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SIR BRYAN CARTLEDGE

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH MR. GORBACHEV

At the end of their formal discussions this evening, the Prime Minister and Mr. Gorbachev discussed what should be said to the press.

The Prime Minister said that she would like to be able to give a constructive interpretation of their meeting. She would say that Mr. Gorbachev had given her a fascinating account of his hopes and plans for the Soviet Union. They had also considered prospects for arms control and reached agreement on a number of points, notably the importance of concluding an INF agreement, including constraints on shorter range systems. They had confirmed their wish to see an agreement banning chemical weapons, on which the United Kingdom had put forward specific proposals for challenge inspection. They were also agreed in wanting to see early talks on reductions in conventional forces. Mr. Gorbachev had assured her that individual cases concerning exit visas and family reunification would continue to be considered carefully, with positive results where possible.

Mr. Gorbachev said that he supported the general lines of the Prime Minister's proposed statement. He suggested that they should say that their talks had lasted for several hours and had conducted an exchange of views of a very broad and frank nature. They had agreed on the goal of developing their relations, co-operation and dialogue to help find solutions to the central problems facing mankind. They had stated their views and outlook on arms control in a very explicit fashion. They both supported the principle that all countries should have an equal right to security. They had stated their support for reductions in nuclear and conventional weapons. There had been a similarity of views on an INF agreement, and the two governments would continue their co-operation on an agreement banning chemical weapons. They had both spoken in favour of finding political solutions to regional disputes. As regards humanitarian issues, they had discussed the development of the Helsinki process and had supported broader co-operation in Europe

covering political, economic, trade and cultural relations. They had also discussed humanitarian issues in this same context. Their discussions had contributed to better relations and to establishing a basis for greater confidence between them.

I should add, for the sake of completeness, that at the end of the morning session it was agreed that the press should be told that the Prime Minister and Mr. Gorbachev had had very full and frank discussions covering the whole range of world affairs including arms control. Their discussions had been extremely interesting and valuable.

C.D.P.

C.D. POWELL

30 March 1987