participating in subsequent negotiations on arms control. On this point, Mr Nitze took the same line with Mr Renton this morning as he had with the Prime Minister last night. However, he seemed prepared to consider the idea which the Prime Minister had initially launched, that the problem could most easily be solved by omitting the entire reference. We have considered your own personal suggestion for an alternative formula, which certainly comes closer than the current language to meeting our requirement. However, it is the considered view here that any reference to the participation by other nuclear powers which did not specifically set out our conditions for doing so (as the Prime Minister suggested) would on balance be disadvantageous. We could well be exposed to further pressure to elaborate, and perhaps even to change, our present well-established position on participation. We can see some advantage from the US angle in including a reference to other nuclear powers. But these US reasons do not apply to our own interests. We therefore take the view that the least said, the better.

Originally the Americans informed us that the deadline for Allied comments on the proposed reply to Gorbachev was this evening (23 July). However, we understand that Mr Nitze has now changed plans and will be discussing the

/response





response with the North Atlantic Council in Brussels tomorrow morning. In practice, therefore, the US deadline may have been extended. Nonetheless there would be evident value in ensuring that the Prime Minister's written comments - to which the President can be expected to attach particular importance - reach the White House as soon as possible.

/ I also enclose a draft telegram to selected posts recording the main elements of the discussions between the Prime Minister, Mr Renton and Mr Nitze; this draws upon your own record, and what Mr Nitze told Mr Renton this morning of his discussion with the Prime Minister.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Howe (Ministry of Defence), with whose officials the enclosures have been cleared; and to Michael Stark (Cabinet Office).

*Yours ever*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R N Culshaw', written in a cursive style.

(R N Culshaw)  
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq  
PS/10 Downing Street



DS (Revised)

DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:

Reference

Prime Minister

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

JRWABB

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

President Reagan

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

CAVEAT.....

It was very good of you to let me know in your message of 20 July the details of how you intend to respond to

Gorbachev's latest proposals. As I told Paul Nitze here yesterday - and I was delighted to see him once more in London - ~~there is much of value in what you propose to~~

~~say~~ I welcome the overall thrust of your approach, and see your intended reply as an important step forward in these crucial negotiations. *I think it is particularly valuable*

*that you have felt able to take a first step on SDI; we both hope this will draw the Russians further into a serious process of negotiation.*

While I am certainly not starry-eyed, I have begun to detect in the Soviet position some readiness to negotiate seriously; and I took the opportunity of Shevardnadze's visit here last week to urge on him the need for the Russians to respond to you at the various negotiating tables, on your concerns about their compliance record, and on the preparations for your next summit. Overall, I am encouraged by the progress we seem to have made in the last few weeks.

Enclosures—flag(s).....

Nonetheless, I must not hide from you the concern which I



feel about the ~~present formula~~ in your <sup>reference to</sup> ~~response on~~ the participation of "other nuclear powers" in subsequent arms control negotiations. It goes without saying that I want to be able to endorse whole-heartedly whatever you put to Gorbachev, and to leave no room for Soviet wedge-driving. But if the present language ~~is~~ <sup>was</sup> retained, I would have to say, in answer to public or private questions from the Russians or anyone else, that our position remained unchanged. In doing so I would have, at least implicitly, to put some distance between your position and my own, something I am always anxious to avoid.

One way of getting round this problem would of course <sup>be</sup> spell out in your response the full set of British conditions for our prospective participation. Paul Nitze did not seem very attracted to the idea, nor was I to his various alternative formulae. I therefore suggest that the best way to <sup>solution</sup> ~~resolve~~ the issue is to omit any reference at all to "other nuclear powers". I hope that you will be able to agree to this. As I said in my earlier message of 11 February, I think it most important to avoid raising any expectations Gorbachev may have about a change in the British position on this score.

I also underlined to Paul Nitze <sup>our</sup> ~~some~~ concern about the <sup>terms of the</sup> ~~current language~~ used with reference to the ABM Treaty. I am worried that this might be read as implying a move towards a less restrictive interpretation of the Treaty limits than your current policy demands. ~~I therefore~~

I was reassured to learn from Paul Nitze that this was not your intention: but I think it would help to forestall criticism on that score if



<sup>if</sup> ~~hope that~~ the wording <sup>could</sup> ~~can~~ be adjusted in order to <sup>make it clear</sup> ~~emphasise~~ that no change in this policy, to which as you know I attach the highest importance, is intended. At the same time, I wonder whether it is wise to do nothing about the Soviet proposal for some clarification of ambiguities in the Treaty. I suggested in February that some such move might be necessary in order to impel Gorbachev into an agreement. You are obviously the best judge of the right tactics. But I still feel that some US gesture in this direction will prove desirable.

The other point I put to Paul Nitze concerned your indication of a readiness to settle for less than 50% cuts in offensive forces. I know that you share my view that for both strategic and political reasons we should set our arms control sights as high as possible. At the same time I understand your wish not to become entangled in the wholly unacceptable Soviet definition of "strategic" systems. I hope that once it has been established that the latter is not a serious runner, it may be possible to raise your sights once more to the more significant target endorsed at your last Summit.

Let me repeat my endorsement of the overall approach you propose to take in your reply to Gorbachev, subject to the points above and to the details mentioned to Paul Nitze in his other discussions here.

Finally, I wanted to let you know how admirable I found your speech on South Africa this week; and how grateful I



am for your words of support. It is a great encouragement to Geoffrey Howe to have your backing in his talks with President Botha and South African Ministers during his present visit there. We must do all we can to find a negotiated way to peaceful change in South Africa.