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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

9 March 1981

Message from President Brezhnev

The Soviet Ambassador called on the Prime Minister this morning to deliver a message from President Brezhnev. He was accompanied by Mr. Ouspenski. Mr. Bullard was also present.

I enclose the Russian language text of the message together with an unofficial translation provided by the Soviet Embassy. At the Ambassador's request, the Prime Minister read the text of President Brezhnev's message in full before the discussion began. She told him that the message would be studied very carefully and a reply sent in due course.

The Prime Minister told the Ambassador that HMG were very anxious to reduce the level of armaments provided they could be certain that the Warsaw Pact countries would also do so, permanently, on a basis which could be trusted and with adequate verification. The Soviet Union must find its present arms programme a major drain on its resources. The West also wished to spend less on armaments provided that this did not damage its security. They wanted the military balance to be stabilised at a much lower level than presently obtained.

As regards detente, the Prime Minister said that she was anxious to pursue this provided it was a genuinely reciprocal process. It would be much easier to discuss this, and other matters, once the Soviet Union had withdrawn its forces from Afghanistan. To have an independent country occupied by a major power inevitably damaged confidence. It gave rise to the question: "who next?". The Soviet occupation therefore remained a source of grave concern to HMG.

NATO was anxious to discuss the control of theatre nuclear forces. NATO's wish to negotiate arms control measures in this area had been announced at the same time as their decision to deploy Cruise missiles. The Soviet Union was far ahead of the West in the number, design and sophistication of their theatre nuclear forces. The SS20 was still being deployed at a rate of one every five days.

People in the West were genuinely peace-loving. They valued freedom and the right to pursue their own lives in their own way. They wanted other countries to be free to determine their own

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Soviet Union

Dear George,

destinies. The Prime Minister recognised, however, that other countries did not see things the same way. Therefore HMG would continue to seek adequate defences, to maintain the Alliance, and to develop cooperation with allies. She saw these as prime duties of the Government. Hers was the last generation that remembered the horrors of World War II. She and her contemporaries would therefore take particular care to try to ensure that it did not happen again. This meant maintaining a military balance.

A new factor in the situation was that conflict seemed to encircle the globe. Hostilities were, or had recently been, in progress in Vietnam, Cambodia, Afghanistan, the Middle East, Ethiopia, Somalia, Angola and the Caribbean. All these situations were extremely dangerous and must not be allowed to expand. The activities of the Cubans and the supply of arms to the third world were a source of concern. These matters could all be the subject of fruitful discussion. But the Prime Minister said that she would need assurances that such discussions were genuine. While the situation in Afghanistan persisted, the West would have to look at any proposal with "extreme care". President Brezhnev had proposed a summit meeting. She had suggested to President Reagan that if there was to be a summit, it would have to be very carefully prepared. If it were rushed into, it would not succeed. Summits always raised expectations and caused proportionate disappointment if they did not achieve anything.

The Prime Minister summarised her position as being that if President Brezhnev wanted to maintain the military balance at a reduced level; if he was prepared to withdraw Soviet forces from Afghanistan; and if he was willing to engage in "two-way" detente, then he would find that HMG were very anxious to discuss these matters.

The Soviet Ambassador said that he had found the Prime Minister's remarks very interesting. There were of course differences between the British and Soviet points of view, but there were also some points in common. The Prime Minister was concerned to resolve the difficult questions that faced both countries. He agreed with her that solutions could not be achieved without contacts, talks and negotiations. Failing such contacts, the problems would not be solved. Indeed, they would get worse. Problems could be tackled at different levels. The most difficult could only be dealt with at the highest level. The Soviet Union regarded the UK as a great power with influence in Europe and indeed in the world as a whole. Hence President Brezhnev's message. Any meeting at any level of course required careful preparation. But some of the most difficult questions got more complicated with the passage of time. As a consequence it was necessary to tackle them urgently.

Turning to disarmament questions, Mr. Popov said that neither side could win a victory in a nuclear war. Limited nuclear war was not possible. Any such war would lead to the destruction of civilisation. For this reason, the Soviet Union gave the highest priority to curbing the arms race. The Soviet Government had taken numerous initiatives and were prepared to discuss any approach to the problems. Mr. Popov quoted the experiences of his own family

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during the last war in support of his claim that the Soviet Union was deeply sincere in its approach to the problem of disarmament. He added that the Prime Minister was right about the damaging effects of the present level of defence expenditure on the Soviet economy. The Soviet Government would prefer to devote more money to economic development. The arms race was of no advantage to either side.

On Afghanistan, Mr. Popov said that the decision to send troops in to Afghanistan had been a difficult one for his Government. Three Afghan Governments had asked that Soviet troops should be sent; only the third request had been accepted. The Soviet Government wanted a political solution. Their troops would be withdrawn immediately if:

- (a) attacks by bands of bandits from outside the country ceased; and
- (b) a guarantee was given that the attacks would not be resumed.

The more arms that were supplied to the rebels fighting against a legitimate Government, the longer delayed the Soviet withdrawal would be. The Soviet Government was anxious to see a political solution achieved either in Afghanistan alone or together with the Gulf. Such a settlement would not only resolve the situation in Afghanistan but would lead to improved relations between the Soviet Union and the UK.

Mr. Popov said that his entire career had been spent in the field of Soviet/British relations. The relationship was "close to his heart" and he had come to London to seek an improvement in it. He was concerned to see trade relations between the Soviet Union and France, the Federal Republic, Finland and Italy expanding while those with the UK diminished. He was equally concerned to read of meetings at the highest level between the Soviet Government and the Governments of France and the Federal Republic and to note the absence of such meetings between the Soviet and British Governments.

The Prime Minister said that she was anxious to see more Anglo/Soviet trade where this was mutually beneficial. This, like all other aspects of the bilateral relationship, would flourish if it was clear that there was on the Soviet side a genuine wish for peace, and for the according to others of the freedom to decide their own destiny. Ours was an open society while that in the Soviet Union was not. She did not agree with the Ambassador about Afghanistan. She was worried about some aspects of the implementation of the Helsinki Final Act: the treatment of Mr. Orlov was one example of the sort of thing that was unacceptable. She could not divine the motives for Soviet actions. She could only judge the Soviet Government by its actions. If Soviet deeds matched Soviet words, the Soviet Government would find in the British Government very willing partners. For the moment they would remain watchful.

/ The Prime Minister

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The Prime Minister ended the meeting by expressing her regret at the death of Mr. Kosygin and by recalling how impressed she had been when she met him in Moscow in 1979.

I am sending copies of this letter to Brian Norbury (Ministry of Defence), Stuart Hampson (Department of Trade) and David Wright (Cabinet Office), together with copies of the enclosure.

Yours ever

Richard Alexander

G.G.H. Walden, Esq., C.M.G.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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SUBJECT

cc Krasov
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Unofficial translation

ПОСОЛЬСТВО
СОЮЗА СОВЕТСКИХ
СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКИХ РЕСПУБЛИК

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL- MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T 47/81

Dear Madame Prime Minister,

I found it necessary to approach you on the most pressing problems created by the present situation in the world. The Congress of our party paid the paramount attention to its analysis, assessment and practical conclusions. The question was about what should be done to preserve peace, to ensure the primary right of every man - the right to live for the present and future generations. This is the essence of the adopted decisions which determine the course of the Soviet Union in foreign policy for years ahead.

We are realists, and certainly we understand that the improvement of international situation, the diminishing and elimination of military threat depend not only on us, but on the will of other states. It also depends on whether it would be possible to create the proper mutual understanding and effective co-operation on the bilateral and multilateral basis in solving vital problems of the present time.

We are convinced that the attitude towards the existing military - strategic balance between the USSR and the USA, between the Warsaw Treaty states and NATO is of a principled importance. The Soviet Union was not seeking and is not seeking military superiority. But we would not permit to create such superiority over us.

The attempts of that sort as well as the attempts to speak to us from the position of force have absolutely no perspective.

The existing military-strategic balance objectively serves to preserve peace on Earth. We are standing for the consistent decreasing of this balances' level without tipping

it. To try to win in the arms race, to rely on the victory in the nuclear war - is a dangerous folly. It is necessary to realise that the endless competition in accumulating newer and newer weapons, the existing tension in the world - that is the real source of the military threat which hangs over all countries. We are ready to act hand in hand with all states in the resolute struggle against this threat.

We would like to express hope, Mrs. Prime Minister, that by joint efforts the present stagnation in Anglo-Soviet relations will be overcome and they will get a new positive impetus in the interests of the peoples of our countries and of the cause of strengthening peace.

We believe that, in spite of the aggravated international situation, there still remain real opportunities to preserve and to strengthen peace so that all nations can live in security and develop mutually advantageous co-operation. In particular, this can be referred to the situation on the European continent where, despite the efforts of the enemies of detente, peaceful co-operation among the countries with two different systems is developing not badly on the whole and where we manage to find common language on a number of major foreign policy issues. Of significant importance - both as such and for strengthening the political dimension - is the fact that the ties among European countries in various fields are widening and assuming new qualities.

As never before, in contemporary conditions consistent advancement is needed along those lines of principle which were defined by joint efforts during the last decade. Vital interests of peoples demand that Europe should follow the path laid down in Helsinki.

It is necessary to continue and to strengthen the process initiated by the European conference. Every form of talks - multilateral, bilateral - should be used to resolve the problems of concern for its participants. From these positions the Soviet Union approaches the Madrid meeting. The adoption in Madrid of a decision to convene the European conference to discuss and resolve the military detente and disarmament issues in Europe would be of a particular importance.

It is known that in recent years the Soviet Union put forward a number of proposals, aimed at diminishing military threat, strengthening international security, many of which had been approved by the UN and other representative forums. All of them remain valid and we will strive for their implementation.

However the situation today is such that it is necessary to increase further the efforts in order to radically improve the international situation, to give people the certainty of a reliable future. Guided by this urgent necessity the Soviet Union is advancing new major initiatives imbued with the deep concern in containing the arms race, deepening detente, strengthening peace.

I found it necessary to draw your personal attention, Mrs. Prime Minister, to these proposals, made, as you know, at the Congress of our party. Apart from the scope and far-reaching character of these initiatives I would like to emphasize particularly their realistic nature, the fact that they take into account both our own and our partners' interests.

The experience shows what a difficult and complex task it is to eliminate hot-beds of military conflicts. It is important therefore to do the preventive work, to forestall the emergence of such hot-beds.

In this context a positive role in Europe is played by the confidence-building measures in military field, undertaken by decision of the European conference. The Soviet Union made proposals to expand considerably the range of such measures.

Now we propose to extend considerably the zone of application of such measures as well. We are prepared to apply them to the entire European part of the USSR, provided the Western states too extend the confidence-building measures' zone accordingly.

We also think that the elaboration and the application of confidence-building measures could be useful in the region of the Far East too. Here it would be necessary to take into account the specifics of this region.

The view is expressed in some countries that our recent proposals concerning Persian Gulf could not be taken apart from the question of the stay of the Soviet military contingent in Afghanistan. Our position is as follows: being prepared to reach an agreement on Persian Gulf as an independent problem and to participate separately in a settlement of the situation around Afghanistan, we at the same time have no objection either to the matters connected with Afghanistan being discussed together with the questions of Persian Gulf security. Such discussions naturally can concern only the international aspects of the Afghan problem and not the internal affairs of this country. The sovereignty of Afghanistan as well as its status as a non-aligned state must be fully protected.

Proceeding from the extreme importance of the strategic armaments limitation issue not only for the USSR and USA, but for other countries as well, we on our part are prepared to continue without delay relevant talks with the United States preserving all the positive elements that have so far been achieved in this field. Such talks understandably can be conducted only on the basis of equality and equal security of both sides.

Trying to prevent the dangerous stockpiling of nuclear-missile weapons in Europe and to contribute to a speedy decision on such weapons, we propose to reach an agreement that as of now a moratorium should be set on the deployment in Europe of new medium-range nuclear-missile weapons of the NATO countries and the USSR, that is to freeze the existing quantitative and qualitative level of these weapons, naturally including the US forward-based nuclear weapons in this region. The moratorium could enter into force as soon as the negotiations begin on this score and could be in force until a treaty is concluded on limiting or, still better, reducing such nuclear systems in Europe.

We believe that the knowledge by the wide public, all people of those consequences that nuclear war is fraught with, would be of major importance also from the point of view

of additional influence on governments with a view to achieve agreements, aimed practically at preventing such a war. For this end we propose that an authoritative international committee should be set up, which would demonstrate the vital necessity of preventing a nuclear holocaust. The committee should be composed of the most eminent scientists from different countries. Probably appropriate part in implementing this goal could be played by the UN Secretary General. The whole world should be informed about the conclusions the committee draws.

Furthermore. To resolve numerous international problems, existing today a far-sighted approach, political will and courage, authority and influence are needed. That is why, in our view, it would be useful to call a special session of the Security Council with the participation of the top leaders of its member-states - both permanent and non-permanent - in order to look for ways of improving the international situation and preventing war. If they so wish, leaders of other countries could evidently also take part in the session. Certainly, thorough preparations would be needed for such a session to achieve positive results.

Coming back to the hot-beds of tension and the task of their elimination, I would like to single out the question of the situation in the Middle East. No matter what one's attitude is to what has been done up to now in this region, it is clear that the political settlement there has been recently pushed backwards. The present situation urgently demands the return to the collective search for a comprehensive settlement on a just and realistic basis, which could be done, say, within the framework of the specially convened international conference.

The Soviet Union is prepared to participate in a constructive spirit in such a work and to do it together with other interested sides - with the arabs, including, of course, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and with Israel. We are ready to search together with the United States, with whom we had in the past a certain experience on this score, we are prepared to co-operate with European countries, with every one

who is sincerely striving for a lasting and just peace in the Middle East. Presumably the United Nations Organization can continue to play a useful role here.

These are the questions which I would like to raise in this message. We hope that you, Mrs. Prime Minister, will treat our proposals with all attention. As you can see they cover the wide range of problems, envisage measures of political and military nature, concern different types of arms and armed forces, touch upon the situation in different areas of the world.

We understand of course, that it will take some time to study and to analyse them. Obviously a necessity will be arising in some consultations, in exchanges of opinions - in short in various forms of dialogue. We are prepared for it.

Yours sincerely,

L. BREZHNEV

6 March, 1981



ПОСОЛЬСТВО
СОЮЗА СОВЕТСКИХ
СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКИХ РЕСПУБЛИК

Уважаемая госпожа премьер-министр,

Считаю необходимым обратиться к Вам по наиболее жгучим проблемам, которые ставит современная мировая обстановка. Ее анализу, оценке и практическим выводам уделил первостепенное внимание съезд нашей партии. Речь шла о том, что должно быть сделано, чтобы сохранить мир, обеспечить для нынешнего и последующих поколений первейшее право каждого человека — право на жизнь. В этом — суть принятых решений, которые определяют внешнеполитический курс Советского Союза на годы вперед.

Мы реалисты и, конечно, отдаем себе отчет в том, что оздоровление международной обстановки, ослабление и ликвидация военной угрозы зависят не только от нас, но и от воли других государств, от того, удастся ли наладить надлежащее взаимопонимание и эффективное сотрудничество на двусторонней и многосторонней основе в решении актуальных проблем современности.

По нашему убеждению, принципиальное значение здесь имеет отношение к сложившемуся военно-стратегическому равновесию между СССР и США, между государствами Варшавского Договора и НАТО. Советский Союз не добивался и не добивается военного превосходства. Но мы и не позволим создать такое превосходство над нами. Подобные попытки, а также попытки разговаривать с нами с позиции силы абсолютно бесперспективны.

Существующее военно-стратегическое равновесие объективно служит сохранению мира на земле. Мы за то, чтобы, не нарушая этого равновесия, последовательно вести дело к снижению его уровня. Пытаться победить в гонке вооружений, рассчитывать на победу в ядерной войне — это опасное безумие. Нужно осознать, что бесконечное соревнование в накоплении все новых и новых

вооружений, сохраняющаяся в мире напряженность — действительный источник военной угрозы, которая нависла над всеми странами. В решительной борьбе с этой угрозой мы готовы действовать рука об руку со всеми странами.

Хотелось бы выразить надежду, г-жа премьер-министр, что совместными усилиями удастся преодолеть нынешний застой в советско-английских отношениях и они получат позитивный импульс в интересах народов обеих стран и дела упрочения мира.

Мы считаем, что, несмотря на осложнившуюся международную обстановку, по-прежнему имеются реальные возможности для сохранения и упрочения мира, с тем чтобы все народы могли жить в безопасности и развивать взаимовыгодное сотрудничество. В частности, это можно отнести к положению на европейском континенте, где, вопреки усилиям противников разрядки, мирное сотрудничество между странами двух систем развивается в целом неплохо и где по ряду крупных проблем внешней политики удается находить общий язык. Важное значение — и само по себе и для укрепления политической стороны дела — имеет то, что расширяются, приобретают новые качества связи между европейскими странами в различных областях.

В нынешних условиях, как никогда, требуется последовательное продвижение по тем принципиальным линиям, которые были заложены совместными усилиями в течение прошлого десятилетия. Кровные интересы народов требуют, чтобы Европа шла тем путем, который был проложен в Хельсинки.

Нужно продолжать и укреплять процесс, начатый общеевропейским совещанием. Любые формы переговоров — многосторонние, двусторонние — следует использовать для решения проблем, волнующих его участников. С этих позиций Советский Союз подходит и к нынешней Мадридской встрече. Особо важное значение имело бы принятие в Мадриде решения о созыве общеевропейской конференции для обсуждения и решения вопросов военной разрядки и разоружения в Европе.

Известно, что за последние годы Советский Союз внес немало предложений, направленных на уменьшение военной угрозы, упрочение международной безопасности, многие из которых получили одобрение ООН, других представительных форумов. Все они остаются в силе, и мы будем добиваться их претворения в жизнь.

Однако положение сегодня таково, что нужно еще более нарастить усилия, чтобы радикально оздоровить международную обстановку, дать людям уверенность в надежном будущем. Руководствуясь этой настоятельной необходимостью, Советский Союз выступает с новыми крупными инициативами, проникнутыми глубокой заботой о том, чтобы сдержать гонку вооружений, углубить разрядку, укрепить мир.

Я счел необходимым привлечь Ваше личное внимание, госпожа премьер-министр, к этим предложениям, выдвинутым, как Вы знаете, на съезде нашей партии. Помимо масштабности и далеко идущего характера этих инициатив, хочу особенно подчеркнуть их реализм, учет в них как наших собственных интересов, так и интересов наших партнеров.

Опыт показывает, сколь непростое, нелегкое дело ликвидация очагов военных конфликтов. Важно поэтому проводить профилактическую работу, предупреждая возникновение таких очагов.

В этом плане в Европе положительную роль играют меры по укреплению доверия в военной области, проводимые по решению общеевропейского совещания. Советским Союзом сделаны предложения по значительному расширению объема этих мер.

Теперь мы предлагаем существенно расширить и зону применения таких мер. Мы готовы распространить их на всю европейскую часть СССР — при условии соответствующего расширения зоны мер доверия и со стороны западных государств.

Мы считаем также, что разработка и применение мер доверия могли бы быть полезными и в районе Дальнего Востока. При этом необходимо будет учитывать специфику этого района.

В некоторых странах высказывается мнение о том, что недавние наши предложения, касающиеся Персидского залива, нельзя оторвать от вопроса о пребывании советского воинского контингента в Афганистане. Наша позиция состоит в следующем: будучи готовыми договариваться по Персидскому заливу как по самостоятельной проблеме и участвовать в отдельном урегулировании положения вокруг Афганистана, мы вместе с тем не возражаем и против того, чтобы вопросы, связанные с Афганистаном, были обсуждены в увязке с вопросами безопасности Персидского залива. Такие обсуждения, естественно, могут касаться лишь международных аспектов афганской проблемы, а не внутренних дел этой страны. Суверенитет Афганистана должен быть полностью огражден, как и его статус неприсоединившегося государства.

Исходя из исключительной важности не только для СССР и США, но и для других стран проблемы ограничения стратегических вооружений и их сокращения, мы со своей стороны готовы продолжать без промедления соответствующие переговоры с Соединенными Штатами с сохранением всего того положительного, что до сих пор было достигнуто в этой области. Понятно, что такие переговоры могут вестись только на основе равенства и одинаковой безопасности сторон.

Стремясь не допустить опасное накопление ракетно-ядерного оружия в Европе и способствовать скорейшему достижению решения относительно такого оружия, мы предлагаем договориться о том, чтобы уже теперь установить мораторий на размещение в Европе новых ракетно-ядерных средств средней дальности СССР и стран НАТО, то есть заморозить в количественном и качественном отношении существующий уровень таких средств, включая, разумеется, ядерные средства передового базирования США в этом районе. Такой мораторий мог бы вступить в силу, как только начнутся переговоры, и действовать до тех пор, пока не будет заключен договор об ограничении, а еще лучше о сокращении таких ядерных средств в Европе.

Мы считаем, что информированность широкой общественности, всех людей о тех последствиях, которыми чревата ядерная война, имела бы важное значение, в том числе с точки зрения дополнительного воздействия на правительства для достижения договоренностей, практически направленных на то, чтобы не допустить возникновения такой войны. С этой целью мы предлагаем, чтобы был создан авторитетный международный комитет, который показал бы жизненную необходимость предотвращения ядерной катастрофы. В него могли бы войти виднейшие ученые из различных стран. Наверное, свою роль в осуществлении этой цели мог бы сыграть генеральный секретарь ООН. О сделанных комитетом выводах должен узнать весь мир.

Далее. Для решения многих существующих сегодня международных проблем нужны дальновидный подход, политическая воля и смелость, авторитет и влияние. Вот почему, по нашему мнению, было бы полезно созвать специальное заседание Совета Безопасности с участием высших руководителей государств — постоянных и непостоян-

ных членов Совета, чтобы поискать ключи к оздоровлению международной обстановки, недопущению войны. В заседании могли бы, очевидно, при желании принять участие и руководители других государств. Для обеспечения положительных результатов такого заседания, понятно, потребовалась бы соответствующая основательная подготовка.

Возвращаясь к мысли об очагах напряженности, задаче их ликвидации, хотел специально выделить вопрос о положении на Ближнем Востоке. Как бы ни относиться к тому, что делалось до сих пор в этом районе, ясно, что политическое урегулирование там за последнее время оказалось отброшенным назад. Создавшаяся обстановка настоятельно требует возврата к коллективным поискам всеобъемлющего урегулирования на справедливой и реалистической основе, что можно было бы сделать, скажем, в рамках специально созванной международной конференции.

Советский Союз готов в конструктивном духе принять участие в такой работе и делать это совместно с другими заинтересованными сторонами: с арабами, включая, конечно, Организацию освобождения Палестины, и с Израилем. Готовы мы вести совместные поиски с США, с которыми у нас в прошлом уже был определенный опыт в этом плане, готовы сотрудничать с европейскими государствами, со всеми, кто искренне стремится к обеспечению прочного и справедливого мира на Ближнем Востоке. Видимо, полезную роль здесь может продолжать играть и ООН.

Таковы вопросы, которые я хотел затронуть в настоящем послании. Мы рассчитываем, госпожа премьер-министр, что Вы со всем вниманием отнесетесь к нашим предложениям. Они, как видите, охватывают широкий круг проблем, предусматривают меры политического и военного характера, касаются различных видов оружия и вооруженных сил, затрагивают положение в разных районах мира.

Мы понимаем, конечно, что потребуется время для их изучения и обдумывания. Видимо, будет возникать необходимость и в каких-то консультациях, обменах мнениями, короче, — в различных формах диалога. Мы к этому готовы.

С уважением

6 марта 1981 года

Л. БРЕЖНЕВ