

PRIME MINISTER

VISIT TO MOSCOW: ARMS CONTROL

You have a meeting tomorrow to go through the arms control issues which will arise during your visit to Moscow. In addition to Sir Percy Cradock and myself there will be Mr. Fall (FCO) and Mr. Howard Griffiths (MOD).

This note sets out the areas which you ought to cover.

INF

We start from the premise that there is no going back on the zero-zero option in Europe. The concept of an interim agreement leaving each side with a fixed and equal number of intermediate weapons above zero is presumably no longer obtainable. But is it worth pressing Gorbachev on global zero-zero which would suit our strategic interests much better? What counter-arguments is he likely to employ?

On an INF agreement, you will need to cover the following points:

- the siting of the 100 warheads which each side would be allowed to retain. What is the precise formulation to use in your discussions with Gorbachev on the siting of the Soviet warheads? Can you press for agreement to siting of the US warheads in Alaska, with confidence that the US will not subsequently concede this point?
- we presumably endorse fully the US text on verification? Do we have adequate safeguards against conversion of SS-20s, to other purposes, e.g. ASAT weapons?
- what is the basis on which we press for longer-range SRINF (SS12/22 and SS23) to be covered in the agreement? Freeze at present levels? Set ceilings?

Aim of reducing imbalance?

- what do we say about other shorter-range (SRINF) and short-range systems? Separate commitment outside the INF Agreement itself to follow-on negotiations? How should the aim of those negotiations be expressed? We want to eliminate the imbalance in these weapons without getting drawn down the road of eliminating nuclear weapons from Europe altogether.
- how tight a link should we seek to draw with reduction in the imbalance in conventional forces? Should we be seeking a parallel commitment to this as well (if only as a means of avoiding elimination of short-range nuclear weapons)?

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START

- the goal of 50 per cent reductions appears to be accepted by both sides. Presumably there are no technical points which we need to make about the way in which that 50 per cent is constituted.
- we shall however want to avoid endorsing any commitment to reductions beyond 50 per cent or to elimination of ICBMs or to elimination of all nuclear weapons.
- we shall need to repeat in the standard terms our position on the inclusion in any future negotiations of the British nuclear deterrent.
- but the main issue will be the question of linkage to the SDI. Gorbachev will argue that he cannot reduce his ICBMs if the US is about to erect a defence system against them: indeed he will need to increase his offensive missiles to be sure of overcoming the SDI. What is the most effective riposte to this argument? (Presumably it lies in stressing that SDI is a defensive system, that the Soviet Union is anyway

doing its own work in this area and deploying an ever more sophisticated system round Moscow, and that it makes sense to be moving towards deterrence based on a mix of offensive and defensive systems.)

SDI

- Gorbachev will press you to stand by your comments in 1984 about the importance of avoiding an arms race in space. You will wish to remind him of Camp David I which offers useful reassurance on this score. You could also use Robert Conquest's point: since ICBMs pass through space, there are already weapons there.
- but the main points to put to him are your conviction that the US will go ahead with determining feasibility of SDI; and your proposal for milestones for SDI research and testing (which both sides would need to set out), combined with a guarantee not to deploy for a fixed term of years. This would go some way to meet his need to show some restraint on SDI development. But can we put this proposal without a clearer indication of likely US views?
- how far can you go (without betraying the extent of our intelligence) in challenging him about Soviet activity in this area (both space research and upgrading of the Soviet ABM system round Moscow)?

Chemical Weapons

- this was identified at Camp David as a priority. How are we giving expression to that? Is challenge inspection the only serious problem outstanding in the negotiations?
- is it likely that Gorbachev will use the occasion to move the Soviet to (or towards) acceptance of our proposals on challenge inspection? If so, how do we respond?

Conventional Weapons

- what useful points can you make on substance of reductions in conventional weapons? And on the link with reductions in nuclear weapons? Do we prefer percentage reductions or the removal of identified units? Are common ceilings feasible or negotiable?

Nuclear testing

- you will need clear language on our position on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.
- also on steps short of that (ratification of PNE and TTBT) which would limit tests.
- and a line on verification measures.

General

These are all detailed points which may come up in discussion. You also need to take an overall look at what would constitute a useful and positive overall result from your talks on these issues. We must avoid the risk of complicating US/Soviet negotiations, which militates against trying to put down anything in writing. The best we can probably hope for is:

- some clearer degree of understanding with the Russians on the elements of an INF agreement.
- some sign (probably only oblique) of Soviet interest in our ideas for dealing with SDI and thus breaking the link with START, which we could usefully relay to the Americans.
- some recognition that the Russians accept in practice that the step by step approach outlined at Camp David is inherently more practical than the comprehensive package approach tried at Reykjavik.

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- absence of direct and public Soviet criticism of the United Kingdom's position as a major obstacle to progress on arms control.

If this could emerge as a reaffirmation of readiness by the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union to continue to work for arms control agreements covering INF, START, chemical and conventional weapons that would be a considerable step.

Further Work

The upshot of the meeting should be for FCO/MOD to go away with a clear idea of what you want in the detailed briefs; and for me (with Sir Percy Cradock's help) to draw up your actual speaking note for use with Gorbachev.

Background Papers

I also include in this folder:

- Sir Percy Cradock's commentary on my questions.
- the general line that you might take with Gorbachev on arms control questions, which we discussed last week.
- the rather bland note which the Foreign Office sent some weeks ago.

C.D.P.

CHARLES POWELL

17 March 1987

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MR POWELL

17 March 1987

VISIT TO MOSCOW: ARMS CONTROL

1. Thank you for sending me a copy of your draft minute on this subject. I think it covers the field well and most of my points below are commentaries or answers on your text rather than suggestions of change to it.

INF

2. Paragraph 2. I doubt very much whether it is worth pressing Gorbachev on global zero-zero. The Russians insist on retaining some missiles in Siberia in order to counter the US bases in Japan and American carrier-borne forces in the Pacific. They prefer the Americans not to have 100 missiles sited in Alaska because it would make their positions in Siberia more vulnerable. I think the latest compromise suggested is that the Americans would retain the right to put missiles in Alaska but would not actually exercise it. But in general I feel that this is an aspect of the INF agreement we do not want to get involved in.

It seems rather important to me CDP

3. As regards SRINF (SS12/22 and SS23) the basis of our concern is, of course, that they could hit us. Our objective must be freeze and catch up.

4. Our objective must be the same in the case of short range systems, ie we must seek a plateau rather than a plain. You should note recent Soviet objections to anything of this kind: they seek elimination.

5. As regards conventional forces, we cannot attach reductions on these as a condition to any LRINF agreement. We must simply urge, as we did at Camp David II, that reductions in nuclear weapons would increase the importance of eliminating conventional disparities.

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START

6. I have no comment on the questions under this heading.

SDI

7. You asked whether we could put the proposal in your second sub-paragraph without a clearer indication of likely US views. I doubt whether we shall get a much clearer indication and I would not like us to get into a position where we had to seek US permission for venturing into this territory. Strictly it is not for us, but I think the possible prize of Soviet indications of how far they might go towards a compromise of SDI is so great that it justifies a little trespassing.

8. Our material on the Soviet SDI programme is extremely highly classified, but it would be open to us to refer to US claims that the Russians are engaged in research and development work on weapons based on new physical principles and in upgrading their ABM system around Moscow. We could add that these claims are based on national technical means and we have no reason to doubt them.

Chemical Weapons

9. Our latest talks in Washington have brought us much nearer agreement with the Americans on CW issues including challenge inspection, but we cannot negotiate bilaterally with the Russians on the issue. We can only note any new proposals they make.

Conventional Weapons

10. I doubt whether we can go into detail on this. The Prime Minister will probably wish to confine herself to

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general points about the urgency of removing imbalances if we are reducing nuclear weapons.

Nuclear Testing

11. No comments on questions, but we must expect to be assailed by Gorbachev about the Western failure to respond to his numerous initiatives.

General

12. The question you pose in your second sentence is important and we should spend some time on this. I think we might reasonably hope for the first three achievements you list; but I think it is unrealistic to hope for absence of Soviet criticism on our position as a major obstacle to progress on arms control. The latest Tass commentary of 13 March makes this plain. Nor do I think that we could expect joint re-affirmation as in your final paragraph: we could say these things ourselves but in any agreed statement the Russians would insist on adding language on SDI. I think we could certainly claim that the visit had enabled us to clarify our position and the Western position on a number of crucial arms control issues; had enabled us to clarify the Soviet position on the same; and (I hope) that it had shown that there were greater prospects of progress on a number of these issues than might have been supposed before the visit took place. That would be a creditable achievement.

6

PERCY CRADOCK

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