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Private Secretary

From: Sir J Fretwell

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 Mr Ratford " 3
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QUADRIPARTITE MEETING OF POLITICAL DIRECTORS: BONN: 2 OCTOBER.

1. Last week's Quadripartite meeting in Bonn was a businesslike and constructive session in which we covered a lot of ground, notably on arms control and East/West relations. I submit the complete records: a summary of the main points is below.

Geneva NST/INF

2. Mrs Ridgway (US) gave a full and up-beat briefing on the Geneva talks, which had evidently moved into high gear in an effort to conclude an INF text quickly. Technical experts were well into the details on data, phasing of the rocket destruction programme, and on site inspection, and she hoped that a joint, bracketed, Treaty text would be on the table by the end of last week. She was a little apprehensive about the Soviet reaction when they were told (as they had not yet been) that inspection on Allied territory would be subject to conditions incorporated in bilateral notes. Her overall assessment was that the Russians were worried about the prospects for ratification (which she expected to go through, after a difficult tussle between the Senate and the Administration), but were working seriously for the successful conclusion of the Treaty before the expiry of Reagan's Presidency.

START/ABM

3. Mrs Ridgway reported that the Russians were also now seriously interested in moving on from INF to negotiations on START, though whether their motive was to facilitate the passage of the INF Treaty through the Senate or to bring SDI back into the spotlight was unclear. The impression left by the latest Shultz/Shevardnadze bilateral was that the USSR was no longer trying to end SDI, but rather to constrain the programme. They appeared to be keeping a sharp eye on the domestic debate in the US: her own guess was that the Russians might make some real progress in the START talks, then stick on SDI at a position very close to mainstream Congressional opinion.

Reagan-Gorbachev Summit

4. No dates are yet under discussion with the Russians, who are also stalling on outline planning for the visit. Shevardnadze's delegation had told the State Department that the Russians would want to continue to read the US domestic scene up until Shultz's visit to Moscow (22/23 October) before discussing the Summit in detail.

CW

5. A brief discussion, in which I repeated our determination to achieve a verifiable agreement, but sounded a note of caution about Soviet good faith. Mrs Ridgway was gloomy about finding adequate ways of dealing with civilian chemical industries. Richthofen signalled the FRG's intention of putting some new ideas to the Allies in the near future.

West/West relations

6. Picking up some remarks of Richthofen's about the need for the current dynamism in East/West relations to be matched by dynamism in West/West relations, Mrs Ridgway paid an unusually warm tribute to recent evidence of European cooperation, including the Franco-German and Anglo-French defence relationships, and activity in the WEU which had provided political cover for some European nations' decisions to send minesweepers to the Gulf. She made a point of saying that what allowed her to sound so much more positive than in the past was the tangible evidence of real European activity in support of Western interests, which the US found easier to endorse than 'theology which they did not understand'.

7. In subsequent discussion we all agreed that the process of transatlantic consultation was working well at present - Mrs Ridgway was particularly positive about recent contacts between the Administration and the EC Commission - but that trade disputes, and above all Airbus, were a major cloud on the horizon.

CSCE

8. I spelt out, with support from Mrs Ridgway, our firm position on the standards which the Soviet Union would have to meet if there was to be any question of a human dimension conference in Moscow. Noiville (France) explained the French proposal as an attempt to prevent the erosion of consensus among Western members of the CSCE, some of whom were disinclined to give a flat no to Moscow.

Eastern Europe

9. We had a detailed discussion of Polish debt, on which Noiville, Richthofen and I argued the case for an IMF Stand By Agreement with strict conditionality. Mrs Ridgway reported that the US Treasury had accepted this - on certain conditions - on the eve of Bush's visit to Warsaw. But she warned that on this, as on most other questions of US bilateral relations with Eastern Europe, US policy would be driven by the vocal domestic lobbies of former Eastern European immigrants. There was even an active Albanian lobby.

10. Mrs Ridgway gave a detailed briefing on Bush's talks with Jaruzelski, which had been unprecedentedly frank and open about

the problems of Polish society and political and economic management.

11. We also discussed briefly Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia and Albania.

Afghanistan

12. We were given an interesting account of Shevardnadze's exchange with Shultz on Afghanistan, which appears to have been more open and cooperative in tone than ever before. The Russians seemed genuinely to be in some perplexity as to how to withdraw from Afghanistan without too much loss of face, and ready to discuss their dilemma with the West. My colleagues however agreed with my assessment that there was no sign that they had yet steeled themselves to draw the necessary consequences from their predicament and bring their occupation to an end.

Iran/Iraq

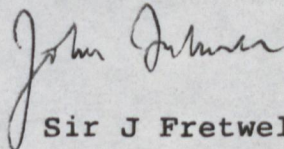
13. A brief discussion, in which Richthofen attempted to argue that we should play for time and give greater flexibility to the Secretary General, and that Iraq, like Iran, had not yet fully accepted SCR 598. The rest of us dealt with this firmly.

Other subjects

14. We also touched briefly on Cambodia and Southern Africa, and I gave my colleagues an assessment of the situation in Fiji.

Future meetings

15. The next meeting of Political Directors will be in London on 5 November. Noiville also passed on an invitation from Raimond for Quadripartite Foreign Ministers to meet at La Celle St Cloud on 9 December for their pre-NAC 'Berlin' meeting. Planning Staff is submitting about this separately.


Sir J Fretwell