

✓ Mr. Carter

File 16

cc Mr. Goodale 22/11

Subj'd



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

17 November 1982

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EAST/WEST RELATIONS

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary discussed the above subject with the Prime Minister this afternoon.

Mr. Pym said that there were three broad considerations to keep in mind. We needed to explore the possibility of change in Soviet policies, following the change of leadership; President Reagan's recent message to the Prime Minister was relevant. We should do all we could to maintain the strength of our relationship with the United States. We needed to ensure that the Europeans remained firm during 1983 with regard to NATO's two-track decision on the stationing of intermediate-range land-based missiles.

He had it in mind to send a message to Mr. Shultz on these matters. This would refer to the changes in the Soviet Union, draw attention to the importance of the forthcoming meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers and suggest the adoption by that meeting of a declaration describing the West's attitude to East/West relations. The message would go on to say that we wished to pursue the considerations in the recently agreed paper on East/West economic relations and to set up the necessary machinery quickly. Finally, the message would float the idea of an early Summit between President Reagan and Mr. Andropov. The discussions which Vice President Bush had had with Andropov in Moscow recently contained a hint that this idea might be worth pursuing. There had been a similar hint in the conversations between the President of the Federal Republic of Germany and Andropov. The thought might be that a very early meeting
/between the two

between the two would be easier to arrange, and would run less risk of raising expectations, than a Summit proposed in a few months' time. It would be seen publicly as a positive move at the beginning of a very difficult period. We should bear in mind that Andropov might himself make such a proposal. It would in any case be useful for us to float the idea with Mr. Shultz. By doing so we could involve ourselves in the preparatory discussion for the Summit and thus keep our relationship with the United States in the best possible condition.

The Prime Minister recalled that President Reagan's position seemed to be that he was ready to respond if the Soviet Union provided genuine opportunities. Previously, we had always argued that a Summit should be very well prepared. It would be a very big departure from this position simply to urge that one should take place. Mr. Pym said that he believed such a proposal would have a very helpful effect on European opinion. The Prime Minister said that her reading of Andropov was that he would need to demonstrate in his early weeks that he was tough. But he might propose one or two cosmetic moves which would lead some in the West to claim that there were new possibilities of detente and thus lower their guard. She agreed that it would be wise for there to be a US/Soviet Summit at some time in the next two years. But she doubted whether there could be more than one. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that he thought this was not necessarily so, given the appearance of a new leadership. If Mr. Shultz thought the idea was worth examining, we could do more detailed work.

The Prime Minister said that if the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary thought that it would help his relationship with Mr. Shultz to float such a proposal, she would not wish to object. But she believed the idea would get a much better reception if we did more work on it first. We needed to be clear as to what such a meeting could achieve, what the limitations and risks were, and where it would take place. It should certainly not be held in Moscow. The next US/Soviet Summit, whenever it took place, would set the scene for East/West relations for a long time ahead. When

/President Reagan

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President Reagan met Andropov, he must not fail. She was not convinced that there was merit in an early meeting.

Mr. Pym said that he also thought there could be merit in new contacts between the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union. For example, Mr. Rifkind might pay a visit to Moscow. It might also be useful for contacts to take place at senior official level. We tended to do much less than our major allies in this respect. This was rather damaging since our allies knew that they had more contact than we did. The purpose of such meetings would be to put across our point of view on a range of subjects. There was nothing to lose.

The Prime Minister expressed some concern that such moves would harm our whole stance on East/West relations. Trade contacts at Ministerial level were a different matter. But we should have to be sure that any political contacts were consistent with the various understandings into which we had entered after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. She was opposed to a Senior Minister visiting Moscow but could perhaps envisage a visit at lower levels, provided it had a clear purpose. She thought we should give Mr. Shultz advance warning of any such visits. In general, she was not enthusiastic about the prospect but would not raise objection if the points she had made were met.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office.