



Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

I thought you might
look like a note on
this before Tuesday's debate.

London SW1A 2AH

cc AJC
RJ

6 May 1983

A.T.C. G.

Dear Sir,

CSCE Conference/Conference on Disarmament in Europe

As requested in your letter of 5 May, I enclose a background note on the proposal for a Conference on Disarmament in Europe (CDE).

As you will see, the origin of this proposal is rather complex. The result, however, of careful negotiation over the last two to three years is that we now have a provisional mandate for a CDE which establishes four basic criteria, all of which have required concessions on the part of the Soviet Union and her allies, and one of which - the criterion concerning territorial applicability - represents a significant breakthrough for the West. It is not possible to foresee what will be negotiable at the CDE itself, but since the mandate is couched in terms which are beneficial to the West, it will at the very least put us in an excellent position to bring pressure to bear on the East, and if all else fails it will leave the East with the onus of explaining publicly why the eminently sensible measures proposed are not acceptable to them.

Final agreement on a mandate for the CDE is of course still dependent on a successful conclusion of the CSCE Review Meeting as a whole in Madrid. Mr Pym will be minuting separately in due course to the Prime Minister and other OD colleagues on the current state of play in those negotiations.

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

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MADRID CSCE REVIEW MEETING:

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT IN EUROPE (CDE)

1. The Helsinki Final Act contains a short section on 'confidence building measures and certain aspects of security and disarmament'. The measures are very limited and only one (notification of military exercises involving over 25,000 men) is politically binding. Moreover, apart from a strip 250 km in depth, the European territory of the Soviet Union is excluded from the notification area.

2. The origins of the CDE lie in a proposal circulated by the French to all CSCE participants in May 1978. This envisaged a two phase conference covering the whole of Europe of which the first would address the ostensibly simpler and, in the French view, essential step of building mutual confidence; and the second, the more difficult business of force reductions. It would not deal with nuclear weapons and was designed to overcome what the French saw as the deficiencies of the existing and deadlocked Mutual Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) talks in Vienna in which they do not participate (despite having forces stationed in Germany).
3. As originally drafted and because the second phase in particular was relevant to MBFR, the French ideas at first received a cautious reception within the Alliance. There were doubts about damaging the balance of the CSCE process by extracting the security content, in which the Russians have always been

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most interested, for the benefit of a separate negotiation. Members of NATO took the view that the proposals directly affected the Alliance's security interests and should be discussed in NATO. Reluctantly the French acquiesced and the Alliance began detailed discussion of the issues. Some two years later the result was a draft package (CM (80) 63) of confidence and security building measures (CSBMs) endorsed by the Alliance and taking full account of its military security interests. The French also accepted a looser linking between the first and second phases of the Conference with the need for all participants to be satisfied with the outcome of the first phase before moving on to the second. During this period the Warsaw Pact launched their own rival and unsatisfactory proposal for a Conference on Military Detente and Disarmament in Europe (CMDDE).

4. At the CSCE Review meeting in Madrid, the West have consistently supported the French proposal and the four basic criteria for CSBMs which it contains: that they should be military significant, politically binding, verifiable and extend to the whole of Europe up to the Urals. In order to protect the CSCE process itself we have also insisted that the CDE must be part of a balanced outcome for the review meeting as a whole. Although not yet finally agreed the CDE mandate which has resulted from the discussion at Madrid embodies the Western approach, superseding all other proposals. It contains the four basic criteria, all of which involve concessions on the part of the Soviet Union and her allies. The fourth is a significant

/breakthrough



breakthrough for the West. It represents recognition for the first time that the West has a legitimate security interest in the whole of the European part of the Soviet Union. Moreover the Soviet Union's attempt to gain a 'corresponding' concession in the exercise of a droit de regard over Western military activities beyond Europe has been neutralised by the West's insistence that air and sea activities will only be notified when they form a part of otherwise notifiable activities on land. Concern within NATO about overlap between the CDE and MBFR has been met by making the possibility of the second disarmament phase of the CDE dependent on a review of the results of the first phase at the next follow-up meeting (provisionally in Vienna in 1986). Extension of the mandate then would require the agreement of all participants. The provisional date for the opening of the CDE is 15 November 1983 in Stockholm, with a preparatory meeting in Helsinki in October. It would conclude in time for the Vienna review meeting in 1986 to consider its results.

5. CSBMs can be defined as concrete non-reduction measures which set rules for military behaviour and interchange. The aim of the proposed Western package is to enhance stability and security by promoting increased military openness and reducing the scope for misunderstanding of military activity. Examples are exchanges of military information, notification of military manoeuvres in advance, invitations to observers at military exercises, improved communications between governments. They are not intended as a substitute for adequate military defences but if negotiated on a sound basis, as the West has insisted, could make a significant contribution to the reduction of tension



and to increased military security in Europe. What turns out to be negotiable at the CDE will depend on the skill and unity of the West and the pressure that the East can be put under to make concessions, but at the very least we shall have the opportunity to place on the East the onus of explaining publicly why such modest and sensible measures are beyond them.

6. The CDE has the backing of the Alliance as a whole and is warmly supported by many of the Neutral and Non-Aligned countries. Within NATO, the Americans have traditionally been the most sceptical, seeing it as further evidence of European enthusiasm for Arms control talks for their own sake, but they have recently come to appreciate it as a plank in NATO's overall approach to managing relations with the East at a difficult period, post-Afghanistan and in the light of events in Poland. The Germans have always been enthusiastic supporters and now attach particular importance to its reassuring effects on Western public opinion in the context of INF deployment. NATO generally recognises that since 1978 the development of a consensus on the French ideas has been a success for the process of Alliance consultation, that the unity and determination displayed subsequently at Madrid have produced significant concessions from the East, and that the extension of the zone of application for new CSBMs to the whole of the European territory of the Soviet Union marks a real breakthrough for the West, with implications for other negotiations with the Russians.