

etc ①

Prime Minister.



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Agree in principle to  
telephone Mr. Lubbers on  
16 May, subject to the  
outcome of the NATO meeting  
on 15 May? A.F.C. 11/5

11 May, 1984

BF

Await further  
advice from F.C.O.  
A.F.C. 18/5

How to do

Handwritten initials

INF Deployment

In your letter of 10 May you recorded the Prime Minister's concern over the possibly serious erosion of the NATO decision on INF deployment; and asked for the Foreign Secretary's advice on the advisability of a direct approach by the Prime Minister to the Dutch Prime Minister, Mr Lubbers.

Sir Geoffrey Howe fully shares the Prime Minister's concern. HM Ambassador at The Hague has reported that no new ideas for resolving the Dutch Government's difficulties with Parliament over the INF issue have emerged, that there is an increasing polarisation of views both within the Coalition and in Parliament, and that the prospects for a compromise which would satisfy both Dutch opinion and the interests of the Alliance are no better than 50/50. In the meantime, the Italian Prime Minister has unhelpfully floated a proposal - for a moratorium on further INF deployments during a resumed US/Soviet negotiation - which can only be interpreted as a concession designed to lure the Russians back to the negotiating table, thus rewarding them for their absence from it. And the Danish Parliament has passed resolutions both calling for the creation of a nuclear free zone in Northern Europe and obliging the Government to re-allocate the outstanding portion of Denmark's financial contribution to the expense of the Alliance's INF deployment programme. Taken together, these developments can only be seen in Moscow as evidence of the progressive unravelling of the NATO 1979 dual-track decision, which only a few months ago seemed to be satisfactorily on course; as an encouraging vindication of the Soviet decision to break off the nuclear arms negotiations; and as a welcome indication that the Alliance is approaching its 35th Anniversary in a state of considerable disarray.

There is to be a meeting of the NATO Special Consultative Group, which coordinates Alliance policies on the INF issue, in Brussels on 15 May. This will give us and like-minded Allies an opportunity to make our objections to Mr Craxi's ideas and to the Danish Parliament's resolutions very clear. It will also enable us to form a clearer picture of the situation in The Hague and to compare our assessment of it with the Americans.

Sir Geoffrey Howe believes that a personal message from the Prime Minister to Mr Lubbers, preferably on the telephone, would be valuable as a means of impressing on him the wider implications of what Dutch Ministers are too prone to regard as a purely local difficulty.



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We know that Mr Lubbers will be engaged in a round of meetings next week with key Ministers and Parliamentarians and the message could have a salutary impact on his approach to them. This would argue in favour of an early message. On balance, however, Sir Geoffrey Howe shares Sir Philip Mansfield's view that it would be best to await the outcome of the SCG meeting on 15 May and to make the approach on, / for example, the following day. I enclose a speaking note embodying the points on which Sir Geoffrey suggests the Prime Minister might draw if she agrees to speak to Mr Lubbers. I shall let you have a report on the outcome of the SCG meeting as soon as it is over so that the speaking note can be amended, if necessary, to take account of that.

I am copying this to Richard Mottram (MOD).

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R B Bone', written in a cursive style.

(R B Bone)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street

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SPEAKING NOTE

Points to Make

1. I have greatly appreciated the way in which your officials have kept us in London informed of developments over your Government's approach to INF deployment in the Netherlands. I am very well aware of the scale and difficulty of the political problems which you face on this issue. I and my colleagues have been following developments with sympathy and concern.

2. I want you to know of the overriding importance which we attach to preserving the integrity of the 1979 dual-track decision. Any derogation from or dilution if it will be seen in Moscow as evidence of an erosion of Alliance resolve. The Russians will regard this as a vindication of their walk-out from the INF talks. It will encourage them to stay away from the negotiating table in the belief that the NATO position will progressively unravel.

3. I am also profoundly concerned about the possibility that the Alliance could be approaching its 35th Anniversary meeting in Washington in a state of obvious disarray, at least on this important issue. I know that you share our strong reservations about the ideas which Mr Craxi put forward recently in Lisbon: but I fear that they will already have done some damage to the image of Alliance unity - and recent resolutions by the Danish Parliament have not helped either. Irresolution can be contagious and I am worried that processes may be set in train which could be hard to arrest.



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4. I do not for one moment under-estimate the problems which you face during the coming days and weeks. But I do urge you, as a friend and Ally, constantly to bear in mind the wider - indeed global - implications of the decisions which may be taken in The Hague in the near future. It is my earnest hope that whatever solution may be found for your immediate problem will be accompanied by a strong re-affirmation of Netherlands support for the 1979 decision and of the need to implement it.



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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

10 May, 1984

INF DEPLOYMENT

BF/ The Prime Minister is concerned that the NATO position on INF deployment is in danger of becoming seriously eroded. She has in mind the doubts about whether the Netherlands Government will decide to go ahead with their deployment programme, the recent unfortunate initiative by the Italian Prime Minister in Lisbon and the recent resolution adopted in the Danish Parliament. On the assumption that the Italians can be dissuaded from pursuing their ideas, it is the Dutch position which is perhaps the most worrying. Mrs. Thatcher will wish to consider again whether she should make any approach to Mr. Lubbers. I should be grateful if you could let me have advice on this matter by the weekend. Should you advise that, for example, the Prime Minister should telephone Mr. Lubbers I should be grateful if you could provide a line to take.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

R. Bone, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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