Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

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5 June 1990

Dear Charles,

Prime Minister's visit to Moscow: CFE: Pre-positioning of Treaty Limited Equipment

I am writing separately in response to your letter of 1 June about outstanding issues on CFE. But the Prime Minister should be aware in advance of her meetings in Moscow that there have been some indications that the Russians might be removing equipment which will be covered by the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty from the Treaty area of application (West of the Urals) for stockpiling east of the Urals. I should stress that we have no hard evidence that the Soviet authorities are doing this in order to circumvent the effect of the CFE Treaty when it comes into force, but that is certainly one interpretation of what we have seen so far. It is equally possible that the movements have been brought about as part of unilateral reduction, modernisation of formations in the European USSR, or prior to destruction.

The Treaty Limited Equipment (TLE) in question are tanks, artillery and aircraft. In the case of the latter, the Soviet Union have also redesignated a number of Soviet Air Force regiments based west of the Urals to the Soviet Naval Air Force. Naval aircraft, they argue, should be excluded from the scope of the CFE Treaty, although they are land based. NATO has firmly resisted the suggestion that land based naval aircraft should be excluded from the TLEs.

We are not in a position to confront the Soviet authorities with an accusation that they are deliberately trying to reduce the extent to which the CFE Treaty bites on Soviet conventional forces by removing TLEs from the scope of the Treaty. But in discussion of CFE, it would be worth the Prime Minister asking about what is happening (particularly with the Soviet military). She might say that:

- we have noted movements of Soviet tank, artillery and aircraft units from west of the Urals to positions east of the Urals;

- this, taken with redesignation of Soviet aircraft west of the Urals to the Soviet Naval Air Force, leads us to wonder what are the implications for the CFE negotiations;

- the agreed purpose of CFE is to establish a stable balance which eliminates the scope for surprise attack and offensive

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action in the Atlantic to the Urals area. As you can imagine any undue increase outside that area would raise worries in Western Europe that the purpose of a CFE Treaty was being circumvented;

- we would therefore be grateful to know why these movements are taking place, and what reassurance you can provide that we will not be faced with undue concentrations east of the Urals.

I am copying this letter to Simon Webb (MOD).

Yours,

Stephen Wall

(J S Wall)
Private Secretary

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10 Downing Street

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Soviet Union: PM's visit to USSR Pt 4

POINTS FOR MEETING WITH THE MILITARY

1. Great respect for Soviet military tradition. Of a generation which remembers of them as allies in WWII.

2. Welcome greater contacts between armed forces: Marshal Yazov's visit: Tom King's visit.

3. Our common experiences then mean that we share unease about German unification. We have to find ways to live with it and ensure we avoid any repetition of the past.

4. The Conventional Force Reduction agreement will require us all to make reductions in our forces, not just Russians. We are also giving thought to our future defence posture.

5. Understand the practical problems which this causes.

6. We welcome the reforms in the Soviet Union. We understand the difficulties of the adjustments. We want to help and be constructive. There is no intention to take advantage.

7. Very much agree with Marshal Yazov that we must all keep sufficient defence. Never know where next threat may come from.

8. Interest in their views on nuclear deterrence in a situation where conventional forces are much reduced. Surely it enhances the need for maintaining nuclear deterrence although at lower levels. Britain will keep its deterrent.