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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

CDP24x.

20 November 1986

Dear Charles,

Anglo-French Summit: Coordination of UK/French
Conditions for Involvement in Nuclear Arms Control

/ HM Ambassador, Paris has reported in his Telno 1221 (copy enclosed for ease of reference) that, according to the Secretary General at the Elysee, President Mitterrand will wish to define more closely with the Prime Minister the circumstances in which Britain and France might offer to join in the process of nuclear disarmament. The President will reportedly want to see how closely we can agree on our various, and respective conditions; and, separately, to work out a formula to be used at the press conference. The Secretary General has suggested that while the latter need not fully reflect the underlying agreement on our actual conditions, it might draw closer to it over time; and that this could be helpful for British public opinion, not least because it would reflect the position of a socialist President.

/ I enclose at Annex A the respective UK and French conditions for subsequent involvement in the nuclear arms control process. The Foreign Secretary's statement to the UNGA in 1983 has been frequently used over the past three years as the fundamental British position. It is a familiar piece of the public record, and any changes would be swiftly detected in Parliament and by the UK media. It set out two basic conditions for UK involvement: very substantial reductions in Soviet and US strategic arsenals; and no significant changes in Soviet defensive capabilities. If these conditions were met, the UK would wish to review its position and to consider how best it could contribute to arms control "in the light of the reduced threat".

On the other hand, Mitterrand's UNGA speech in 1983 set out a much wider range of conditions, which Chirac confirmed this September remain unchanged. The first condition, implicitly related to nuclear weapons alone, goes somewhat wider than our own since it covers not only "the correction of fundamental difference in terms of type and quantity" between the superpower arsenals and those of the other nuclear powers; it also calls for changes in nuclear doctrine. The second condition emphasises the gap in conventional, chemical and biological forces, without establishing what would need to be

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done for this condition to be met. The third condition brings in not only the UK condition on defensive (anti-missile) capabilities. It also speaks of "the cessation of the escalation in anti-submarine and anti-satellite weapons".

In considering Mitterrand's objectives, it is instructive that in recent weeks the French have been laying even greater emphasis on the current conventional imbalance as an obstacle to nuclear arms control between the US and the Soviet Union. French officials have indicated their opposition to the West's acceptance of the zero-zero option in INF, and the West's pursuit of 50% reductions in strategic arms, while this conventional imbalance exists. In other words, there is a growing inclination in Paris to condition even the priorities in nuclear arms control identified at Camp David on redressing the conventional disparities.

The comparison of the respective positions at present indicate that it will be no easy task to coordinate in private our respective conditions, unless we for our part are to add significantly to our own. It might be possible to keep such additions secret, but the risk of leaks would be considerable. The French for their part would have an interest, as indicated in the way in which they wish to play the press conference, in demonstrating that their own position was increasingly supported by HMG. It is therefore a matter for political judgement whether an unmistakable addition to the UK list of conditions would provoke the sort of unwelcome debate in this country which would outweigh any benefits from closer coordination with the French in this area. In the Foreign Secretary's view, domestic criticism of increased British conditions for our involvement in arms control would not be much assuaged by the argument that French socialists applied similar conditions to their own involvement. There is also the danger that such coordination might lead us down a road the French themselves are evidently ready to follow, towards outright opposition even to the priority areas of nuclear arms control which we ourselves wish to see achieved.

In these circumstances the Foreign Secretary believes that it would be unwise to encourage the French to think that we would be ready to engage with them in the sort of private exercise which the Secretary General has suggested Mitterrand will wish to pursue. On the other hand, he believes that the treatment of the issue at the press conference may present somewhat fewer problems. A suggested form of words for the Prime Minister to use is attached at Annex B. This endeavours

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to trade on our present language to indicate some sympathy with the French approach, without formally adopting their conditions on conventional imbalance etc as the new UK position.

If she agrees with the above, we shall brief HM Embassy accordingly.

I am sending copies of this letter and enclosures to John Howe (MOD) and Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

*Yours ever,
Colin Budd*

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

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ANGLO/FRENCH SUMMIT: UK STATEMENT ON INVOLVEMENT IN
NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL

The President and I, in reviewing recent developments in nuclear arms control, also discussed the potential involvement of our national ^{nuclear} forces of deterrence in any subsequent process of reductions.

We agreed that our long-standing conditions for such involvement remained unchanged. I noted that, provided the conditions set out by the Foreign Secretary at the UNGA in September 1983 were properly met, we would be prepared to review our position and to consider how best we could contribute to arms control in the light of the reduced threat.

I also noted that in recent public statements - and notably in the agreed statement of views which President Reagan and I had endorsed at Camp David the threat to which the nations of Western Europe are exposed comprises not only Soviet nuclear forces but the conventional disparities between East and West: given the need for a stable overall balance at all times, nuclear weapons cannot be dealt with in isolation.

Extract from Foreign Secretary's statement to UNGA, 28 September 1983:

As far as the British deterrent is concerned, we must naturally take into account that our force is a strategic one, and that it represents less than 3 per cent of the strategic nuclear forces available to the United States or to the Soviet Union. It would be absurd as things stand for us to seek to trade reductions with a Super Power. But we have never said "never". On the contrary, we have made it clear that, if Soviet and US strategic arsenals were to be very substantially reduced, and if no significant changes had occurred in Soviet defensive capabilities, Britain would want to review her position and to consider how best she could contribute to arms control in the light of the reduced threat. That remains our position.

Extract from President Mitterrand's speech to UNGA, September 1983

It is time, at this stage of my statement, to come back to strategic nuclear armaments in the world. We cannot reject the idea - and I do not - that the five nuclear Powers should together debate when the time comes a permanent limitation of their strategic systems. We must therefore set out clearly the conditions for progress in this field.

The first of these conditions is the correction of the fundamental difference, in terms of type and quantity, between the armaments of the two major Powers and those of the others, and the difference between a country that might use them to assert its power and a country which might be forced to make use of them for its own survival.

The second condition flows from the wide gap between conventional forces, particularly in Europe, a gap which has become even wider, I fear, because of the existence of chemical and biological weapons,



the manufacture and stockpiling of which must be prohibited by a convention.

The third condition is the cessation of the escalation in anti-missile, anti-submarine and anti-satellite weapons.

Extract from M. Chirac's speech to UNGA, 24 September 1986

The President of the French Republic recalled in 1983 from this very rostrum the conditions which France has set for its participation in the nuclear disarmament process when the time comes. I should like to repeat here that these conditions will not change and that France will not agree to its forces being taken into account, directly or indirectly, in negotiations to which it is not a party.



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1. The President and I have discussed defence relations between our two countries. These are close, reflecting our shared interests as members of the NATO Alliance and as nuclear powers. ^{let me} mention

~~among other things~~
just five examples

- Monsieur Giraud's successful visit to the UK in September;
- Ship visits (44 by French Navy vessels to the UK, 56 by HM ships to France last year);
- Joint exercises by all three services;
- Collaboration on the production of defence equipment, bilaterally and with others, including joint examination of airborne early warning systems;
- Wide-ranging exchanges on broad strategic and arms control issues.

We reaffirmed the importance of continuing to develop this kind of close cooperation between ^{us} ~~our two countries~~ ~~at a time of~~. It serves the interests of our own security and of the security of the whole of Western Europe.

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