

Subject

cc: Madsen  
ops File

MFJ



cc: FCO

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

27 September 1983

PRIME MINISTER'S  
PERSONAL MESSAGE  
SERIAL No. T.141A/83

Dear Chairman,

I thank you for your message of 27 August on the Geneva talks on intermediate range nuclear forces (INF) and for sending me the text of your Pravda interview,

In response I must at once emphasise the British Government's sincere desire that the negotiations in Geneva should succeed. It is still possible to reach agreement to ban completely those weapons on both sides which are of particular concern - the SS20s, SS4s and SS5s on your side and the Cruise and Pershing 11 missiles on NATO's side. If such an agreement can be reached by the end of this year NATO need never deploy any of the new missiles.

I note with interest your statement that, in the context of an overall agreement, you would be prepared to destroy SS20 missiles now stationed in the western part of the Soviet Union. As you know we had been under the impression that you had intended only to move those weapons to Soviet Asia. This was unacceptable to us, firstly because these mobile missiles could quickly be moved back again to Europe in a time of crisis and second because we had no wish to increase the number of weapons facing our friends in Asia. We hope you will

/expand

DSG

expand upon your proposal at the negotiations in Geneva and also address the important question of how destruction of missiles would be verified.

But I believe that your message reveals some misunderstanding of the basic security requirements which underlie NATO's position in the INF talks. The security of Western Europe demands that the Soviet Union and the United States are permitted equal numbers of intermediate range nuclear forces. It is simply not possible for us to accept that you should maintain a monopoly of missiles of this range while insisting that the Americans should not be allowed to install a single new missile. The problem of the disparity in these forces became acute for us when in the late 1970s the Soviet Union began the massive build-up of SS20s, for which we could see no defensive purpose, at a time when, as now, NATO had no comparable missiles. We were thus forced to modernise our forces. To do so NATO planned to install Cruise and Pershing 11 missiles but we have always made it clear that there would be no increase in the number of NATO's warheads as a result of this. Thus, the deployment of new warheads would be accompanied by the withdrawal of old.

We said from the start that we would review the plans if we achieved concrete results in arms control negotiations. Our preference would still be that there should be no missiles of this type on either side. As long as this solution is not acceptable to you, we and our allies will pursue an interim agreement: but this will have to respect the principle of balance between yourselves and the Americans.

It follows from what I have said that NATO cannot accept that account should be taken of the strategic nuclear forces of Britain in the INF negotiations. This is a position unanimously agreed by NATO since 1979 for reasons of the security of the Alliance as a whole. That our nuclear forces

/in question

in question are strategic was acknowledged by the Soviet Union itself during the SALT talks. They have no place in negotiations on intermediate range weapons, where we need to address the problems of the Soviet and American ground-launched weapons which are of such concern to both sides.

I must say in all frankness that it is difficult to understand your preoccupations with British strategic weapons. They represent a tiny fraction of yours (the British deterrent is less than three per cent of the size of your strategic missile and bomber force). In that they constitute our ultimate national deterrent they are weapons of last resort which are in no sense comparable to your SS20 force. They are the minimum necessary for effective deterrence. But it is worth adding that we are not trying to claim that British nuclear weapons should never be relevant to arms control. If Soviet and United States strategic arsenals were to be very substantially reduced and no significant changes had occurred in Soviet defensive capabilities, Britain would of course want to review her position and to consider how best she could contribute to arms control in the light of the reduced threat. But I must repeat that British nuclear strategic forces can have no place in any current negotiations at Geneva.

I note with disappointment what you say in your message about Soviet intentions to take "counter-measures" following any new NATO deployments. If by this you have in mind steps towards increasing the nuclear arms race, that, as you say yourself, would be in nobody's interest.

For our part we shall remain committed to the search for arms control measures which are balanced and can be verified properly and which thus protect the security of both sides.

/If it is

If it is necessary for NATO to begin deployment of the new weapons by the end of this year, this can be discontinued or reversed at any time that a satisfactory agreement is reached. But, I repeat, our hope remains that there can still be an agreement this year which makes it unnecessary for NATO to begin deployment.

Yours sincerely  
Margaret Thatcher.

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Mr. Yu. V. Andropov.

PRIME MINISTER

INF: YOUR LETTER TO ANDROPOV

You will remember that you approved a reply but ~~that~~ agreed that it should be discussed with the French and the Americans.

This has now been done. Ideally, we should now instruct Moscow to deliver the reply.

I attach the text. The only section that you need look at again is the sidelined one on the last page. This concerns the British deterrent. It has been changed only very slightly, to meet American concerns that the previous wording could have been misunderstood to imply a readiness to have British nuclear systems included in the current START negotiations.

If you agree the wording (and I am sure it is alright), the Foreign Secretary will use this formula in his speech to the UN General Assembly tomorrow.

Agree?

*Agreed mb*

A. J. C.

27 September, 1983

RESTRICTED

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10 October 1983

PRIME MINISTER'S LETTER TO MR. ANDROPOV

You earlier arranged for the text of the Prime Minister's reply to Mr. Andropov's message of 27 August to be delivered in Moscow.

I now enclose the signed version and should be grateful if you would arrange for its delivery.

A. J. COLE

Roger Bone, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

RESTRICTED



10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

Letter to Andropov

You approved this text which  
was delivered in Rosnow while  
we were in North America.

2. We should now send  
a signed version (which we  
shall date 27 September)

"Lea Chaima"

A. S. C. <sup>157</sup>/<sub>10</sub>.

ANDROPOV

He now says that he agrees to negotiate towards an equal number of warheads on intermediate range nuclear weapons.

NATO has always wanted that. But we prefer no such warheads on either side.

If the Russians are signalling that they will now negotiate seriously in Geneva, I welcome that.

But we must be careful. There are a lot of ambiguities in Andropov's statement which will have to be cleared up in Geneva.

His statement that the British and French strategic deterrents should be included is completely unacceptable.

There is no difference between these weapons and the enormous number of American and Soviet strategic weapons which are excluded from the INF talks. It is nonsensical to include them. Why include our submarine-based deterrents but not the Russian?

The Russian tactic is transparent. They want to include the British and French warheads, match them with an equal number of Soviet SS20s and so keep a monopoly of ground-launched intermediate-range missiles in Europe.

/ If we



If we fall for this, the end result will be that the Russians have modernised INF weapons in Europe and the West have none. We shall not fall for it.

16-145

27.9.83 ?

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File No. ....

OUTWARD

Security Classification

CONFIDENTIAL

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TELEGRAM

Precedence

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(Restrictive Prefix) .....

(Security Class.) CONFIDENTIAL .....

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Distribution:—

[TEXT]

YOUR TEL NOS 286 AND 287: INF.

FOLLOWING FOR BONE FROM COLES.

THE PRIME MINISTER HAS APPROVED HER REPLY TO ANDROPOV.

PLEASE INSTRUCT MOSCOW TO DELIVER IT.

THE PRIME MINISTER NOTES THAT IN HIS SPEECH TO THE UNCA

ON 28 SEPTEMBER THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY WILL BE

DRAWING ON THE WORDING ABOUT THE BRITISH STRATEGIC DETERRENT.

Copies to:—

SECRET

SECRET

FM FCO 261453Z SEP 83

TO FLASH OTTAWA

TELEGRAM NUMBER 286 OF 26 SEPTEMBER

INFO IMMEDIATE UKMIS NEW YORK (FOR PRIVATE SECRETARY).

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FOLLOWING PERSONAL FOR COLES (PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY) FROM BONE

INF

1. I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU DID NOT SEE, BEFORE YOUR DEPARTURE, MY LETTER OF 23 SEPTEMBER ENCLOSING A SLIGHTLY REVISED DRAFT OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S REPLY TO ANDROPOV.
2. THE REVISED DRAFT, CLEARED WITH THE FRENCH AND THE AMERICANS, IS IN MIFT. PARA 3 BELOW EXPLAINS THE REASONS FOR THE CHANGES FROM THE VERSION ENCLOSED IN YOUR LETTER TO ME OF 14 SEPTEMBER.
- 3.(I) IN THE FOURTH PARAGRAPH, SECOND SENTENCE THE VERSION ENCLOSED WITH YOUR LETTER READ 'THE SECURITY OF WESTERN EUROPE DEMANDS THAT THERE IS A BALANCE BETWEEN SOVIET AND AMERICAN INTER-MEDIATE RANGE NUCLEAR FORCES'. WE SUGGEST THAT THE REVISED FORMULATION REFLECTS MORE CLEARLY THE NATO POSITION ON THE NEED FOR EQUAL GLOBAL CEILINGS BETWEEN THE AMERICANS AND THE RUSSIANS.  
(II) IN THE LAST SENTENCE OF THE SAME PARAGRAPH, WE HAVE SUBSTITUTED THE WORD 'WARHEADS' FOR 'WEAPONS' AND THE WORD 'ACCOMPANIED' FOR 'MATCHED'. BOTH THESE MINOR CHANGES ARE FOR THE SAKE OF ACCURACY, PARTICULARLY GIVEN THAT THE WARHEADS TO BE REMOVED WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE FROM SHORTER RANGE SYSTEMS.  
(III) IN THE 7TH PARAGRAPH, THE 5TH SENTENCE IN THE VERSION ENCLOSED WITH YOUR LETTER READ '... NOT TRYING TO CLAIM THAT BRITISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS SHOULD NEVER BE RELEVANT TO ANY ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS'. THE FINAL SENTENCE OF THE PARAGRAPH READ '..... HAVE NO PLACE IN ANY NEGOTIATIONS ABOUT INTERMEDIATE RANGE WEAPONS'. THE AMERICANS WERE ANXIOUS THAT THIS WORDING MIGHT BE MISTAKENLY MISUNDERSTOOD TO IMPLY A READINESS TO HAVE BRITISH NUCLEAR SYSTEMS INCLUDED IN THE CURRENT

START NEGOTIATIONS. THE REVISED VERSION REMOVES ALL GROUNDS FOR DOUBT.

SECRET

4. MY LETTER OF 23 SEPTEMBER RECORDS THE FOREIGN SECRETARY'S SUGGESTIONS THAT, WHETHER OR NOT THE PRIME MINISTER WISHES TO PUBLISH ANY OF HER REPLY TO ANDROPOV AS SUCH, THERE WILL BE A NEED TO ADOPT A STANDARD PUBLIC LINE IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF BRITISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN RELATION TO ARMS CONTROL, WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO FURTHER INTER-DEPARTMENTAL WORK ON THIS SUBJECT, COMMISSIONED FOLLOWING RECENT MINISTERIAL DISCUSSION. HE CONSIDERS THAT THE FORMULATION OF UK SYSTEMS IN THE DRAFT REPLY TO ANDROPOV, AS NOW ACCEPTABLE TO THE AMERICANS AND THE FRENCH, WOULD SERVE THIS PURPOSE WELL FOR THE TIME BEING. HE WOULD THEREFORE PROPOSE TO DRAW ON THIS WORDING IN HIS OWN SPEECH TO THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON 28 SEPTEMBER.

5. IT WOULD THEREFORE BE DESIRABLE FOR THE REPLY TO ANDROPOV TO BE DELIVERED IN MOSCOW IN ADVANCE OF DELIVERY OF THE UNGA SPEECH. GRATEFUL THEREFORE TO KNOW WHETHER THE PRIME MINISTER IS CONTENT WITH THE REVISED DRAFT. IF SO, WE WOULD PROPOSE TO INSTRUCT THE EMBASSY IN MOSCOW TO DELIVER IT, MAKING CLEAR THAT THE SIGNED TOP COPY WILL FOLLOW.

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GRS 893

SECRET

FM F C O 261453Z SEP 83

TO FLASH OTTAWA

TELEGRAM NUMBER 287 OF 26 SEPTEMBER 1983,

~~INFO~~ IMMEDIATE UKMIS NEW YORK,

FOLLOWING PERSONAL FOR COLES (PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY) FROM BONE  
MIPT : INF

1. FOLLOWING IS REVISED DRAFT OF PRIME MINISTER'S REPLY TO  
ANDROPOV.

BEGINS: I THANK YOU FOR YOUR MESSAGE OF 27 AUGUST ON THE GENEVA  
TALKS ON INTERMEDIATE RANGE NUCLEAR FORCES (INF) AND FOR SENDING  
ME THE TEXT OF YOUR PRAVDA INTERVIEW.

IN RESPONSE I MUST AT ONCE EMPHASISE THE BRITISH  
GOVERNMENT'S SINCERE DESIRE THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS IN GENEVA SHOULD  
SUCCEED. IT IS STILL POSSIBLE TO REACH AGREEMENT TO BAN  
COMPLETELY THOSE WEAPONS ON BOTH SIDES WHICH ARE OF PARTICULAR  
CONCERN - THE SS20S, SS4S AND SS5S ON YOUR SIDE AND THE CRUISE  
AND PERSHING II MISSILES ON NATO'S SIDE. IF SUCH AN AGREEMENT  
CAN BE REACHED BY THE END OF THIS YEAR NATO NEED NEVER DEPLOY  
ANY OF THE NEW MISSILES.

I NOTE WITH INTEREST YOUR STATEMENT THAT, IN THE CONTEXT OF  
AN OVERALL AGREEMENT, YOU WOULD BE PREPARED TO DESTROY SS20  
MISSILES NOW STATIONED IN THE WESTERN PART OF THE SOVIET UNION.  
AS YOU KNOW WE HAD BEEN UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT YOU HAD  
INTENDED ONLY TO MOVE THOSE WEAPONS TO SOVIET ASIA. THIS WAS  
UNACCEPTABLE TO US, FIRSTLY BECAUSE THESE MOBILE MISSILES COULD  
QUICKLY BE MOVED BACK AGAIN TO EUROPE IN A TIME OF CRISIS AND  
SECOND BECAUSE WE HAD NO WISH TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF WEAPONS  
FACING OUR FRIENDS IN ASIA. WE HOPE YOU WILL EXPAND UPON YOUR  
PROPOSAL AT THE NEGOTIATIONS IN GENEVA AND ALSO ADDRESS THE  
IMPORTANT QUESTION OF HOW DESTRUCTION OF MISSILES WOULD BE  
VERIFIED.

SECRET

BUT I BELIEVE THAT YOUR MESSAGE REVEALS SOME MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE BASIC SECURITY REQUIREMENTS WHICH UNDERLIE NATO'S POSITION IN THE INF TALKS. THE SECURITY OF WESTERN EUROPE DEMANDS THAT THE SOVIET UNION AND THE UNITED STATES ARE PERMITTED EQUAL NUMBERS OF INTERMEDIATE RANGE NUCLEAR FORCES. IT IS SIMPLY NOT POSSIBLE FOR US TO ACCEPT THAT YOU SHOULD MAINTAIN A MONOPOLY OF MISSILES OF THIS RANGE WHILE INSISTING THAT THE AMERICANS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO INSTALL A SINGLE NEW MISSILE. THE PROBLEM OF THE DISPARITY IN THESE FORCES BECAME ACUTE FOR US WHEN IN THE LATE 1970S THE SOVIET UNION BEGAN THE MASSIVE BUILD-UP OF SS20S, FOR WHICH WE COULD SEE NO DEFENSIVE PURPOSE, AT A TIME WHEN, AS NOW, NATO HAD NO COMPARABLE MISSILES. WE WERE THUS FORCED TO MODERNISE OUR FORCES. TO DO SO NATO PLANNED TO INSTALL CRUISE AND PERSHING II MISSILES BUT WE HAVE ALWAYS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THERE WOULD BE NO INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF NATO'S WARHEADS AS A RESULT OF THIS. THUS, THE DEPLOYMENT OF NEW WARHEADS WOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE WITHDRAWAL OF OLD.

WE SAID FROM THE START THAT WE WOULD REVIEW THE PLANS IF WE ACHIEVED CONCRETE RESULTS IN ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS. OUR PREFERENCE WOULD STILL BE THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO MISSILES OF THIS TYPE ON EITHER SIDE. AS LONG AS THIS SOLUTION IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO YOU, WE AND OUR ALLIES WILL PURSUE AN INTERIM AGREEMENT: BUT THIS WILL HAVE TO RESPECT THE PRINCIPLE OF BALANCE BETWEEN YOURSELVES AND THE AMERICANS.

IT FOLLOWS FROM WHAT I HAVE SAID THAT NATO CANNOT ACCEPT THAT ACCOUNT SHOULD BE TAKEN OF THE STRATEGIC NUCLEAR FORCES OF BRITAIN IN THE INF NEGOTIATIONS. THIS IS A POSITION UNANIMOUSLY AGREED BY NATO SINCE 1979 FOR REASONS OF THE SECURITY OF THE ALLIANCE AS A WHOLE. THAT OUR NUCLEAR FORCES IN QUESTION ARE STRATEGIC WAS ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE SOVIET UNION ITSELF DURING THE SALT TALKS. THEY HAVE NO PLACE IN NEGOTIATIONS ON INTERMEDIATE RANGE WEAPONS, WHERE WE NEED TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS OF THE SOVIET AND AMERICAN GROUND-LAUNCHED WEAPONS WHICH ARE OF SUCH CONCERN TO BOTH SIDES.

I MUST SAY IN ALL FRANKNESS THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO UNDER-  
STAND YOUR PREOCCUPATIONS WITH BRITISH STRATEGIC WEAPONS. THEY  
REPRESENT A TINY FRACTION OF YOURS (THE BRITISH DETERRENT IS  
LESS THAN THREE PER CENT OF THE SIZE OF YOUR STRATEGIC MISSILE  
AND BOMBER FORCE). IN THAT THEY CONSTITUTE OUR ULTIMATE NATIONAL  
DETERRENT THEY ARE WEAPONS OF LAST RESORT WHICH ARE IN NO SENSE  
COMPARABLE TO YOUR SS20 FORCE. THEY ARE THE MINIMUM NECESSARY  
FOR EFFECTIVE DETERRENCE. BUT IT IS WORTH ADDING THAT WE ARE  
NOT TRYING TO CLAIM THAT BRITISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS SHOULD NEVER BE  
RELEVANT TO ARMS CONTROL. IF SOVIET AND UNITED STATES STRATEGIC  
ARSENALS WERE TO BE VERY SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED AND NO SIGNIFICANT  
CHANGES HAD OCCURED IN SOVIET DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES, BRITAIN  
WOULD OF COURSE WANT TO REVIEW HER POSITION AND TO CONSIDER HOW  
BEST SHE COULD CONTRIBUTE TO ARMS CONTROL IN THE LIGHT OF THE  
REDUCED THREAT. BUT I MUST REPEAT THAT BRITISH NUCLEAR STRATEGIC  
FORCES CAN HAVE NO PLACE IN ANY CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS AT GENEVA.

I NOTE WITH DISAPPOINTMENT WHAT YOU SAY IN YOUR MESSAGE  
ABOUT SOVIET INTENTIONS TO TAKE QUOTE COUNTER-MEASURES UNQUOTE  
FOLLOWING ANY NEW NATO DEPLOYMENTS. IF BY THIS YOU HAVE IN MIND  
STEPS TOWARDS INCREASING THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE, THAT, AS YOU SAY  
YOURSELF, WOULD BE IN NOBODY'S INTEREST.

FOR OUR PART WE SHALL REMAIN COMMITTED TO THE SEARCH FOR  
ARMS CONTROL MEASURES WHICH ARE BALANCED AND CAN BE VERIFIED  
PROPERLY AND WHICH THUS PROTECT THE SECURITY OF BOTH SIDES. IF  
IT IS NECESSARY FOR NATO TO BEGIN DEPLOYMENT OF THE NEW WEAPONS  
BY THE END OF THIS YEAR, THIS CAN BE DISCONTINUED OR REVERSED  
AT ANY TIME THAT A SATISFACTORY AGREEMENT IS REACHED. BUT, I  
REPEAT, OUR HOPE REMAINS THAT THERE CAN STILL BE AN AGREEMENT  
THIS YEAR WHICH MEAKES IT UNNECESSARY FOR NATO TO BEGIN  
DEPLOYMENT. ENDS

HOWE

NNNN

SECRET



*Ajcov*

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

23 September 1983

*Repl sent from Canada.*

*3.10*

*f.c.*

*Law 2.1.*

Mr Andropov's Message to the Prime Minister about INF

Thank you for your letter of 14 September. *see Pt 3*

We have now cleared the proposed reply to Mr Andropov with the French and the Americans. It has been amended very slightly in deference to the views of the latter, as described in paragraph 3(c) below.

Thus our only remaining textual comments, which are agreed with MOD, are as follows: -

- (a) In the fourth paragraph we would prefer the second sentence to read 'the security of Western Europe demands that the Soviet Union and the United States are permitted equal numbers of intermediate range nuclear forces'. We believe that this formulation reflects more clearly the NATO position on the need for equal global ceilings between the Americans and the Russians.
- (b) In the last sentence of the same paragraph we should substitute the word 'warheads' for 'weapons' and the word 'accompanied' for 'matched'. Both these minor changes are for the sake of accuracy, particularly given that the warheads to be removed will almost certainly be from shorter range systems.
- (c) In the seventh paragraph delete the words 'any' and 'negotiations' from the fifth sentence. Amend the final sentence to read 'But I must repeat that British strategic nuclear forces can have no place in any current negotiations at Geneva'. The Americans were anxious that the original formulation should not be mistakenly understood to imply a readiness to have British nuclear systems included in the current START negotiations.

/The Foreign



SECRET



The Foreign Secretary believes that, whether or not the Prime Minister wishes to publish any of her reply to Andropov as such, there will be a need to adopt a standard public line in response to questions about the future of British nuclear weapons in relation to arms control, without prejudice to further interdepartmental work on this subject commissioned following recent Ministerial discussion. He considers that the formulation in the draft reply to Andropov, as now acceptable to the French and the Americans, would serve this purpose well for the time being. He proposes to draw on this wording in his own speech to the UN General Assembly on 28 September, the text of which has been sent separately to No 10. No doubt others concerned will also wish to use it in any public references or written material for use in the public debate.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (MOD) and David Goodall (Cabinet Office). I enclose a copy of the draft reply with the above amendments written in for ease of reference.

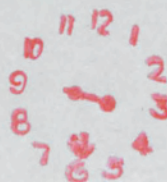
*Yours*  
*R B Bone*

(R B Bone)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street

SECRET

23 SEP 1983





Aycov

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

23 September 1983

Repl sent from Canada.

AH 3.10

f.c.

Jaw 2.10,

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*Yours*  
*R B Bone*

(R B Bone)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street

SECRET

23 SEP 1983

