



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

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Jan Shaw

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Soviet Attitude to INF Negotiations

The Prime Minister may wish to be aware, in the light of her forthcoming discussions at the Anglo-German Summit, of the latest indications from the INF negotiations in Geneva about Soviet intentions there. For some time now, in discussing the future work schedule of the negotiations, the Russians have been agreeing to future meetings in Geneva on a more or less week by week basis within the current round, avoiding committing themselves to more than a few days ahead. Earlier this week they gave the clearest hints so far that their attendance at the INF negotiating table in Geneva would continue only so long as no cruise missiles had arrived in Europe; and that they expected that the first cruise missile deliveries will be to the UK. If we take this linkage at face value, it means that the Russians may be expected to walk out from the first INF plenary scheduled after the arrival of cruise missiles at Greenham Common, which would be Thursday 17 November.

In discussion with Herr Kohl, therefore, we suggest that the Prime Minister might underline the way in which a Soviet reaction of this kind could be turned to Western advantage. The West will be able to point to the contrast between the Soviet desire to impress Western opinion with the reasonableness of the Soviet approach to negotiations and their abrupt refusal to continue to talk. She might point out that the whole credibility of the Soviet negotiating position would be eroded by the fact that, while expecting the US to take seriously the latest elements formulated publicly by Mr Andropov (in his Pravda interview on 27 October), the Russians had refused to do us the courtesy of remaining at the negotiating table to answer Western queries about the Soviet position. We take it that the Germans would agree that this contrasts sharply with the readiness of the US, with Alliance backing, to negotiate seriously for two years notwithstanding the deployment of an extra Soviet SS20 once every five days throughout that period.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram in the Ministry of Defence and to David Goodall in the Cabinet Office.

Jan Shaw
[Signature]

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