



CE/SUP

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From the Private Secretary

22 January, 1988.

Dear Tony,

NATO SUMMIT

You are no doubt thinking about what we want to get out of the NATO Summit and how it should most effectively be organised. The Prime Minister will certainly want to discuss this with Lord Carrington when she goes to NATO on 17 February. But by then quite a lot may already have been settled.

The Prime Minister sees three main purposes in holding the Summit:

- to focus public attention on NATO in an American Presidential election year, and thus underline its continuing vital importance to the defence of the West and the need for the United States to continue to station substantial forces in Europe;

- to consult at the highest level within the Alliance ahead of the US/Soviet Summit in Moscow, and to agree on the broad lines of the American approach there. This will in effect mean confirming NATO's priorities in the next phase of arms control;

- to underline the unity of NATO in the face of continuing Soviet initiatives designed to separate Europe from the United States and to restate the main principles of Western defence policy, including the continuing essential contribution of nuclear deterrence.

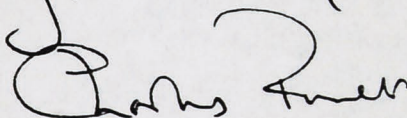
This points to a meeting which is part ceremonial and part substantive. There will no doubt be an inclination to allow all sixteen heads of government to make speeches. It may be unavoidable; but the Prime Minister hopes that we can encourage as much proper debate and discussion as possible in place of formal speeches.

We shall also want to see some sort of declaration or communique from the Summit. This could pose some quite difficult problems. We shall not want an unseemly wrangle

over drafting which would destroy much of the presentational value of the Summit. This must be a real risk on such points as negotiations on short-range nuclear systems in Europe, if the Germans dig their heels in. This points to getting texts settled in advance. It may also point to aiming for a rather general declaration rather than a communique dealing with specific points on which the scope for dispute will be greater. This will probably suit the Americans who will not want their hands tied too tightly ahead of the US/Soviet Summit.

We also need to be clear whether we envisage NATO using the Summit to take a step forward in some particular area. I do not have any specific ideas to offer. But I think that the Prime Minister would welcome suggestions from the Departments and Sir Michael Alexander for a possible initiative which would allow us to point to an identifiable achievement from the Summit.

I am copying this letter to Brian Hawtin (Ministry of Defence) and to Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,


C.D. Powell

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