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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 23, 1985

MR

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INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ROBERT C. McFARLANE *RCM*

SUBJECT: Gorbachev Letter to Prime Minister Thatcher -
October 12

We have obtained a copy of the text of General Secretary Gorbachev's October 12 letter to Prime Minister Thatcher (Tab A). We understand that the British Foreign Office is now drafting a reply to Gorbachev for the Prime Minister's consideration upon her return from the U.S. Working-level contacts indicate that the reply is likely to be strongly negative.

His letter extolls the virtues of the Soviet "concrete" Geneva proposals; ban space strike arms, 50% cut in the nuclear armaments capable of reaching each other's territory and an equal aggregate on "nuclear charges" of 6000. While not advocating the cessation of negotiations on medium-range nuclear armaments with the U.S., he goes on to indicate a willingness for "direct conversation" with the U.K. and France to "...look at the nuclear balance of forces in Europe, in its constituent components...." He ends with a request for her views.

The British agree with our assessment that none of the recent Soviet INF proposals reflect any substantial accommodation of Western concerns. Even Karpov's "informal" proposal of October 14 (to allow 100-120 GLCMs), while seeming to concede the legitimacy of some U.S. INF deployments, in fact does no such thing since it was billed as an "interim" solution leading to the ultimate goal of zero U.S. deployments. Given the rigid linkage between SS-20s and U.K./French systems underlying all the Soviet INF proposals, we consider them largely tactical maneuvers aimed at wedge-driving rather than at laying the basis for real negotiation.

In your October 23 bilateral with Margaret Thatcher you may wish to reinforce this above assessment.

Attachments
Tab A

Text of Gorbachev-Thatcher Letter of October 12

Prepared by:
Bill Wright

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BEGIN TEXT OF LETTER:

ESTEEMED MADAME PRIME MINISTER,

I SHOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS YOU IN CONNECTION WITH THE NEW INITIATIVES TAKEN BY THE SOVIET UNION IN THE INTERESTS OF STOPPING THE ARMS RACE AND IMPROVING THE SITUATION IN THE WORLD AS A WHOLE AND IN EUROPE IN PARTICULAR. AT THE PRESENT ACUTE AND DANGEROUS STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT, THESE QUESTIONS ARE ADVANCED BY LIFE ITSELF INTO THE CENTER OF ATTENTION OF RESPONSIBLE STATE POLICY. THEY HAVE BEEN THE SUBJECT OF SERIOUS CONSIDERATION IN OUR PREVIOUS CONTACTS WITH YOU, HAVE OCCUPIED AN IMPORTANT PLACE IN MY CONVERSATIONS WITH PRESIDENT MITTERRAND, AND WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE AT THE FOCAL CENTER OF THE FORTHCOMING SOVIET-AMERICAN SUMMIT MEETING.

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SOLUTION OF THE TASKS OF THE CESSATION OF THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE, OF SHARPLY REDUCING THE LEVEL OF NUCLEAR CONFRONTATION, AND AT THE SAME TIME OF PREVENTING AN ARMS RACE IN SPACE, WE HAVE ADDRESSED THE USA WITH CONCRETE PROPOSALS, THE ESSENCE OF WHICH IS AS FOLLOWS:

- TO BAN THE DEVELOPMENT, TESTING AND DEPLOYMENT OF SPACE STRIKE WEAPONS;
- TO CUT IN THAT EVENT BY 50 PER CENT THE NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS OF THE USSR AND THE USA WHICH ARE CAPABLE OF REACHING EACH OTHER'S TERRITORIES;
- TO ESTABLISH FOR THE RELEVANT SYSTEMS OF THE TWO SIDES REMAINING AFTER REDUCTIONS SHARPLY REDUCED EQUAL AGGREGATE LEVELS OF NUCLEAR CHARGES -- AT 6000 UNITS EACH.

ON MY INSTRUCTION, OUR EMBASSY IN LONDON HAS ALREADY INFORMED YOU THAT THE FOLLOWING NEW AND MOST SUBSTANTIAL ELEMENT HAS BEEN INTRODUCED INTO OUR APPROACH ON THE SOLUTION OF NUCLEAR ARMS PROBLEMS. WE CONSIDER IT POSSIBLE TO CONCLUDE AN APPROPRIATE AGREEMENT ON MEDIUM-RANGE NUCLEAR SYSTEMS IN EUROPE SEPARATELY, WITH NO DIRECT LINK TO THE PROBLEM OF SPACE AND STRATEGIC ARMS. WE PROCEED FROM THE ASSUMPTION THAT A FURTHER EXACERBATION OF NUCLEAR CONFRONTATION IN EUROPE IS NOT IN THE INTERESTS OF ANY EUROPEAN STATE. IT IS NECESSARY, AT LAST, TO START UNTYING THIS KNOT AND TO GET DOWN TO BUSINESS WITHOUT FURTHER PROCRASTINATION.

YOU, OF COURSE, WILL ALSO HAVE NOTED THE FACT THAT IN ADDITION TO THE MORATORIUM ON THE DEPLOYMENT OF MEDIUM-RANGE MISSILES WHICH WE DECLARED LAST APRIL, WE HAVE WITHDRAWN FROM STAND-BY ALERT IN THE EUROPEAN ZONE

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OF THE USSR A CERTAIN NUMBER OF SS-20 MISSILES. THIS IS A MANIFESTATION IN CONCRETE DEEDS OF OUR POLITICAL WILL FOR A SEARCH FOR WAYS OF REDUCING THE DANGERS OF MILITARY CONFRONTATION IN EUROPE.

. ALL IN ALL, AS YOU WILL SEE, A COMPLETELY NEW SITUATION IS THUS CREATED, WHICH OPENS UP THE POSSIBILITY OF ENSURING STRATEGIC STABILITY IN EUROPE AT A SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED LEVEL OF NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS. A PRACTICAL ROAD TOWARDS THIS IS THAT OF DIRECT DIALOGUE AND AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES. THE SOVIET UNION IS READY FOR SUCH A DIRECT CONVERSATION. AS YOU KNOW, WE HAVE ADDRESSED A SIMILAR PROPOSAL ALSO TO FRANCE.

. NATURALLY, THIS DOES NOT IN ANY WAY MEAN THE STOPPING OF NEGOTIATIONS ON MEDIUM-RANGE NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS IN EUROPE WITH THE AMERICAN SIDE, WHOSE RELEVANT SYSTEMS CONTINUE TO BE AN ELEMENT IN THE CORRELATION OF NUCLEAR FORCES BETWEEN EAST AND WEST ON OUR CONTINENT.

. WE NATURALLY REALIZE THAT GREAT BRITAIN HAS HER ALLIANCE OBLIGATIONS AND WE ARE FAR FROM TRYING TO INTRODUCE ANY DISCORD INTO BRITAIN'S RELATIONS WITH HER ALLIES. WE HAVE SOMETHING QUITE DIFFERENT IN MIND, NAMELY THAT ALONG WITH THE SOVIET-AMERICAN NEGOTIATIONS WE SHOULD LOOK AT THE NUCLEAR BALANCE OF FORCES IN EUROPE, AT ITS CONSTITUENT COMPONENTS, WHICH IS SOMETHING DIRECTLY CONCERNING THE SECURITY INTERESTS OF OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

. I CAN STATE FRANKLY THAT WE ARE NOT RAISING THE QUESTION OF LIMITING OR REDUCING THE NUCLEAR FORCES OF GREAT BRITAIN. WE ARE IN FAVOR OF AN UNDERSTANDING WITH YOU WHICH WOULD RELATE TO ONE OF THE COMPONENTS OF

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THE NUCLEAR BALANCE IN EUROPE AT A REDUCED LEVEL ACCEPTABLE TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES, WITHOUT INFRINGING ANYONE'S LEGITIMATE INTERESTS. THE MAIN THING IS TO BRING ABOUT A TURN AWAY FROM THE DECADES OF BUILDING UP NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS IN EUROPE AND TOWARDS A PERIOD OF SUCCESSIVE REDUCTIONS OF THEM.

I THINK THAT TODAY, WHEN THE THREAT OF WAR IN THE WORLD IS NOT DIMINISHING AND THE ARMS RACE IS GAINING EVER GREATER MOMENTUM AND IS THREATENING TO MOVE INTO SPACE, THERE IS A GREATER NEED THAN EVER BEFORE FOR NEW AND BOLD STEPS AND FOR NON-STEREOTYPE SOLUTIONS WHICH WOULD LEAD THE DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS NOW UNDER WAY FOR YEARS OUT OF THEIR BLIND ALLEY.

I SHOULD BE GRATEFUL TO HAVE YOUR VIEWS ON THE ABOVE MENTIONED ISSUES.

WITH RESPECT, M. GORBACHEV

12 OCTOBER 1985

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

October 22, 1985

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR ROBERT C. McFARLANE

FROM:

BILL WRIGHT/BOB LEONARD

SUBJECT:

Gorbachev Letter to Prime Minister Thatcher -
October 12

SIGNED

Tab I & A
PDB
w/ 10/23

Per the PROF Note from Admiral Poindexter (Tab II), we have prepared a short summary of the Gorbachev letter followed by an assessment in your cover memorandum to the President (Tab I).

The Gorbachev letter (Tab A) extolls the virtues of the Soviet "concrete" Geneva proposals; ban space strike arms, 50% cut in the nuclear armaments capable of reaching each other's territory and an equal aggregate on "nuclear charges" of 6000. While not advocating the cessation of negotiations on medium-range nuclear armaments with the U.S., he goes on to indicate a willingness for "direct conversation" with the U.K. and France to "...look at the nuclear balance of forces in Europe, in its constituent components...." He ends with a request for her views.

The British agree with our assessment that none of the recent Soviet INF proposals reflect any substantial accommodation of Western concerns. Even Karpov's "informal" proposal of October 14 (to allow 100-120 GLCMs), while seeming to concede the legitimacy of some U.S. INF deployments, in fact does no such thing since it was billed as an "interim" solution leading to the ultimate goal of zero U.S. deployments. Given the rigid linkage between SS-20s and U.K./French systems underlying all the Soviet INF proposals, we consider them largely tactical maneuvers aimed at wedge-driving rather than at laying the basis for real negotiation.

Recommendation

That you sign the memorandum to the President at Tab I and forward it with the text of the Gorbachev letter (Tab A) for his background in preparation for his October 23 bilateral with Prime Minister Thatcher.

Approve SK Disapprove JM

Concurrence: Sven Kraemer and Jack Matlock

Attachments

- Tab I Memorandum for the President
- Tab A Text of Gorbachev-Thatcher Letter of October 12
- Tab II PROF Note Tasking

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BY WJ NARA, DATE 9/5/87