



From: Derek Thomas

Date: 25 March 1987

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- cc PS/Mr Renton
- PS/PUS
- Mr Boyd
- Mr Ratford
- Mr Fall
- Mr Slater
- Mr Gore-Booth
- Mr Lever
- Mr Pakenham
- Mr Dain
- Mr Fowler
- Mr Richardson
- Mr Figgis
- Mr Llewellyn-Smith

Private Secretary

- cc HM Ambassador at
Washington
Paris
Bonn
HM Representative,
UKDEL NATO

QUADRIPARTITE MEETING OF POLITICAL DIRECTORS: LONDON, 25 MARCH

1. The monthly meeting of Quadripartite Political Directors took place in London today under UK chairmanship. It was a productive meeting, without any of the hiccups which characterised meetings earlier this year.

2. The main subjects on the agenda were LRNIF and the problem of follow-on negotiations; SDI/ABMT; conventional arms control; next steps in CSCE; East/West relations generally, and the Prime Minister's visit to Moscow in particular; problems of handling Polish and Yugoslav economic problems; shipping in the Persian Gulf; and the latest escalation of tension in the Aegean. Records covering the major issues will be submitted. Other records will be circulated to those concerned.

3. The Secretary of State may like to have a brief account of the principle points which emerged.

LRNIF AND FOLLOW-ON NEGOTIATIONS

4. There was no daylight between us on the need to have constraints on SRNIF and a US right to match included within an INF agreement, with a clear commitment to follow-on negotiations. The difficulties would arise on what should be covered in the follow-on negotiations. The French wanted to be explicit from the start that third country forces and forward-based systems should be excluded, and that there should be no question of a zero option on SRINF. The rest of us agreed that these were highly desirable objectives for NATO, but doubted whether the Russians would accept them as conditions at the outset of negotiations. Mrs Ridgway pointed out the difficulties which would arise, in follow-on negotiations, on such questions as the right of conversion of P2 missiles and the implications for the shorter end of the range if we insisted strongly on all limits being global. She said that the US had examined all the options they could think of for follow-on negotiations without finding any which would be entirely acceptable. Her conclusion (and possibly Shultz's) was that we might have to be prepared to live with some degree of imbalance in SRNIF if we wanted to avoid complete de-nuclearisation in Europe.

5. We agreed that it was urgent to clarify thinking within NATO on these issues.

Why?

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SDI/ABMT

6. Mrs Ridgway repeated twice that the consultative process would be resumed once the Administration had completed its work on the legal and technical aspects of the ABMT. She also confirmed as clearly as she could that the concept of eliminating ballistic missiles in the context of a ten-year nonwithdrawal agreement had been included because the President continued to attach importance to it, not as a serious negotiating objective (my words, not hers which were more careful).
7. Mrs Ridgway also made it clear that the US side was prepared to discuss predictability with the Russians provided they were convinced that Gorbachev was not simply aiming to cripple SDI. So far the interpretation they were seeking to impose on the ABMT appeared to be designed to do just that.

CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL

8. Mrs Ridgway floated the idea of a Quadripartite group at Mr Fall's level to try to sort out some of the problems which had arisen in this field. The disadvantages (security of the forum, risk of proliferating Quads, need to avoid duplication) all emerged in discussion. Nevertheless, I suggested that a one-off, ad hoc meeting of this kind with a specific mandate to tackle the key problems of substance and procedure which were blocking progress could be useful. My colleagues have taken this idea away to consider urgently.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS

9. We had a somewhat hand-wringing discussion about the dilemmas we faced in the negotiations on a global ban on chemical weapons. The prospect of a Congressional decision to fund the deployment of binary chemical weapons was the primary Western leverage on the Russians to negotiate. If they played their cards skilfully, they could hold up and possibly prevent a Congressional decision. That would take the pressure off. If we then reached an agreement on SRINF involving a Soviet freeze and a US right to match, we risked leaving ourselves in a doubly exposed position: Soviet preponderance in both chemical and SRINF weapons.

10. We saw no easy solutions.

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO MOSCOW

11. I briefed my colleagues in general terms. They were supportive.

12. We looked at a French paper on the need to be more ready to take the initiative in our dealings with the USSR, not simply respond to Soviet initiatives. A number of useful ideas were explored and will be followed up.

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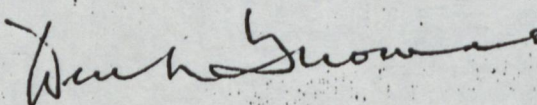
QUADRIPARTITE FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING AT REYKJAVIK

13. I raised the practical problems of the present schedule. All my colleagues thought their Ministers would rule out the possibility of either holding the Quadripartite meeting in Venice or leaving the Venice Summit early. They also thought that while they would recognise the practical problems we had posed, they would attach very considerable importance to finding a way of holding the meeting somehow.

14. In the course of discussion, it emerged that Shultz and Genscher had now decided against trying to return to Berlin from Reykjavik for President Reagan's visit to Berlin. There may therefore be a possibility of shifting the Quadripartite breakfast from 11 to 12 June. Both Mrs Ridgway and Noiville thought their Ministers would accept this option. Von Richthofen was less sure about Genscher but has undertaken to consult.

NEXT MEETING

15. The next meeting of the Quadripartite Political Directors will be held in Paris on 5 May. The French problem thus seems to have been solved.


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