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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

26 May 1983

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Dear John,

Williamsburg Summit: Arms Control

Thank you for your letter of 24 May to Roger Bone. I enclose a revised brief (PMVZ (83) 11) which takes account of the points you make. Given that the Prime Minister may not wish to open up a debate on future arms control implications for British and French nuclear forces, we have accordingly altered the Speaking Note. But as you will note from the background material, we suggest that the Prime Minister may find it useful to listen to other Heads of Government's views on this if these are forthcoming. As requested, the positions of the Japanese, Canadian and Italian Governments on INF have been set out more fully (paragraph 14 in the background section).

You will have seen that the Americans have now dropped the idea of an agreed INF statement, although if there is a consensus for a short statement emphasising seriousness about the negotiations, and about deployment if they fail, the Americans would welcome this.

I am sending copies of this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office). The brief is being reproduced separately by the Cabinet Office for circulation in the usual way.

Yours ever
John Holmes

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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PMVZ(83) 11

COPY NO

19 MAY 1983

WILLIAMSBURG ECONOMIC SUMMIT

28-30 MAY 1983

ARMS CONTROL

(including INF, START, etc)

Brief by Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Arms Control

1. United Kingdom objective. To open up a Summit discussion about the main directions and priorities of Western arms control policy for the remainder of 1983. To ensure that President Reagan understands the political realities in Europe on this subject; that European leaders remain united and firm.

Points to Make

2. Need for steadiness of nerve over INF by the Alliance throughout rest of this year. UK deployments will begin as planned. Need for Alliance solidarity, particularly from smaller allies.

3. Western interim step proposal still thoroughly tenable. No need to contemplate further refinements or adjustments in Western negotiating position. Existing negotiating principles of cardinal importance, especially need for limitations on a global basis, not only because of the implications for Japan, but also to protect Alliance interests.

4. Western public responds well to clear explanation both of the need for sound defences and of the contribution arms control can make to Western security. But, particularly over next six

/months

months, we need to consider the effect on one another of public statements or actions which could have damaging Alliance repercussions outside the context for which they were intended. This puts premium on forethought and prior consultation.

5. Exclusion of British (and French) nuclear deterrents from INF continues to be vital element in NATO negotiating position. We must not weaken on this. It is essential at this juncture that the Russians do not succeed in cracking NATO unity on this issue. (See para 15 below) [In the long term if over time there is a substantial reduction in the threat from Soviet strategic forces we would review the position of our deterrent in the Strategic Arms Control Talks.]

6. START talks most important. Scowcroft report opens up possibility of adjustment in US position to increase levels proposed under existing US draft treaty for missile launchers. Andropov's 3 May speech presumably means that in START, as well as in INF, the Russians will need to re-cast their proposals in terms of warhead rather than missile limits. These two adjustments would seem to narrow the gap between the two sides. Any sign of specific new Soviet proposals on these lines in Geneva?

7. Need for sensible but limited objectives in START to maximise chances for early agreement. Cannot solve all elements in the problem at once. Is there any chance of a limited breakthrough before US presidential election - eg an outline agreement on main issues, containing perhaps agreed overall numerical limits, agreements on systems to be included etc, all of which could be fleshed out in subsequent negotiation?

8. Absence of practical progress in these or other existing arms control fora risks undermining public confidence in multi-lateral arms control as a whole. That is why we should not

/ignore

ignore efforts in non-nuclear arms control. Need to get serious substantive work underway on chemical weapons at Committee on Disarmament in Geneva. A conference on disarmament in Europe (CDE), now within grasp at Madrid, could be useful contribution. Need to remain alive to possibilities for new thinking at Vienna Force Reduction talks (MBFR).

9. Hope Americans will agree to keep open options for arms control in space. We should develop a position in the Committee on Disarmament (CD) to undercut Soviet propaganda, eg by establishing a CD working group to consider what is feasible and realistic.

10. Some element of hard-headed East/West political dialogue may be necessary prerequisite for giving arms control necessary momentum. High level meetings between Western and Soviet leadership may have a part to play in this. Chancellor Kohl's objectives at Moscow visit in early July? US intentions?



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

24 May 1983

WILLIAMSBURG SUMMIT: ARMS CONTROL

I should be grateful if you would refer to the brief which has been provided on this subject for the Prime Minister (PM VZ(83)11).

As the Prime Minister is unlikely to have an opportunity to consider this brief before her flight to the United States on Saturday, and as she is likely to be opening a discussion of arms control at dinner in Williamsburg on Saturday night, it is desirable that the brief should be fully self-explanatory. I think that in its existing form it will raise a number of questions in Mrs. Thatcher's mind. I list these below.

Paragraph 5

In present political circumstances, and given the danger of the contents of the dinner table discussion being leaked, I am rather doubtful whether the Prime Minister will wish to open up a debate on the longer-term implications of third country nuclear forces for strategic arms control. Secondly, in previous public references to this issue, the Prime Minister has always been careful to stress that she cannot speak for the French Government.

Paragraph 6

I doubt if Mrs. Thatcher will wish to say that the Scowcroft Report opens up interesting new possibilities without being clear in her own mind as to the nature of those possibilities. It is not entirely clear to me whether the possibilities are simply those described in paragraph 17 of the background brief - these appear to be little more than possible adjustments in the US negotiating position.

I think it would also be helpful if the Prime Minister were made aware of the adjustments to the Soviet position in the START talks which may be required as a result of Andropov's 3 May speech.

Paragraph 7

If the Prime Minister is to refer to the possibility of "an early outline framework agreement on START" I believe that she will need a rather fuller description of what would be involved than is provided by paragraph 17 of the background brief.

/ Paragraph 8

Paragraph 8

Could more background also be provided on the reference to a new US proposal for arms control in space?

Paragraph 10

On the assumption that the idea of a Summit statement on INF is still alive, it would be helpful if I could have a copy of the draft which has been under consideration.

Finally, I think the Prime Minister would find it helpful to have a brief note on the position of other Summit participants, in particular with regard to the INF talks. Mrs. Thatcher is of course familiar with the American, German and French positions but would, I am sure, find useful a few sentences on the position of Japan, Canada and Italy (the latter with particular reference to a possible change of Government later this month).

B/F
You may think that the simplest way of dealing with these points would be to produce a revised brief. It would be helpful if I could have this by midday on Thursday at the latest. You may want to have a word on the telephone about some of the above points.

I am sending copies of this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

A. J. COLES

R. B. Bone, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.