

CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister's

John Clerk

Foreign and Commonwealth Office 18.11.83



London SW1A 2AH

18 November 1983

John Clerk

MS

INF Negotiations: Soviet Manoeuvring

The Soviet Ambassador called on Mr Luce on 18 November to talk about the informal ideas which were floated in Geneva by the Soviet negotiator on 13 November. Under these ideas the number of SS20s facing Europe would be reduced to 122, a level somewhat lower than anything the Russians have already offered, but no Pershing II or cruise missiles would be allowed. The Americans briefed us in detail on the exchange very soon after it happened and said that having set them out, the Soviet negotiator asked the American, Nitze, to put them forward as his own. Other Allied Governments agree that the ideas are quite unacceptable. Following the leak of part of them by Chancellor Kohl on 17 November, we and other Foreign Ministries have been making this clear publicly.

Mr Popov, as the enclosed record shows, was adamant that the ideas came originally from Nitze and not the Russians. The Russians, he said, had expressed interest and the hope that they would see formal proposals containing them. The Soviet motive for turning the truth on its head is not clear yet. It is just possible that following the leak of the ideas by Chancellor Kohl, the Soviet negotiator and his backers in Moscow wished to protect themselves from others in the Soviet leadership who would conceivably have been opposed to the ideas. But this does not seem very likely. Our best guess at present is that the Russians are planning to publicise their claim that Nitze has put forward positive ideas when they leave the negotiating table in Geneva. They could allege that despite every effort by themselves, and even by the US negotiator, to reach a reasonable agreement, Washington had blocked all progress.

We know that the Russians have taken parallel action in Bonn and we expect them to act also in the capitals of the INF basing countries.

Mr Popov did not mention Greenham Common. Soviet statements in Moscow about INF are also avoiding any critical reference to the arrival of the first cruise missiles. This fits with the Soviet interest in focusing all attention on the arrival of Pershing II missiles in Germany next week.

/I am

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL



The Foreign Secretary has not yet seen this letter or enclosure: I shall be submitting a copy to him in parallel this evening.

I am also sending a copy of this letter to Richard Mottram in Mr Heseltine's Office.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'R B Bone'.

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

SUMMARY RECORD OF CALL ON MR LUCE BY THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR, MR POPOV,
ABOUT INF AT NOON ON 18 NOVEMBER

1. Mr Popov said he was instructed to inform the Prime Minister urgently and confidentially that in Geneva the US negotiator had expressed to the Soviet negotiator some considerations about a possible compromise over the main outstanding issues.
2. The essence of Nitze's suggestion was that the United States would forego deployment of all 572 Pershing II and cruise missiles if the Soviet Union would liquidate a corresponding number of its missiles, carrying 572 warheads. According to Nitze's calculations the Soviet Union would retain 122-127 SS20s which would approximately equate to the medium range missiles of the other, non-American, Allies. The question of what should be done about a possible increase in the forces of those other Allies would be left to other negotiations, for instance START.
3. Nitze had been told by the Soviet negotiator that the Soviet Union would be prepared to consider these ideas if they were officially tabled. At the same time he confirmed the amendments to the Soviet negotiating position put forward by Andropov in his Pravda interview of 27 October.
4. The Americans had not reacted officially to the Pravda interview. Instead the US delegation had officially tabled one clarification of the offer of an "interim agreement": a figure of 420 "missiles." Thus the Americans reaffirmed their plans to deploy missiles while proposing that the Soviet Union should disarm unilaterally. Whether or not there was an agreement, and whether or not the talks continued, depended entirely on the US side. The Russians had expressed their interest in Nitze's ideas and given the United States an opportunity to show goodwill and a serious interest in an agreement.
5. Mr Luce stressed the British Government's strong commitment to the search for balanced and verifiable arms control agreements. In their view these matters had to be discussed at the talks in Geneva

/where

where they would be put to the test. On the substance of an agreement the British concern was to avoid a monopoly for either side in classes of weapon under discussion. He hoped that the Russians would pursue the talks vigorously in Geneva. Would they continue to negotiate there?

6. Mr Popov said the Russians sought an agreement and had never aimed to have a monopoly in any kind of arms. The Soviet wish for the negotiations to continue had been proved through the Soviet proposals tabled. The British Government had acknowledged that a number of these as serious proposals. The Soviet Union was prepared to continue on condition that the other side was taking the negotiations seriously but they did not want to talk for the sake of talking or only to provide a cover for NATO's deployments.

7. The US delegation had taken a step backwards by repeating an unacceptable proposal officially very soon after Nitze had proposed unofficially his interesting ideas.

8. Mr Luce undertook to study what Mr Popov had said. The importance of the Geneva negotiations was paramount and the world would not understand if they were broken off. Mr Cartledge asked how the British Government should interpret the fact that ideas which they had understood to have been Soviet ones were being described by Mr Popov as coming from the Americans. Would these ideas be tabled formally by the Soviet Union at Geneva?

9. Mr Popov was adamant that the ideas put forward unofficially had come from the Americans. Reading from his telegram of instructions he said that the Americans had gone on to put forward officially a proposal which was practically the same as their long-standing one.

10. Mr Cartledge asked if the reference to considering increases in third country systems in the course of other negotiations such as START meant the Soviet Union accepted that British and French missiles were strategic. Mr Popov replied that they did not; there had been no change in the Soviet position about British forces. But Nitze's ideas could open up the way to the inclusion of British and French

/forces

CONFIDENTIAL

Sub



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

21 November 1983

INF NEGOTIATIONS: SOVIET MANOEUVRING

The Prime Minister has noted the contents of your letter of 18 November.

A. J. COLES

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

CONFIDENTIAL

g