

SECRET



File 110 5
cc to P. Goad ak

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

5 May 1986

You may find it helpful to have a note of one or two points which arose from a meeting which I had with Admiral Poindexter today:

- (i) he said that it was flatly untrue that the Soviet Union had notified the United States promptly of the nuclear accident. The Americans had first learnt of it from reports from Swedish monitoring stations on the Monday. There had been no communication from Gorbachev until some days later and then only of a routine nature. The Russians seemed particularly concerned about the demonstrations which Gorbachev would face on human rights questions when he went to the United States. They thought that he might help to make some gesture on this front but needed more time to convince his colleagues;
- (ii) American thinking on the timing of a summit was that the most likely time would be between the Congressional elections in November and Christmas or possibly early in the New Year.

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- (iii) The NSC staff were working on some new ideas in the arms control field which he described as a double track approach. The aim seems to be to map out specific steps which one side might take and the response from the other. He thought that the ideas which the Prime Minister had put to the President in her message of February on SDI would be subsumed into this study;
- (iv) the Americans had genuinely believed they had permission from France for over-flights in the action against Libya. The question of military action had first been raised with them by President Mitterrand in early February. General Walters had been sent to see the French in late February and subsequently this had been followed up by a military group who had had talks with their French opposite numbers about possible action. The Americans had at this stage mentioned the possibility of an air strike and had been told that over-flights should present no problem;
- (v) the Americans had no fresh reports of unrest in Libya today. But they did have [redacted] which he showed me, which suggested that Qadhaffi either had or was about to reconstitute the Revolutionary Command Council. It was difficult to interpret the significance of this but it appeared to mean sharing some of his authority more formally.

You may care to show this to the Foreign Secretary in case this is of interest. But I do not think that it should be distributed more widely.

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CHARLES POWELL