



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

CONFIDENTIAL

London SW1A 2AH

27 April 1989

Dear Charles,

CM

SNF

This letter provides briefing on SNF for the Prime Minister's meeting with Chancellor Kohl.

The German position was read out by the Chancellor in the Bundestag today, with the rider that it is for discussion with Allies. I attach a copy with our commentary on it. I also enclose a copy of Bonn's reporting telegram on Kohl's speech.

Our strategy remains clear:

- to do nothing to prejudice the deployment of a tactical air-to-surface missile (TASM);
- to keep the development of a follow-on to LANCE (FOTL) on track between now and 1991/2, and to secure a production and deployment decision at the latest by then;
- to avoid any arms control negotiation and the slippery slope to a "third zero".

The Foreign Secretary believes that our bottom line for the NATO Summit must be to insist on:

- the long-term requirement for land-based short-range missiles;
- the 1988 'up-to-date where necessary' formula;
- no commitment to arms control negotiations and therefore no high-level group to study the issue.

Provided that we secure these points, we would have a minimum amount of common ground on which we could build a definitive modernisation decision over the next two years, and which should secure the necessary funding for SNF development from Congress. We would not, in that case, need:

- reference by name to FOTL or TASM;
- explicit Alliance support for the US development programme.

Is this
wrong?

CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL

Meanwhile, in discussion with the Germans, we recommend that we should press for all of these ingredients. Now is not the time to lower our demands. Nor should we allow discussion to be anchored on the German text. The Prime Minister may, therefore, wish to deploy the following arguments:

- on modernisation, effective and credible land-based and air-launched SNF systems will remain an essential part of NATO's strategy of flexible response for the foreseeable future. A successful outcome to the negotiations on Conventional Forces in Europe would not obviate the need for such systems. Arms control agreements made reduce the number of theatre nuclear weapons we need but not the types of system needed for effective deterrence. A "third zero" on SNF missiles would thus not be acceptable for as far ahead as can be seen. All of this has been common ground between us: we must not resile.
- Ministers in the Nuclear Planning Group have repeatedly confirmed the requirements for a FOTL (and TASM). They have also supported US efforts to develop FOTL (and US and UK efforts to develop TASM). These commitments should be reaffirmed at the NATO Summit. It would be extremely damaging if Germany were now to renege on them. While we would have preferred the Summit to agree in principle to deploy these systems, we will not insist on this now in view of German difficulties.
- on the arms control side, we should play up at the Summit the benefits of updating:
 - longer range places emphasis on deterrence rather than war-fighting;
 - scope for substantial reductions.
- we would also be prepared to state that further SNF cuts will be made if significant "concrete results" are achieved towards eliminating the conventional imbalance.
- it is clear from the Gorbachev visit that the explicit aim of the Warsaw Pact is the denuclearisation of Europe. Given the conceptual difference between this view and NATO's requirement to retain SNF as an essential element of deterrence, there is no prospect of a fruitful outcome from any SNF negotiations. Political pressures and verification problems would drive the Alliance over several years to accept a third zero. There would be grave implications for Europe-US relations. Contrary to what Genscher has said, the 1987 Reykjavik formula makes no reference to SNF negotiations.

CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL

- NATO has always had an active arms control dimension to its own SNF policy (reductions in the warhead stockpile from 7,000 to 4,600 since 1979). The Alliance should now call upon the Warsaw Pact to eliminate unilaterally its overwhelming superiority in these systems. If the Russians come down to NATO SNF levels, and agree to significant "concrete results" in CFE, we would be prepared to review the scope for further measures to reduce sub-strategic systems (leaving totally open whether this would be done unilaterally or collectively).

This last sentence would make a nod in the direction of an arms control "perspective" which even Woerner argues is essential. Realistically, if there are concrete results from CFE and if the Russians come down to NATO SNF missile levels, the world will look very different and NATO will have to review its position. To put this in writing would not be a hostage to fortune, provided that we kept open the unilateral as well as the collective option. But it is a matter of tactical judgement whether to deploy the last sentence at this stage. It would be worth doing so in exchange for agreement on our bottom line. But we should not let the Germans simply pocket it.

The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary agreed yesterday that we should make clear that we are prepared, if necessary, to deal with this at the Summit, rather than accept a bad conclusion. This will maximise the pressure on the Germans (and on the Americans, who are very anxious to avoid an acrimonious Summit). But we should recognise that the alignment of forces is unlikely to favour us as the Summit approaches. Sir Michael Alexander assesses that we are likely to be in a minority of two (with the French as tacit supporters on arms control but not prepared to press Kohl on modernisation). Our recent contacts with Washington suggest that the Bush Administration will be prepared to accept a minimal statement on modernisation in the interest of securing two other objectives:

- (i) to avoid commitment to arms control negotiation;
- (ii) to avoid an Alliance row which would harm Bush's image and could stir up Congressional trouble over funding and burden-sharing generally.

The Prime Minister discussed tactics yesterday with the Foreign Secretary (your letter of 26 April). It is not yet clear how the Germans, or indeed the Americans, see matters being taken forward between now and the Summit. The Prime Minister will wish to give President Bush an early account of her meeting with Kohl; and we will need to concert closely with the Americans on how to proceed. If their disposition is to allow the Germans to stew for a while, if necessary up to

CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL

the Summit itself, then we have no interest in advocating early contacts. If, however, the Americans are disposed to try to get the matter sorted out in advance of the Summit, then we shall want to make clear that this should not be done simply at the bilateral US/German level. British Ministers will want to continue to make their views known to the Americans and the Germans over the next month. The Germans, if they are disposed to compromise at all, will probably try to do so through a bilateral deal with the United States, in the belief that the Americans, because of their wish for a peaceful Summit, will be easier to roll over.

Finally, on public handling, we recommend:

- a short joint line, reaffirming the March 1988 Summit Declaration (as was done at Frankfurt) and confirming that the two sides will continue to consult with a view to reaching agreement at the Summit;
- / - a short but clear statement of HMG's position, to match the German statement.

I am copying this letter to Brian Hawtin (MOD) and Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

Jms.
Stephen Wall

(J S Wall)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

FRG PAPER ON SNF

COMMENTARY ON THE GERMAN POSITION

1. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany endorses the Alliance's observation that there is at present no foreseeable alternative to the concept of preventing war through deterrence based on an appropriate mix of adequate and effective nuclear and conventional forces.

Comment: Unobjectionable as far as it goes but misses out the final part of the key sentence in the 1988 Summit communique: "which will continue to be kept up-to-date where necessary".

2. In the case of nuclear forces, land-, sea- and air-based systems are under the existing circumstances needed in Europe, too.

Comment: "Under the existing circumstances" unacceptably weak. Theatre deterrent would not be adequate and effective without land-based systems.

3. The development of a follow-on system to the LANCE short-range missile is a national American decision.

Comment: Resiles from past agreed confidential minutes of NATO Nuclear Planning Group which reaffirm Ministers' support for US efforts to meet the identified requirement for FOTL. (NPG confidential minute of October 1988: "Ministers reaffirmed their continuing support for United States efforts to meet the identified requirement for a follow-on to LANCE".)

4. Within the framework of the Comprehensive Concept of Arms Control and Disarmament, the Alliance will issue a mandate for the early commencement of negotiations on short-range nuclear missiles aimed establishing equal ceilings at lower levels, as defined by the Alliance at Reykjavik in 1987 and at Brussels in 1988.

① 1992 → 1996

② Germany

③ Poland - U.S.

Comment: Implies Reykjavik formula calls for early negotiations - it does not.

5. For nuclear artillery warheads, too, a negotiating mandate will be included in the Comprehensive Concept with a view to attaining equal ceilings at radically lower levels.

Comment: Entirely new element in Alliance's arms control agenda. Same objections as for negotiations on SNF missiles. Verification would be even more difficult than for missiles.

6. In 1992 the Alliance will decide, in the light of political and security developments and especially the results of all disarmament negotiations, on whether or not it is necessary to introduce a follow-on system to LANCE into the Alliance in 1996 and hence on the production and deployment of such a system.

Comment: Leaves impression that FOTL may well not be necessary - we see no circumstances under which we will not want to deploy it. NATO Defence Ministers have endorsed a High Level Group report confirming the need for FOTL. (HLG Paper on the Role of SNF, 1988: "NATO therefore requires a mixed SNF capability comprising both longer SSMS and nuclear artillery, with the emphasis on the former to reflect their greater flexibility and utility".)

7. The decisive and crucial factors in this respect will be whether it proves possible to achieve greater security at lower levels of nuclear and conventional forces in general, to conclude binding agreements with the Warsaw Pact on the elimination of the capability for launching surprise attacks and initiating large scale offensive action, to attain, through suitable agreements, a higher degree of mutual trust on account of increased transparency and predictability of military conduct.

Comment: A successful outcome to CFE would not obviate need for FOTL. Arms control agreements may reduce quantitative requirement

for theatre nuclear weapons but not the types of system needed for effective deterrence.

8. Omissions:

- no explicit rejection of "third zero".
- no call on Soviet Union unilaterally to reduce its SNF levels to those of NATO.
- no mention of substantial stockpile reductions which modernisation will permit.

STATEMENT OF THE UK POSITION

Effective and credible land-based and air-launched SNF systems will remain an essential part of NATO's strategy of flexible response for the foreseeable future. A "third zero" on SNF missiles would not be acceptable.

We therefore need up to date SNF and support the work being done by the US to develop a follow-on to LANCE. But precise deployment decisions are not for now.

By keeping NATO's SNF missiles up to date we can make substantial reductions in NATO's nuclear stockpile (already cut by 35% this decade). Restructuring will also involve a shift to longer ranges which will emphasise the deterrence role of SNF systems.

All of these elements are entirely consistent with established Alliance policy.

The explicit aim of the Warsaw Pact is the denuclearisation of Europe. Given the conceptual difference between this view and NATO's requirement to retain SNF as an essential element of deterrence, there is no prospect of a fruitful outcome from any SNF negotiations.

NATO has always had an active arms control dimension to its own SNF policy (reductions in the warhead stockpile from 7,000 to 4,600 since 1979). The Alliance should now call upon the Warsaw Pact to eliminate unilaterally its overwhelming superiority in these systems.

⑤ 92 - Done running at a lower level.

Nuclear conventions - most difficult
for US

⑥ Remond A didn't to make USSR.

Perhaps. II

\$ 50-
\$ 150- ||

System

Land -
- agreements

Land

Sea & Air
Security

Public - Public Paper
S.R. ↓
Defence

20th century

(- define
Security)

Written

① Land Sea Air

② Americans - them

Interests

Consider the Interests