



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

23 August 1983

Pine M...  
24/8

Dear Willie,

THE GREEK PROPOSAL TO POSTPONE DEPLOYMENT ON INF MISSILES

Mr Whitney thought you may like a note on the message which the Greek Foreign Minister sent to his European Community colleagues early last week (and published on 18 August). This proposed the postponement of the deployment of cruise and Pershing II missiles for a suggested period of six months in order to 'give the Geneva negotiations the breathing space they certainly need', and suggested that the proposal might be discussed informally at the next Political Co-operation Meeting of Foreign Ministers on 12 September.

Immediately after the publication of this message the FCO News Department gave an 'on the record' answer to a question as contained in FCO telno 272 to Athens (enclosed). On the day before (ie before publication of the message) an official here had made similar points to the Greek Charge; and had added the point that it was difficult to understand why non-stationing countries found it necessary to compound, in this way, the political difficulties which stationing countries are currently facing.

This is the worst example to date of the Greeks dissociating themselves from the agreed Alliance position on INF. It is particularly reprehensible that they should have publicised this message (no doubt for domestic political reasons); that they should be seeking to use the Presidency to further their maverick views; and that they raised the subject in the Ten instead of in the Alliance where it belongs and has been handled up to now.

Several other Community partners, including especially the Germans, have also given the Greeks a suitably firm response. We have little doubt that in sending a formal reply on his return to London Sir Geoffrey Howe will wish to underline the unacceptability of the Greeks' activities. But in deciding on the timing of this reply we shall have to bear in mind that the Defence Secretary is to visit Athens to see Papandreou on 2 September in order to promote the sale of Tornado, on which a decision is expected from the Greeks by 10 September. The total value of the deal is £700m, with a British content of £300-350m. We should probably seek to avoid allowing the message to coincide with this important visit.

/...

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Over the weekend messages were distributed by Ceausescu on lines similar to the Greek Foreign Minister's letter. It could well be that there has been some consultation between Ceausescu and Papandreou.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram in the MOD.

*Yours sincerely*

*Richard Kinchen*

R Kinchen  
Private Secretary  
to Ray Whitney MP

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UNCLASSIFIED

FM FCO 191230Z AUGUST 1983

TO IMMEDIATE ATHENS

TELEGRAM NUMBER 272 OF 19 AUGUST

AND TO IMMEDIATE ALL NATO AND EC POSTS

INFO PRIORITY MOSCOW, E.BERLIN, WARSAW, PRAGUE, SOFIA, BUCHAREST, BUDAPEST, TOKYO, UKDIS GENEVA, UKDEL VIENNA, CANBERRA, UKREP BRUSSELS, MODUK (DS17).

MIPT: GREEK PROPOSAL TO POSTPONE NATO'S DEPLOYMENT OF INF MISSILES

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF AN ON THE RECORD ANSWER GIVEN BY NEWS DEPARTMENT AT 1230 ON 19 AUGUST:

'I CAN CONFIRM THAT THE GREEK EMBASSY DELIVERED ON 17 AUGUST A LETTER FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE PROPOSING THE TEMPORARY POSTPONEMENT OF THE DEPLOYMENT OF CRUISE AND PERSHING II MISSILES, AND SUGGESTING THIS BE DISCUSSED INFORMALLY AT THE NEXT MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE TEN.

THE LETTER IS RECEIVING ATTENTION AND WE EXPECT A FORMAL REPLY TO BE SENT AFTER SIR GEOFFREY HOWE'S RETURN TO LONDON. IN THE MEANTIME WE HAVE ALREADY EXPRESSED TO THE GREEK EMBASSY AT OFFICIAL LEVEL OUR SURPRISE THAT SUCH A PROPOSAL SHOULD HAVE BEEN MADE AND OUR FIRM OPPOSITION TO IT.

IT REMAINS THE POSITION OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND OF THE ALLIANCE AS A WHOLE THAT THE DEPLOYMENT OF CRUISE MISSILES AND PERSHING II MUST BEGIN AS PLANNED BY THE END OF THIS YEAR UNLESS PROGRESS AT THE GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD MAKE THIS UNNECESSARY.

WE REMAIN CONVINCED THAT THE RUSSIANS WILL NOT NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY TOWARDS THE ARMS CONTROL OBJECTIVES WHICH ALL THE ALLIES SHARE, UNLESS THEY IN TURN REMAIN CONVINCED THAT THE ALLIES WILL OTHERWISE DEPLOY THE NEW WEAPONS AS DETERMINED IN NATO'S 1979 'DUAL-TRACK' DECISION.

POSTPONEMENT OF DEPLOYMENT WOULD CAST DOUBT ON NATO'S DETERMINATION TO STICK TO THIS DECISION AND WOULD THUS CUT ACROSS OUR ARMS CONTROL OBJECTIVES.

THE MATTER HAS FOR OBVIOUS REASONS BEEN HANDLED IN THE ALLIANCE, NOT IN THE TEN.

WHITNEY

DIST:

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22 AUG 1983	
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