



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

8 September 1983

Jon S...

In your letter of 25 July you asked for a draft speech for the Prime Minister's use at the Churchill Foundation Award Dinner in Washington on 29 September.

I enclose a draft dealing with East/West relations. It includes a tribute to Sir Winston Churchill, and to the Churchill Foundation; refers to the North Atlantic Alliance and the continuing validity of its aims and ideals; underlines the importance of US leadership of the Alliance; and discusses the way in which the West should handle its relations with the Soviet Union. (The shooting-down of the South Korean Airliner is referred to in paragraph 18 but this may need to be amended in the light of developments during the next two weeks.)

The speech would take about 20-25 minutes to deliver.

Two copies
R B Bone

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

DRAFT SPEECH TO BE DELIVERED BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE
CHURCHILL FOUNDATION DINNER IN WASHINGTON ON 29 SEPTEMBER
1983

Tribute to Sir Winston Churchill and to the Winston
Churchill Foundation

1. I am deeply grateful to the Winston Churchill Foundation of the United States for honouring me with this award.

No-one, least of all a Conservative Prime Minister, can receive it without the greatest pride and delight. In doing so, I am conscious that Churchill belongs to you in the United States as well as to us in the United Kingdom. For he began life with an American mother and an English father, and when he ended it, he had been made an honorary American citizen by the United States Congress.

2. But before he ended it, he knew that you had set up this splendid Foundation as a tribute to him⁽¹⁾; a Foundation whose purpose it is to foster that spirit of Anglo-American cooperation which Churchill epitomised. By making it possible for Americans to study and undertake research at Churchill College Cambridge, you have made an invaluable contribution to scholarship. Already eight of your Churchill Fellows have won Nobel prizes. But, what is just

(1) The Winston Churchill Foundation of the United States was founded in 1959.

as important, the presence of the Churchill Fellows in Cambridge helps to promote those close personal contacts between the peoples of the United Kingdom and the United States which are the bedrock of our enduring friendship. Nothing would have delighted Churchill more.

3. Although he left office nearly 30 years ago, Churchill remains a symbol and an inspiration to all who believe in democracy. He reminds us of the need to meet the challenges that confront us with energy and resolve. He reminds us that if politics is the art of the possible, it can nevertheless be great art. And he reminds us that transatlantic alliance and European cooperation point the way forward still.

4. For Churchill knew that the only means of safeguarding the freedom we so nearly lost in a second great war was to bind the Western democracies firmly together when peace was won. That is still as true today as it was half a life time ago; and we grow careless of the fact at our peril. We have a duty to ourselves and to those who follow us to sustain the priceless gift of freedom which his massive energies and inspired statesmanship bequeathed to us. In doing so, we fashion the best memorial we can offer him.

5. Churchill was a giant. He had an appetite for life, a vastness of imagination, and an unbending determination which saved his own country and helped to save the world.

Above all, he had endurance, displaying an heroic indifference to the pressures and expediencies of the moment which enabled him to hold fast to his goals, no matter what the obstacles and set-backs. As we contemplate the challenges facing us, we do well to heed his example.

6. We too need a clear vision and a vaulting imagination; but we also need the resolution to stick to our chosen path. Some problems have no easy solution: for some difficulties there is no quick fix. Pointing this out may not be welcome. But if we are to be worthy of Churchill's example, we must have the courage for the long haul. And this applies particularly to our conduct of international affairs.

The Alliance and Arms Control

7. Courage for the long haul is exactly what the Western Alliance is all about. It is exactly what it has displayed since it was set up over 30 years ago. Then, as post-war optimism gave way to the sombre realisation that the democracies faced a new challenge, a small number of far sighted men, inspired by the wartime collaboration of Churchill and Roosevelt, established the Western Alliance. Its aim was then, and remains today, entirely defensive: to safeguard the democratic ideals and way of life of its members. Its membership was then, and remains today, entirely voluntary. Its success has been unparalleled in

history. Safeguarded by their commitment to one another, the member countries of NATO have preserved their freedom and provided material prosperity for their peoples on a scale that would have seemed Utopian only 50 years ago.

8. This is a remarkable achievement, and one that has only been possible through unremitting effort. But there is a danger that we may be falling victim to our own success. The democracies learnt the lessons of the last war well. They established an Alliance which has withstood the tests of time and the pretensions of an antagonistic power. But that unity of purpose which has withstood the pressures from without is now under pressure from within. For it is just because we have enjoyed peace for so long that some people have come to assume that this is an inevitable state of affairs, rather than the result of the sustained efforts of our Alliance.

9. The so-called "peace movement" may pride itself on being the advocate of peace, but it is the NATO Alliance which can pride itself on being its practitioner. Peace does not come from chanting the word like some mystical incantation; it comes from that ceaseless vigilance and determination which the Western allies have sustained for nearly two generations. Maintaining peace is hard work, and we must not allow our people to forget it. We will not return to the wishful thinking of the 1930s when the democracies believed they could have it on the cheap. The Soviet

challenge remains. To say this is not to welcome the fact or to take pleasure in it. But, as President Reagan said in his memorable speech at Westminster last year, "self delusion in the face of unpleasant facts is folly".

10. No-one wants peace more than the Western Alliance. Our record proves that. We can stand on it and be proud of it. The major arms reduction proposals now on the table are Western proposals, drawn up after close consultation within the Alliance. In the field of strategic weapons, President Reagan has offered the most far reaching reductions in the history of strategic arms negotiations; while on intermediate range missiles he has, in the zero option, suggested that both sides should eliminate a whole category of nuclear weapons.

11. So far this radicalism has proved too great for the Russians, and they have rejected it. We in the Alliance remain convinced that no intermediate range nuclear weapons are the best intermediate range nuclear weapons. But in the face of Soviet intransigence the President has, on behalf of the Alliance, proposed an interim solution which would balance these weapons on both sides at a lower level than currently exists or is planned for. So far the Russians have rejected this too, though it is not too late for them to respond positively.

12. It would be easy to become discouraged. While the Alliance concentrates its efforts on limiting or eradicating intermediate range nuclear forces, the Russians seem more interested in trying to maintain their present unilateral advantage. Of course they deny this; but when I see the way they juggle the figures, and when I read their arguments for rejecting our offers, I am reminded of the lines by the playwright, Sir James Barrie:

"Facts were never pleasant to him. He acquired them with reluctance and got rid of them with relief. He was never on terms with them until he had stood them on their heads."

13. But we shall not allow ourselves to be discouraged. Our proposals are radical and our purpose firm. We are ready at any time for an equitable agreement; and we have been for many months. And we shall go on trying to get one. But I say again that NATO will not, and cannot, allow the Russians to perpetuate their present unilateral advantage. To do so would be to turn our backs on what we have achieved in the past 30 years, and to display a lack of will which would, in the short term, put at risk the credibility of our Alliance and, in the longer term, destabilise that military balance on which peace itself depends.

The Role of the United States

14. There have been great changes in the world since we set up NATO in the aftermath of war. But the United States remains the strongest member of the Alliance, and without the American guarantee, the European members would be perilously exposed. In its commitment to the Alliance, the United States has shown a resolve for which we in Europe are deeply grateful. By promoting post-war economic recovery, through the Marshall Plan, and by offering the shattered European democracies its military protection, the United States made possible that remarkable renaissance of Western Europe which stands in such stark contrast to the Eastern half of our continent.

15. But the leadership of a democratic organisation of 16 members is not easy. Differences of perception, and differences of interest, are bound to arise. We must accept these calmly as we work to resolve them. And through careful consultation, and through a sensitive awareness of one another's preoccupations, these differences can be resolved. Above all, we must never lose sight of our overall objective which is to maintain our unity so that we may retain our freedom. The values and ideals which bind us together are vastly more significant than the differences which occasionally divide us. Our peoples know this. And if there are sometimes disputes, we need only pause for a moment to realise that free men on both sides of the

Atlantic need, and enrich one another, still.

16. So although the world has changed, the need for transatlantic cooperation has not. The facile anti-Americanism of some in Europe, and the short sighted irritation with Europe expressed by some in the United States, must remain the misguided views of the minority. The Alliance must prosper, and can only do so under US leadership. The need for it is as great today as when Churchill and Roosevelt bent their energies to their great purpose. They did not always agree either; but they never forgot that their differences were trivial when weighed against their historic task, which was to withstand the challenge to democratic freedom.

17. Ours is nothing less. Differences of view should not be mistaken for a divergence of wills. We in Europe will continue to play our full part, but we know that it is the United States which is the ultimate guarantor of freedom. It is a role for which Americans are well cast, with their libertarian tradition and their enduring idealism. But it is a role which requires continuing resolve and courage, for it is not likely to be shed soon if we are to ensure that triumph of democratic freedom to which we are all committed.

Relations with the Soviet Union

18. In managing our relations with the Soviet Union we must remain united and resolute. Despite its growing economic difficulties; despite the discontent of an East European empire that longs to be free; and despite the increasing disillusionment of developing countries, the Soviet Union is unlikely to change much, or quickly. We should not imagine that internal difficulties and external failures will necessarily change Soviet attitudes or priorities, or that such influence as the West can exert will be decisive. The Soviet leadership is likely to remain suspicious and antagonistic towards the West, and opportunist and unscrupulous in its approach to international relations. The Russians may have failed to make good those famous boasts that they would overtake Western societies economically and technologically, and bury them into the bargain, but they remain fundamentally hostile to our values and way of life. Nothing demonstrates this more vividly than the fact that they can shoot down a civilian airliner without compunction, and apparently without remorse.

19. We shall remain resolute in resisting all attempts to undermine our democratic system. Economically, we have nothing to fear. Whatever the difficulties, the economies that flourish do so under the banner of the market, not of Marx. It is to the market economies that developing countries turn for aid, trade and technology. And in the

competition of ideas, we know that we are the easy winners. The Russians know it too. Why else do they prevent their people from travelling freely? Why else do they jam Western broadcasts? President Reagan was right when he told members of the British Parliament last year that we had no need to be shy in proclaiming our democratic ideals. Their resonance is worldwide. In defending them and sustaining them, we offer hope to the millions who long to share in them.

20. Confidence in our economic system and in the attractiveness of our democratic ideals does not, of course, reduce the need for a strong defence. The Soviet leadership know that they can only compete successfully with us in the military field. And so each year they devote some 15% of gnp to military spending - depressing evidence of where their priorities lie. The NATO countries have met this challenge, not by matching the Russians man-for-man or missile-for-missile, but by spending enough to ensure that their own military capabilities have been strong enough to deter aggression

21. As long as we maintain such a defence, we have nothing to fear from engaging the Russians in a dialogue. But such exchanges must be hard headed: I do not want the word "dialogue" to become suspect in the way the word "detente" now is. And a major element in such a dialogue must be arms control. We want verifiable arms control agreements both in

the nuclear and conventional fields. As I have said, we have put forward a large number of proposals covering a wide range of issues. We are committed to arms reductions across the board, as long as we can reach agreements which are to the genuine benefit of both sides.

22. But dialogue has a broader purpose too. Whatever the difficulties, we must continue our efforts to persuade the Russians to take a less dogmatic and a more constructive view of the world and to conduct international affairs with greater restraint and responsibility. We must try to do this in our bilateral discussions with them. But we must also make full use of the other opportunities which exist.

23. The CSCE process is one of these. We may be disappointed that the Soviet Union has often failed to live up to its CSCE undertakings; but we should nevertheless remind ourselves of the value of the Helsinki process. Despite setbacks and disappointments, it has brought the two halves of a divided continent together in a new type of institutionalised contact. It has provided a measure against which we can judge Soviet behaviour; a tribunal in which to examine it; and an instrument, however imperfect, with which to try to influence it. And more than this, it has helped to keep alive the hope that the divisions of our continent may eventually be healed. This is enormously important to Europeans, and particularly to Central and East Europeans, who retain the belief that one day they will be

re-united with the main stream of democratic Europe. And they are right.

24. There are no easy options in East/West relations. If we are to sustain our alliance and preserve the freedom that Churchill bequeathed to us, we must curb our impatience and be prepared for the long haul. We must maintain our military strength but we must always be ready to talk. Such a strategy offers the best hope of managing East/West relations safely and successfully. It also offers the best prospect of securing those arms control agreements to which we, in the West, are committed.

Conclusion

25. It has been said of Churchill that he "remained inflexibly attached to first principles".⁽¹⁾ And it was because he brought all his resource and energy to bear in the defence of those principles that democratic freedom triumphed over the fearful challenges which it faced. Democracy faces challenges still. But if we display a similar commitment to our principles we too shall prevail. And it is in the belief that we shall do just that, that I gratefully accept this award tonight.

(1) From Sir Isaiah Berlin's essay on Winston Churchill in "Personal Impressions"