

July 12, 1979
**Letter from President Carter to Dutch Prime
Minister Andreas van Agt**

Citation:

"Letter from President Carter to Dutch Prime Minister Andreas van Agt", July 12, 1979, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Archive A.A.M. van Agt box 41: TNF Dossier, Catholiek Documentation Center, Radboud University, Nijmegen. Contributed by Ruud van Dijk. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/113535>

Summary:

President Carter writes to Prime Minister Andreas van Agt about the proposal for Theater Nuclear Forces (TNF) modernization and asks for Dutch support.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY)

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

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July 12, 1979.

His Excellency
Andreas van Agt
Prime Minister of the Netherlands
The Hague

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

Alliance consultations on theater nuclear forces have reached a stage where I believe it would be useful to supplement those consultations with bilateral discussions. Accordingly, I would like to send my personal emissary on these issues, David Aaron, to meet with you or with your appropriate Cabinet members the week of July 16, 1979. He will also consult with the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Belgium, and the United Kingdom.

Alliance consultations so far reveal a broad consensus that Soviet nuclear efforts, especially such long-range theater nuclear forces as the SS-20, pose a military and political challenge to the Alliance. To meet this challenge, the Alliance needs to modernize by deploying long-range nuclear systems in Europe capable of reaching Soviet territory, and by being prepared to negotiate viable arms control agreements. This would demonstrate Alliance unity, strengthen the spectrum of deterrence, and maintain the perception in both East and West of a firm U.S. and Allied commitment to the defense of Europe.

TNF modernization can only be undertaken on the basis of Alliance consensus, and broad participation in this effort. It will require steadfastness and determination to obtain an Alliance consensus on theater nuclear modernization and arms control, which I hope can be achieved by the end of the year. The work of the High Level Group on TNF Modernization and the Special Group on TNF Arms Control is putting the Alliance in a position where such decisions are possible.

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I am ready to do my part to lead the Alliance to a consensus, but I will need your support. David Aaron will be prepared to discuss with you in detail our thoughts on how a common Alliance TNF modernization and arms control approach can be achieved. In particular, he will be prepared to discuss possible specific roles which the Netherlands might play in Alliance TNF modernization. The U.S. has under development the weapons systems appropriate for TNF modernization and is prepared both to suggest the force mix and to make the systems available. On the basis of his discussions with you, we can move forward with full Alliance consideration leading to concrete TNF modernization and arms control decisions.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jimmy Carter

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