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Secretary of State

Private Secretary

From: Derek Thomas
Date: 6 May 1987cc: PS/Mr Renton
PS/PUS
Mr Braithwaite
Mr Gillmore
Mr Boyd
Mr Munro
Mr Fall
Mr Ratford
Mr Lever
Mr Packenham
Mr Llewellyn-Smith
Mr Figgis
Mr Dain
Mr Gore-Booth
Mrs Leslie①
~~cc (personal)~~
Mr Powell, No. 10② Mr Thomas
May 1987
F/S.MEETING OF QUADRI-PARTITE POLITICAL DIRECTORS, LA CELLE ST CLOUD,
5 MAY.

1. The monthly meeting of quadri-partite Political Directors was held at La Celle St Cloud on 5 May under Noiville's chairmanship. The discussion revealed less sharp differences on SRINF than seemed likely from recent exchanges of telegrams. But in this forum, of course, the dominant influence is the views of Foreign Ministers. No progress was made on the mandates for conventional arms negotiations in Vienna. Details will be reported by telegram. The highlights are set out below.

LR/SRINF

2. This was the most important agenda item. There was full agreement on LRINF: zero, adequate verification, and global if possible. On SRINF, the French position as set out by Noiville was more qualified than in Chirac's recent message. The French would prefer deployment of 80 systems, as providing a clear fire break below which no negotiations would take place. But they would be able to accept zero SRINF provided the conditions (based on ours) were sufficiently strict. Noiville argued that there was no hurry for decisions before Reykjavik: serious matters of security were

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at stake and the European public would understand if the need for careful consideration meant that no immediate decisions were taken.

3. I described our position as beginning to firm up, and set it out on the basis of the Prime Minister's recent messages. Von Richthofen was frank about divisions within the government and even within the CDU/CSU. He said no decisions would be possible in Bonn at least before the end of this week. He excluded neither the zero SRINF option with strict conditions, nor deployment of 80 systems, for which however he showed little enthusiasm. He accepted that there was no sign that others would be prepared to deploy.

4. Mrs Ridgway set out the US position clearly on familiar lines and argued for early decisions. I supported her on this. She questioned the viability of deployment of 80 systems from a number of angles. First she brought out the reluctance of Italy and the Benelux to deploy. Second she pointed out the unsustainability of working for deployment of 80 systems which implicitly include the German PIAs, while continuing to insist on exclusion of third country systems. Thirdly, she highlighted (as I had done), the problem we would face if we proposed a positive level of deployment and if the Russians then rejected it. This would lead us back towards another dual track.

5. I concluded that I was encouraged by the considerable areas of agreement. The main uncertainty at present seemed to me to be precisely where to draw the fire break and how soon decisions were needed. Noiville commented that he thought we had gone a long way in the last few months. What was needed now was not just an agreement but a good one.

Conventional

6. Since talks were taking place simultaneously in the HLTF in Brussels, we did not try to break the logjam in the quadrò-partite group. Von Richthofen and I both deplored the continued squabbling

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which left the West at a disadvantage in Vienna. I pointed out that our problem would get worse once talks resumed on 11 May. Mrs Ridgway looked unperturbed and set out the US requirements in uncompromising terms. Noiville looked a bit shame-faced and agreed that the problem needed a solution.

7. I spoke afterwards to my German colleague about the Secretary of State's suggestion that we and the Germans should make a joint approach in Paris and Washington. We agreed that this might still be necessary if the HLTF failed to resolve the problem.

CW

8. Mrs Ridgway and Von Richthofen both helped me to pour cold water on the French idea of a security stock. Noiville made it clear that the French would not take any further action on this until there had been discussion among experts at their meeting on 13 May. On challenge inspection Mrs Ridgway suggested that at the same meeting, experts should concentrate on the machinery of verification, rather than its theory. She thought that this might be the best way of overcoming differences between us. I welcomed this idea.

East-West

9. This was essentially a comparison of notes about recent and forthcoming high level visits. I suggested that we should keep a collective eye on the fall out in Eastern Europe from Soviet policies of glasnost and democratisation. I also suggested that we should do some contingency thinking in this group about how we should react when Ceausescu left the scene. This was thought to be a good idea. I will ask EED to start preparing some thoughts as a basis for discussion in July.

CSCE

10. We agreed that if the deadline has to be extended beyond 31 July, it may be useful to arrange a meeting among the four to discuss the CSCE end game. Mrs Ridgway, Von Richthofen and I all

/supported

supported the idea of a joint meeting between CSCE heads of delegation and Political Directors, perhaps at the September quad meeting. Noiville agreed to think about this.

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Vienna Summit

11. We all felt that although it was difficult to foresee precisely what it might be appropriate for Heads of Government to say publicly about East-West relations, we found it difficult to imagine that they could meet without having something to say publicly on this question. Mrs Ridgway reported that the Japanese had circulated a text containing some general ideas on East-West relations which were in Washington's view very much on the right lines. It was striking that the Japanese had volunteered this. Perhaps we could build on their ideas.

12. I think there is merit in this suggestion. If the Secretary of State agrees, I will ask the Department to look at the Japanese paper and see what elements can be distilled from it. What we need is something which does not simply repeat the generalities of previous statements but avoids being drawn into commenting on current issues in the arms control negotiations. Something which builds on recent contacts (including the Prime Minister's visit) and stresses the need for building up trust. If our representatives at forthcoming meetings and the Summit Seven had such elements up their sleeves, this would be a useful insurance against the inevitable midnight drafting sessions.

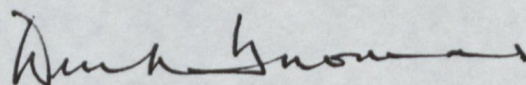
13. On South Africa, there was no support from any of my colleagues for Canada's idea for a Summit Seven group and very little support for a statement. I suggested that the Americans, French and Germans should all seek to discourage the Canadians from pursuing their ideas.

/Quadri-Partite Group

Quadri-Partite Group

14. Over lunch, Noiville asked me for my valedictory views on the quadri-partite forum. I said it provided a unique opportunity for private discussion of the key issues of the day. I had found it an invaluable steering group for western policies. If we did not have it we would have to invent it. It was a pity it was so difficult to hold meetings of the four at higher levels, because of the political divisiveness that was created. Even the meetings of Foreign Ministers outside the strict Berlin framework were difficult. This underlined the importance that those who participated in the group should have the ear and speak with the authority of their Foreign Ministers.

15. This provoked much nodding of heads. Mrs Ridgway spoke to me separately about the idea which we had floated of a meeting at Heads of Government level. Our suggestion had caused great concern in Washington. If we pressed ahead with the idea, her own judgement was that the President would simply opt out, because of the difficulty over the likely Italian reaction. I took note.



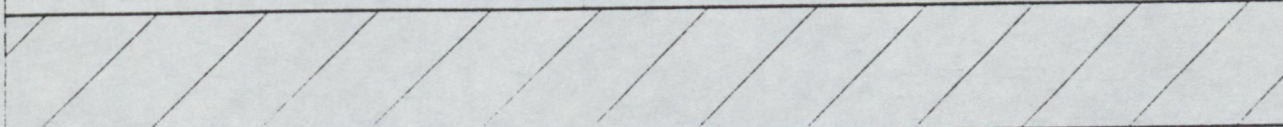
Derek Thomas

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ZCZC 1 ZCZC
 TC 2 SECRET
 CAVEAT 3 BURNING BUSH
 FM 4 FM FCO
 TO 5 TO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON
 TELNO 6 TELNO
 OF 7 OF MAY 87
 AND TO 8 INFO IMMEDIATE UKDEL NATO, PARIS, BONN
 9
 10
 11 MEETING OF QUADRIPARTITE POLITICAL DIRECTORS, PARIS, 5 MAY:
 12 INF
 13
 14 SUMMARY
 15 1. A useful exploratory discussion. Agreement that West should
 16 accept zero LRINF with adequate verification and preferably on a
 17 global basis.
 18
 19 2. On SRINF, French would prefer deployment at eighty systems
 20 but could accept zero on strict conditions similar to ours.
 21 French see no need for decisions before Reykjavik. US would
 22 prefer SRINF zero with strict conditionality. German position
 23 still undetermined, but they endorsed our conditions if zero
 24 SRINF were adopted. US challenged by ability of figure of eighty
 25 SRINF systems since it implied inclusion of German P1As and thus
 26 invalidated exclusion of third country systems.
 27
 28 / DETAIL
 29 3. Noiville began by setting out the French position. France



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2 accepted the zero option for LRINF albeit without much
 3 enthusiasm. But two important points remained to be settled.
 4 First, verification, on which the Soviets had not yet made
 5 precise proposals. Second, the question of one hundred warheads
 6 in Asia.. France would strongly prefer the elimination of these
 7 also, not for reasons of Asian security but because the problems
 8 of verification would be eased.

9
 10 4. On SRINF, Noiville recalled that the conclusion of WEU
 11 Ministers at Luxembourg had been that the West should not drag
 12 its feet but that there was no great hurry to reach decisions.
 13 The questions involved were important and complex and some
 14 governments had not yet made up their minds. It would not be
 15 appropriate for France to take up a detailed position since the
 16 negotiations were between the US and the USSR. But her general
 17 views, were that the security of Europe depended on a nuclear
 18 deterrent; that deterrents depended on maintaining nuclear
 19 weapons on European soil (and on the NATO doctrine of flexibility
 20 response); and that Soviet attempts at de-nuclearisation of
 21 Europe must at all costs be resisted.

22
 23 5. On Shultz' three alternatives, the French assessment was that
 24 rejection of the Soviet proposal was unrealistic in the present
 25 political climate. France's preferred option would be equal
 26 deployment of SRINF weapons at the level of eighty warheads.
 27 This would be a most certain firebreak, below which NATO could
 28 successfully resist pressure for further negotiations about
 29 elimination of nuclear weapons. As for the option of accepting
 30 the Soviet proposal for zero deployment of SRINF, France could go
 31 along with this provided strict conditions were met, vis
 32 exclusion of third country forces; global application of zero
 33 (not provided for in the latest Soviet proposal); and to find a
 34 way of establishing a clear firebreak so as to avoid the slippery

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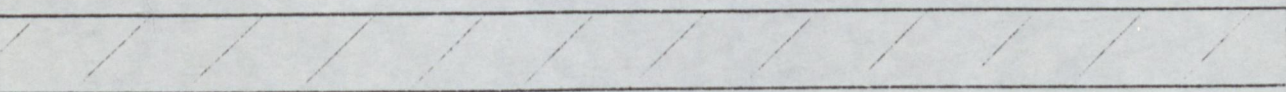
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2 slope towards de-nuclearisation. The French would also be
3 anxious to avoid establishing a clear link between SRINF
4 negotiations and the SRINF imbalance. It would be easy for the
5 Soviets to acquiesce in troop withdrawals which would be easy for
6 them to reinstate quickly afterwards. The result would thus not
7 be the enhancement of security.
8
9 6. Thomas (UK) set out our views as conveyed in the Prime
10 Minister's recent messages. He said that we had not yet reached
11 final conclusions in London but our views were beginning to firm
12 up on the lines indicated. We believed that the conditions set
13 out in the Prime Minister's messages would be the clearest way of
14 establishing the firebreak to which Noiville had referred and
15 leaving us in the best available condition of security. The
16 worst outcome, in our view, would be to aim for the right to
17 match at some level and then discover that we could not reach
18 agreement on deployment. Our own view was that deployment of
19 even eighty warheads would be very difficult. Are any European
20 countries prepared to take them? We therefore preferred to set a
21 firm floor below which it would be made clear that NATO would not
22 be prepared to negotiate. We would also need to retain the right
23 to modernise and if necessary increase levels below this floor.
24 We also thought we needed to encourage US deployment of SLCMs and
25 additional F111s to be placed at the disposal of SACEUR.
26
27 7. Von Richthofen said he was in a difficult position because
28 the Federal Government was not in a position yet to take even
29 tentative decisions. That said, he could agree with what
30 Noiville and Thomas had said about LRINF. This should be
31 presented as a major Western success since it was the
32 double-track decision which had brought the Russians back to the
33 negotiating table. On the one hundred Asian systems, the Poles
34 had told him in Warsaw recently that the Russians would certainly

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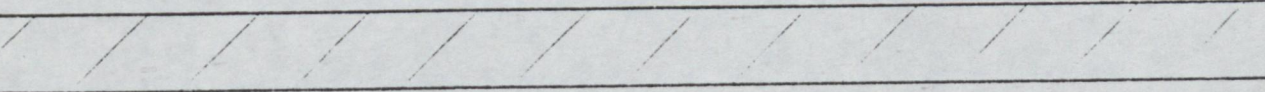
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 2 seek a separate deal with Asian countries on these systems.
 3
 4 7. On Shultz's options on SRINF, Von Richthofen said that German
 5 opinion was still in a formative stage. The Chancellor would be
 6 meeting with colleagues on 6 May and there would be a Bundestag
 7 debate on 7 May. Final decisions were unlikely in Bonn this
 8 week. One major factor shaping German thinking was the need to
 9 avoid establishing German territory as the main likely
 10 battleground in a future war in Europe.
 11
 12 8. Von Richthofen endorsed British views about conditions which
 13 would need to be made if NATO accepted the zero SRINF option.
 14 Decisions had not been reached yet in Bonn on the possible
 15 deployment of eighty SRINF systems as an alternative to zero.
 16 Some opinion within the CDU/CSU wanted to see a clear link
 17 established with conventional and chemical weapons. Genscher too
 18 was in favour of not looking exclusively at nuclear weapons.
 19
 20 9. Mrs Ridgway set out the US position in familiar terms. She
 21 made it clear that there was no final decision in Washington yet
 22 on the SRINF options but there was concern at the risk that the
 23 Russians could play a cost free game with the NATO Allies if we
 24 did not get our act together soon. Mrs Ridgway stressed that
 25 whatever our final decision, it must include a clear floor below
 26 which NATO would not be prepared to negotiate. Above that floor,
 27 only two of the options were realistic: zero or intermediate
 28 level on deployment. On the latter, the figure of eighty seemed
 29 to have obtained some currency as reducing existing Soviet
 30 systems less those taken out of the GDR and Czechoslovakia. But
 31 this raised a number of problems. Only one Ally (the FRG) had
 32 shown any real interest in deploying P1Bs. Belgium had said it
 33 would be impossible. For the Netherlands it would be very
 34 difficult. In the FRG, even Volker Ruehe spoke only of retaining

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2 the right to deploy in some future circumstances. Second, if we
 3 are insisting on exclusion of third country systems, it was
 4 hardly logical to count in German P1As towards the Western
 5 eighty. (Von Richthofen confirmed that Woerner had tended to
 6 assume that the German P1As were included in the figure of
 7 eighty). Von Richthofen accepted the illogicality of arguing at
 8 the same time that third country systems should be excluded.

9
 10 10. Thirdly, Mrs Ridgway picked up Thomas' point about the
 11 Western position if, having proposed deployment at some level,
 12 the Soviets rejected it. Would we be prepared to walk away from
 13 the table? Shultz thought that we should table what we meant to
 14 achieve and be prepared to walk away if it were not accepted. If
 15 we tabled a proposal for deployment of eighty SRINF systems and
 16 these were rejected, we could too easily find ourselves
 17 scrambling towards zero in disarray. We would then have lost the
 18 firebreak.

19
 20 11. We needed to think our way through this very carefully.
 21 Could we afford, politically, to find ourselves back on another
 22 track?

23
 24 12. In further discussion the following points emerged:
 25 i) In the US and UK view, decisions were needed before
 26 the Reykjavik meeting. The US was looking for decisions by
 27 mid-May. Delayed decisions could be very costly for the
 28 Alliance. Thomas supported her on this. Alliance cohesion had
 29 been crucial in bringing the Russians to the table. If they
 30 sensed disarray, they would seek to exploit it by appealing over
 31 the heads of government to Western publics. Noiville disagreed.
 32 There was a need to give the public a sense that NATO was a
 33 democratic institute, which allowed time for debate. He accepted
 34 that decisions should not be spun out. But he found it difficult

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 2 to see why the month until the Reykjavik meeting should seem too
 3 long given the seriousness of the issues involved;
 4 ii) all agreed that the terms of verification would be crucial.
 5 Mrs Ridgway said that, despite Soviet assurances on the
 6 principle, little had yet been clarified of substance;
 7 iii) Von Richthofen suggested that one way of giving comfort to
 8 the German military would be to speed up the modernisation
 9 programme of P1As. Mrs Ridgway shied away from getting involved
 10 in budgetary programming. This was the business of Ministry of
 11 Defence experts.

12
 13 13. Thomas said he was encouraged by the convergence of views on
 14 much of the substance covered in this discussion. The two main
 15 areas where there were differences of approach were:
 16 i) where to draw the firebreak;
 17 ii) time pressures for decisions.

18
 19 14. Noiville commented that he too was encouraged by the
 20 distance we had come over the last few months. Western public
 21 opinion had a sense of close consultation between Allies. Mrs
 22 Ridgway doubted whether the last point was valid for US opinion
 23 which had a sense of debate bouncing between Bonn and Washington
 24 with considerable scope for damage. Noiville concluded that what
 25 was needed was not simply agreement but good agreement and he
 26 thought that this was within sight. Von Richthofen added that he
 27 hoped other governments would not go public on their decisions
 28 now. This would reason intensifying the debate between different
 29 political factions in Bonn.

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