

Subject



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

21 March 1985

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. TS1/85

Dear Ron

I was most grateful for your letter of 10 March, setting out the US negotiating position at the outset of the Geneva talks, and for the timely briefing which Max Kampelman's team gave to the North Atlantic Council on 11 March. It was also very useful to have had the opportunity to compare notes in Moscow with George Bush and George Shultz before I saw Gorbachev.

This process of consultation between us which you have begun is of the greatest value. The position which you outlined in your letter, and which your negotiators have subsequently deployed in Geneva, has our wholehearted support. The goal of radical reductions in offensive nuclear weapons is one we fully share. The leadership and commitment you have already demonstrated to the Allies and to the rest of the World is already a major step towards achieving our common objective.

I had almost an hour with Gorbachev in Moscow. The prospects for the Geneva talks took up most of the time. Gorbachev spoke predictably of his alleged doubts about American intentions, and expressed concern about the possibility of an arms race in space. He was however no less firm in claiming that the Soviet Union wanted to reach agreement on large-scale and mutually acceptable reductions in weapons; he specifically underlined this point.

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I spoke on the lines which I had agreed in advance with George Bush. I told Gorbachev that I shared the hope he had expressed, which I know you also share, for a successful outcome in Geneva; and I emphasised to him your own personal determination to achieve reductions in nuclear weapons. I underlined to him the importance of finding the political will for a way through. I recalled to him the Four Points you and I had agreed at Camp David in December, emphasising that the Western aim in the negotiations was to seek balance, not superiority. These remained the basis for the British Government's policy (as I reminded the House of Commons again this week).

I look forward to keeping in the closest touch with you as the talks proceed. I can assure you of our continuing support. Our position has not changed, whatever you may have heard or read.

With warmest best wishes.

Yours ever
Margaret

The President of the United States of America