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PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

March 10, 1985

SERIAL No. T 44185

US DECLASSIFIED

Dear Margaret:

Over the past weeks since our agreement with the Soviet Union to begin new negotiations on nuclear and space arms, we have been actively preparing for the opening round of these talks this March 12th. In this regard, I found our discussions during your most recent visit very useful and timely.

As a basic part of our preparations for Geneva, we have sought to maintain a close dialogue with our Allies. This will continue to be a central element of our overall arms control efforts. I have asked that the senior US negotiators -- Ambassadors Kampelman, Tower and Glitman -- meet with your representatives at the North Atlantic Council this March 11th to discuss the approaches they will be taking into the negotiations that begin the following day. Their presentation will be immediately followed by a session of the special consultative group to further consider INF questions. As the new Geneva talks unfold, we will, of course, continue to keep you fully informed and look to you for ideas, counsel and support.

As I set out in my letter to you of January 5th and as we have since reaffirmed in both our private and public statements, our immediate objective in these negotiations will be to achieve a radical reduction in the levels of existing and planned offensive nuclear arsenals, as well as the stabilization of the relationship between offensive and defensive nuclear arms, whether on earth or in space. Though effective nuclear deterrent forces will inevitably remain critically important to the security of the West well into the future, we should nonetheless set as an immediate goal significant and verifiable reductions in US and Soviet offensive nuclear forces, carried out in a manner which also enhances strategic stability.

With the beginning of these new talks, there are, of course, significant differences between our approach to these problems and that of the Soviet Union. The Soviets will be faced with a basic choice at Geneva -- that

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between serious bargaining at the negotiating table or further political posturing. Although they have spoken much of their readiness to pursue "radical reductions" in offensive nuclear arms, it remains unclear whether the Soviets are prepared to put aside efforts at legitimizing various unilateral advantages, to engage in serious negotiating, and in doing so, to begin to address fundamental Western concerns. They will, moreover, probably continue attempts to establish an artificial procedural linkage between negotiating progress within the three separate areas of the negotiations, threatening overall stalemate in order to extract unilateral restrictions on research into strategic defense on the part of the US. In this regard, the Soviets will try to use the talks to delay or undercut our strategic defense research, thereby maintaining their own advantages in both offense and defense.

For our part, we will be realistic, determined and patient, ready to deal with either course the Soviets choose. I have instructed our negotiators both to offer constructive ideas of our own and to respond to any serious proposals from the Soviet side.

In the field of intermediate-range nuclear forces, our primary objective is to press for early progress consistent with the criteria which we have long enunciated. Our negotiators will build upon the flexibility inherent in the initiatives that the US, based on Alliance consultations, tabled in September 1983. We will be willing to explore a variety of ways to reach the goal of equal global limits on LRINF. Our negotiators will be authorized to probe Soviet interest in equal global entitlements at levels other than those previously proposed. Within such an equal global limit, the US would consider not deploying its full global allotment in Europe. We would further be ready to consider reductions in Pershing II missile deployments and limitations on aircraft, two major concerns of the Soviet Union.

As I have indicated to you before, however, we continue to oppose any moratorium or pause in deployments, to reject the inclusion of any third-country systems in these US-Soviet negotiations, and to reaffirm that the Alliance's deployment program decided upon in 1979 can be

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altered only as a result of a concrete arms control agreement. Within our basic principles, the US remains prepared to show significant flexibility.

On the question of strategic arms, our primary focus must remain the achievement of significant reductions in the most destabilizing forces, ballistic missiles, and especially MIRVed, land-based ICBMS. Moving away from high concentrations of such destabilizing weapons will be in everyone's interest. To do so, we will continue to place our emphasis on the reduction of warheads and the level of destructive capacity and potential associated with these systems. We will seek an outcome that results in reductions to an equal limit of 5000 ballistic missile warheads on both sides. There can be a number of ways by which such reductions might be accomplished. Some could involve relatively fast reductions. Others could move more slowly to accommodate normal force planning and an improved confidence in the reduction activity over time. Provided that their method of operation ensures enhanced strategic stability and protects the national security of the US and our Allies, we will be flexible. It is the outcome that is of primary importance.

With respect to ballistic missile destructive capability, the US is prepared to consider different ways by which reductions in this area can be achieved. We can agree to either direct or indirect limits in this area, as long as an appropriate outcome results. However, of equal importance to reductions in the number of ballistic missile warheads and their associated destructive potential is the quality of the stability that results from the specific reductions.

The US recognizes the Soviet interest in dealing with the numbers of strategic nuclear delivery vehicles, ballistic missiles and bombers. The US delegation will be ready to listen to Soviet ideas in this area. We are prepared to explore trade-offs between areas of relative US advantage and areas of relative Soviet advantage. The US feels that the relative US advantage in bomber forces and the relative Soviet advantage in land-based ballistic missile forces offers the promise for such a potential trade-off.

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In short, our negotiators in Geneva will be prepared to be flexible by building upon US proposals previously put forward and to make progress towards an equitable and verifiable agreement if the Soviets are equally prepared to join us in this effort.

In the defense and space forum, we wish to engage the Soviets in a serious and comprehensive discussion of the offense-defense relationship. our specific near term objective is to reverse the erosion of the ABM treaty regime. Our SDI research program is fully consistent with that agreement. We will raise our concerns over Soviet actions -- such as their construction of a large phased array radar at Krasnoyarsk -- which violate the ABM treaty.

But while we will focus for the present on reversing the erosion of the ABM treaty regime, and while we do not believe it appropriate to begin discussing amendments to that agreement, we are prepared to begin discussing with the Soviet Union the implications which emerging defensive technologies may have for strategic stability and arms control over the longer term. In these discussions we will review the contributions which defensive systems can make to mutual security. We will also stress our belief that -- should new defensive technologies prove feasible -- any transition to a more defense-reliant balance should be a cooperative endeavor. We will, of course, also be prepared to hear out Soviet concerns.

In my earlier correspondence with you, I pledged my own efforts to achieve meaningful and equitable agreements that might reduce the threat of nuclear war and in doing so, help to strengthen the security of all nations, both East and West. In the preparations for the new Geneva talks, my decisions have been guided by this personal commitment. I look forward to your continuing advice and support in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

/s/

Ronald Reagan

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