

cc Mr. Ingham
Mr. Pattison

PRIME MINISTER

The Disarmament Campaign

You will remember that Mr. Foot pressed you on disarmament questions at Question time last week. I think there will be an increasing need for you to deal with the disarmament arguments, both at Question time and in other public comment. The range of possible questions is wide and it will never be easy to guess precisely which aspect will be emphasised by the Opposition.

I therefore asked the FCO to prepare the attached note which falls into two parts:

- (a) Points we should try to get across;
- (b) Points on which the Government might be pressed, together with suggested answers.

You may like to retain this as a standard brief for Question time.

A. J. COLES



24 March 1982



10 DOWNING STREET

file
cc Mr Pattison

From the Private Secretary

21 March 1982

Arms Control and Disarmament

You may have observed that during Prime Minister's Question Time last Thursday the Leader of the Opposition pressed the Prime Minister on the attitude which the Government would be taking towards the UN Special Session on Disarmament. It seems likely that in the coming weeks there will be an increasing need for the Prime Minister to deal, at Question Time and on other public occasions, with this and other disarmament issues. I should be grateful if you could provide by Wednesday, 24 March a succinct statement, couched in language for public use, of:

- a) The points which the Government might attempt to get across on these matters.
- b) The points on which the Government might be pressed and the response which it should make.

It would be helpful if the whole could be expressed in clear language which can be virtually read out at Parliamentary Question Time.

I am copying this letter to David Omand (Ministry of Defence).

A. J. COLES

Francis Richards Esq
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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united nations



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

24 March 1982

AFC has seen,

Dear John,

Arms Control and Disarmament

I attach as requested in your letter of 21 March, notes for the Prime Minister's use under two headings:

- (a) The points which the Government might attempt to get across on these matters.
- (b) The points on which the Government might be pressed and the response which it should make.

Yours ever,

(F N Richards)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing St

ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT

Points to get across

1. The Second United Nations Special Session on Disarmament (7 June - 9 July) will be an important event. It will stimulate action within the UN framework and outside it. We hope that the Session will agree a Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament setting flexible and realistic guidelines for the future. We have put forward our ideas on this to the Committee on Disarmament.
2. Senior representatives of NATO and other government will attend the Special Session and lend their authority to its proceedings. The Prime Minister's intention to speak to the Session is a mark of the importance which the Government attach to it.
3. We are working for specific measures of disarmament which will assure our security at lower levels of armament and risk. We can only achieve this through the negotiation of balanced, equitable and verifiable agreements.
4. The search for arms control and disarmament measures is wider than people realise. Resolutions, petitions and speeches are no substitute for patient negotiation of the detailed issues between the governments actually concerned. Several such negotiations are going on or are in prospect. On intermediate range nuclear weapons we support President Reagan's zero option, ie. the elimination of long-range land-based nuclear missiles from Europe. This is much the most radical proposal in the field. Mr Brezhnev is talking of steps which would leave the Russians with a substantial superiority in this field. We are preparing to do away with such missiles altogether. We welcome President Reagan's commitment to achieving substantial reductions in strategic weapons and we look forward to the opening of negotiations between the USA and USSR.

POINTS ON WHICH THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE PRESSED

Trident and Non-Proliferation

1. There is no provision of the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968 which denies a state the right to maintain and modernise its nuclear deterrent. The obligations in Article VI of the Treaty are met by virtue of the INF talks in Geneva for a reduction in nuclear weapons, and the negotiations in the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva for a Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament.

Trident and Arms Control

2. As a strategic deterrent, the Trident force is irrelevant to the INF negotiations in Geneva since these talks are concerned with sub-strategic, land-based forces. Nor will the British nuclear deterrent be considered in the forthcoming START talks, the objective of which must be to bring about reductions to a level of parity between the United States and the Soviet Union. (If pressed) If circumstances were to change significantly, we would of course be prepared to review our position in regard to arms control. But that point would appear to be a long way off.

Size of Trident Force

3. As with Polaris, the Trident force will be of the minimum size compatible with ensuring effective deterrence. The number of missiles will still represent only a very small proportion of the nuclear arsenals of either the Soviet Union or the United States.

4. Trident D5 will not involve any significant change in the planned total number of warheads associated with our strategic deterrent force in comparison with the original intentions for a force based on the C4 missile system.

/A freeze

A freeze on the deployment of Cruise Missiles in Britain

5. We share the concern for a reduction of nuclear weapons. But the NATO decision of 1979 to modernise with the Cruise and Pershing missiles was taken as a means of bringing the Russians to the negotiating table. In that we have succeeded, We should not now remove the incentive to the Russians to negotiate for the elimination of long-range land-based nuclear weapons in Europe.

Date of NATO Summit (10 June)

6. The determining factor in the choice of date was the need to find a day when the fifteen Heads of State and Government could be gathered in one place (Bonn). There is plenty of time for NATO leaders to attend both the NATO Summit and UNSSD II.

Conflict on purpose between NATO Summit and UNSSD II

7. We see no conflict. NATO is a defensive alliance which has long been active in arms control eg the talks on Mutually Balanced Force Reductions in Vienna.

Coincidence of UNSSD II and British Army Equipment Exhibition (21-25 June)

8. The Government is fully committed to the pursuit of arms control and disarmament through the negotiation of equitable, balanced and verifiable agreements. While such negotiations continue, sovereign states have an unquestionable right to self-defence; we claim this right for ourselves and it would be inconsistent to deny it to others. Industrialised countries like the UK are recognised as traditional sources of supply by those states which are unable to meet their own security needs. There is no inconsistency in the coincidence of the two events.

Addition to Defensive Points

9. Will the Government put forth proposals to the Special Session as their predecessors did in 1978?

We will put ideas to the Special Session for better progress in the negotiation of specific measures . While the Session cannot itself negotiate measures we hope it will act as a spur to the negotiators.