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Authority: 40359
By: Laurie Madsen
Date: 09-21-2015

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February 14, 1982

Dear Bill:

Rupert Murdoch, the media magnate and owner of the Sunday London Times, The London Times (daily), The New York Post and other worldwide mass-circulation publications, called me on February 9. Senior British officials have been telling him of their increasing concern with the rapid progress being made by the unilateralists.

According to Murdoch, the majority of the people just do not understand the SS-20 threat. He asked if we could release satellite photographs of Soviet SS-20s to dramatically stem the rising opposition to GLCM and Pershing II deployment.

He felt that the delineation of the SS-20 threat graphically could be very persuasive. It would give the press--the friendly press in particular--an opportunity to counter the growing wave of unilateralism.

I pointed out to Murdoch that I had seen these photographs and they are not comprehensible to the lay person. Murdoch responded that he would commission credible analysts to be briefed here. They could make the photographs understandable to the average individual with circles, arrows, and other enhancements.

London 2

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Coincidentally, after talking with Murdoch, I received a cable from our Embassy in London (see attachment A), which concludes:

The Honorable
Judge William F. Clark
Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
The White House

NW#: 40359

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- 2 -

"...the most important media product we need--and one which would have enormous public impact--would be a series of photographs of Soviet SS-20s....This would show the British audiences graphically, dramatically and with the need for little further explanation just what the danger is."

I called Bill Casey to relate these innovative approaches as well as a third--a presidential press conference similar to President Kennedy's during the Cuban missile crisis. Both American and foreign media would be invited. The President could present large blow-ups while experts would be on hand to provide explanations in greater detail.

Bill Casey agreed to re-check the objections raised by his people when we initially discussed release of the photographs last year. Bill's people still oppose release of the photographs for "legal and security considerations."

However, Bill said we do not want to be too rigid and protective, given Murdoch's observations and with so much hanging in the balance on the upcoming German elections. Nevertheless he agreed that I should go ahead and present this issue to you on the basis that maybe we are being too rigid. As a major public diplomacy question, you may wish to pass it on to the SPG for a thorough examination.

I look forward to hearing your assessment.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

Charles Z. Wick

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