



PM/83/85

Prime MinisterPRIME MINISTEREast/West Relations

1. Following Andropov's statement of 28 September, with its strong attack on the US and on President Reagan personally, a certain amount of concern has been expressed by my colleagues in the Ten about the prospects for relations with the Soviet Union as we approach the first phase of INF deployment. In Athens last weekend, the Foreign Ministers of Denmark and the FRG drew attention to their parliamentary and domestic difficulties. Elleman Jensen disclosed that he would be visiting Moscow at the end of this month to demonstrate publicly that Danish concerns were being made clear to the Russians at a high level. Privately he told me that if, as he feared, the SPD in Germany turned against deployment, it would almost certainly destroy his majority on this issue in the Folketing. Genscher's recent meeting with Gromyko in Vienna was of course intended partly to contain pressure from the peace movement within the FRG.

2. Against that background, I have been considering what the Soviet tactics are likely to be during the next few weeks and what is the right response to these. This is on the assumption that the East-West situation is not going to change completely as a result of events in Grenada.

3. The Russians are conducting a determined campaign to put maximum pressure on the Europeans, especially the West Germans, in the run-up to deployment. Andropov's statement expressed anger, frustration and uncertainty about Soviet relations with the US. It also betrayed concern at the damage the KAL incident has done to their peace policy goals in Europe.

4. The Russians have been exercising their well tried

/skill



skill at blowing hot and cold. Since Andropov's September statement we had the Warsaw Pact Foreign Ministers' communique in Sofia, with its carefully moderate tone and calculated ambiguity about whether or not the Russians would be prepared to continue the INF talks in Geneva if the first phase of deployment goes ahead. Now this ambiguity has been removed by Andropov's Pravda interview of 26 October, in which he said that the appearance of new American missiles in Europe would make continuation of the INF talks impossible. It does therefore seem likely that after NATO deployment the Russians will interrupt the talks for a while at least. But I would expect them to resume, perhaps under a slightly different description, sometime next year.

5. Soviet statements in the coming month are likely to be aimed primarily at West German public opinion. Gromyko's speech in East Berlin on 18 October echoed the completely unyielding line he took with Genscher in their lengthy talks in Vienna on 15/16 October. It was a more or less open appeal to the West German peace movement, depicting the Americans and President Reagan personally as forcing Cruise and Pershing on the Europeans, and as seeking to mask their real intentions by a series of contrived but worthless offers in Geneva. By choosing to say this in East Berlin, and by the subsequent announcement of preparations in the GDR and Czechoslovakia, Gromyko no doubted hoped to play on West German fears that INF deployment in their country, followed by counter-measures in the GDR (SS21, 22 or 23) would increase the strain on ties between the two parts of Germany.

6. I think we have to accept that there will not be an agreement on INF before the end of the year. It could be that Andropov's latest Pravda interview will indeed be the final Soviet offer before deployment. But they will continue with the carrot and stick approach in their attempts to polarise opinion against the Americans and, ultimately, to break our will to continue with deployment



in the years ahead. Meanwhile the Russians will go ahead with the deployments on their side which were planned in any event, representing them as counter-deployments forced upon them.

7. To balance this, I would not entirely rule out the possibility of a US/Soviet framework agreement on START being reached before the US Presidential elections, particularly if the Soviet leadership believes that President Reagan is likely to be re-elected. Gromyko took a very negative line on the US "build down" proposals in his speech in East Berlin, but that is not necessarily his last word on the subject. Nor would I expect INF deployment to lead the Russians to bring counter-pressure to bear on the West, eg in Berlin, Yugoslavia, the Middle East, Central America, etc. These pressure points would, I think, only be activated if the Russians had concluded that there was really no hope at all of eventual agreements on START and INF, and that the US, through exports of military technology to China, a major anti-satellite outer-space programme, wide-ranging COCOM controls etc, was bent on an all-out attempt to break the Soviet economy and achieve strategic dominance.

8. My conclusions as regards tactical handling are as follows:

- a) we and our allies should continue to do everything in our power to explain to our public that it is the Soviet Union which remains inflexible and unreasonable on arms control;
- b) we need to work up our contingency plans for public handling of possible Soviet moves. We do not know what pretext the Russians might use to suspend the INF talks. In wedge-driving terms they might just be tempted by our announcement in November that the missiles were arriving here (although they have not reacted to the arrival of

I doubt the wisdom of such an announcement



- missile launchers already in Italy, and on balance I would not expect them to make a move until after the FRG Bundestag debate on 21 November);
- c) we should use the Anglo-German Summit in Bonn on 8/9 November to steady Kohl and especially Genscher, who is playing something of a solo role in the field of East/West relations at the moment;
- d) we must take great care with the tone and content of our own public responses to Soviet statements. We should not take a dismissive line which would make it harder for them to come back to the INF table. We should reiterate our readiness to talk seriously if they are prepared to. Our attitude should be hard on substance and cool in tone, to show that it is the Russians who are indulging in intemperate polemics;
- e) we should use our contacts with the Soviet Union (as I did with Gromyko in Madrid in September. and with Deputy Prime Minister Kostandov recently in London) to tell the Russians directly of our security concerns, but also of the West's genuine willingness to negotiate balanced arms control agreements. I see this as being useful in continuing to make the Russians aware of our real views, as opposed to their propaganda version of them, and in reducing the danger that the Soviet leadership might decide to take action based on miscalculations or misunderstandings. Following the KAL incident and with the present level of mistrust between the US and Soviet Union, another major incident would be immeasurably more difficult to manage;
- f) we should encourage the Americans to maintain their contacts with the Russians and to build up a broader agenda than simply the area of arms control. I am aware of the difficulty of this following the KAL incident. But if the US continue to take the view expressed by President Reagan to you recently in Washington, and repeated by US officials since then - that it is now for the Soviet Union to make



the next move - we may be in for a long period of stand-off, which leaves the field free for the Russians to deal directly with the Europeans.

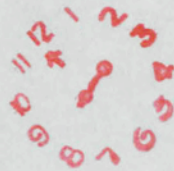
9. I am sending copies of this minute to colleagues in OD and, for his information, to Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'G. Howe', written in a cursive style.

GEOFFREY HOWE

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
28 October 1983

28 JUL 1983





FILE

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

31 October, 1983

OD Committee:- HO MOD
 LC LPS
 FCO CDL
 HMT CO
 LPO DTI

EAST/WEST RELATIONS

The Prime Minister has seen the minute of 28 October by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary on this subject.

Mrs. Thatcher has noted Sir Geoffrey Howe's conclusions in paragraph 8 of his minute.

She has commented, with regard to sub-paragraph(b) of that paragraph, that our announcement that Cruise missiles are arriving here should not be in such terms as to enable those opposed to the deployment programme to organise a further demonstration to coincide with the arrival of missiles i.e. they should have no prior warning. I have conveyed this point orally to Richard Mottram in the light of this afternoon's debate in the House of Commons.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the members of OD and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

A. J. COLES

Brian Fall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

SECRET