



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

12 September 1983

Dear Brian,

POLICY ON EAST/WEST RELATIONS

On 8 September the Prime Minister held two meetings at Chequers to discuss the question of East/West relations.

The morning was devoted to a discussion with eight academic experts on the basis of papers which they had submitted earlier. In the afternoon a meeting of Ministers and officials considered, in the light of the morning's discussion and a paper on East/West relations prepared by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the policy which the Government should pursue on East/West relations in the next few years. A list of those attending the two meetings is enclosed.

The purpose of this letter is to record the policy conclusions which were agreed.

The meeting considered whether British policy should aim at, in the words used by the US Secretary of State on 15 June, 1983, "the gradual evolution of the Soviet system towards a more pluralistic political and economic system". The view was reached that the realistic possibilities of change in the Soviet system were such that it was very doubtful whether in the foreseeable future any substantially greater diversity could be expected. Our policy should therefore be based on the assumption that any change in the system in at least the medium term would not be fundamental.

It was agreed that the capacity of the West to exercise influence on the Soviet Union was not great, that Eastern Europe might provide more scope for influence but that the process of change in both would be at best gradual.

Soviet Union

The question of whether or not the United Kingdom should seek increased contact, at higher levels, with the Soviet Union was discussed at length. It was agreed that the aim should be to build up contacts slowly over the next few years. There would be no public announcement of this change of policy. The timing and nature of exchanges should be very carefully

/ considered,

SUBJECT

FILE

cc Master  
Foreign Pol,  
April '83,  
Strategy on  
Foreign Policy  
and Defence Issues

considered, bearing in mind both the recent Korean airliner incident and the fact that the reason why contacts had been reduced was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, where Soviet forces were still present. We should continue to pursue the present policy of making the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan as burdensome and embarrassing as possible.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary would hold a meeting with the Soviet Foreign Minister at the UN General Assembly in September. Mr. Gromyko might be invited to visit the United Kingdom in 1984.

Further thought should be given to the timing of the resumption of meetings in Berlin between the Commander in Chief, British Forces, Germany, and his Soviet Opposite number.

There were arguments both for and against a meeting between the Prime Minister and Mr. Andropov. It was possible that the new policy of increased contacts would result, in the next two or three years, in a meeting at this level at an appropriate time and place. But the Prime Minister would not go to the Soviet Union for this purpose. The aim should rather be to persuade Mr. Andropov to visit the West (which he had never done).

It might also be useful to arrange at the appropriate time for other senior members of the Politbureau, particularly potential successors to Andropov, to visit London. The Prime Minister would be prepared, in principle, to receive one or more such visitors. This question should be further examined and recommendations made in due course.

It was agreed that the main means of influencing developments within the Soviet Union was through the spread of information and that the most effective current instrument was Western radio broadcasts. Ways of increasing the flow of information to the Soviet Union should be actively pursued. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office should in this connection re-examine the role of the BBC External Services with regard to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. (It had been suggested during the earlier discussion with academic experts that the BBC were prevented by a policy directive from broadcasting to the Soviet Union in languages other than Russian and, further, that the effectiveness of its Eastern European programmes was limited by the convention that events in those countries could be covered only if they had already become the subject of media comment in the United Kingdom.)

As regards economic relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe it was agreed that the nature of the Western free market system and the widespread availability of technology ruled out a total ban on the transfer of technology. But our security interests required that the utmost care was taken to ensure so far as possible that exports which could have significant military application did not occur. Strategically significant exports should continue to be identified and embargoed under effective COCOM procedures.

Governments should exercise financial prudence in trading with the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries and avoid granting preferential treatment. The West should avoid over-dependence on imports from or exports to the Soviet Union in all trade sectors. Although trade might bring certain desirable political benefits, this could never justify conducting trade on terms disadvantageous to the West.

Soviet policy in the Third World was reviewed. It was agreed that this policy had been cynical and opportunistic. The Russians were facing increasing problems in responding to developing countries' real needs. Even where Soviet/Cuban influence had been established, countries were increasingly turning to the West for assistance. We should take advantage of this and should, in a variety of ways, seek to build up resistance to the Soviet Union in the Third World.

A fundamental characteristic of the relationship between the West and the Third World was that, unlike the Soviet Union, the West sought to help resolve the underlying problems of particular regions. We should play our part in maintaining this Western approach which was of great importance for world stability.

#### Eastern Europe

A number of conclusions relating specifically to Eastern Europe were reached.

It was possible to be more optimistic as to the possibilities for encouraging greater diversity in Eastern Europe but even here the prospects for fundamental change were severely limited. It was essential that our policy towards the Eastern European countries, and especially the public presentation of that policy, should not be such as to induce the Soviet Union to become even more repressive in its behaviour in the area.

Some evolutionary gains had been maintained in Eastern Europe. It was in the interests of the West to assist in preserving these. Each country should be treated individually and those tendencies which diverged from the Soviet model should be encouraged.

Eastern European awareness of developments in the West should be fostered by increased contacts of various kinds and by an active policy in the field of information.

A further programme of Ministerial visits should be arranged. Consideration should be given to the possibility of a visit by the Prime Minister to Hungary. High-level contact with Romania had value in helping that country to maintain its comparatively independent stance in international affairs. In the case of Czechoslovakia and East Germany, visits at above the level of a junior Minister would probably be inappropriate.

/BBC broadcasting

BBC broadcasting to Eastern Europe should be maintained at the highest level which was compatible with the resources available.

Similarly, the British Council's programme of exchanges should be maintained. There was particular value in exchanges which allowed young people in Eastern Europe to be exposed to Western society. Exchanges between schools were a good example.

A criticism made during the meeting with academic experts - that in selecting candidates for exchanges the British Council were obliged to ensure that those chosen should not be likely to become involved in controversial human rights questions - should be examined.

Cultural exchanges (the arrangement of British cultural events in Eastern Europe and vice-versa) brought less certain benefits than other types of exchange and should be considered selectively.

I am copying this letter and enclosure to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

*Yours ever*

*John Cole.*

Brian Fall, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Brown

System not as monolithic as it looks, especially top party leadership

Reactionaries - neo Stalinists

Conservatives - maintain system with minor improvements

Progressives -

Mixed views among advisers of Andropov. Reformers have high hopes

Gorbachev Note

Zastavskaya

Cannot run economy as big as Soviet Union from centre

Because of ① Because of vested interests, difficult to move

② <sup>Their own</sup> Ideology is that they are monolithic (more than they are)

③ No overall strategy

She suggests

Andropov recognises big changes are needed; but tremendous institutional obstacles. Betting is that he won't be able to do it.

Kaser

One opener of Soviet leaders is to Eastern Europe. Andropov's Hungarian period

Committee set up in November 1981 to study Eastern European systems

<sup>Proposal that</sup> Each republic in USSR to

Note

Some members of the Politburo recognise that some defects are such that they would grip the system up

Thomas

Inhibited by feeling that they are high priests of world system. Andropov: Jewish origin, not peasant background.

## Pravda

(2)

Change in relationship between society & state. Society has crystallised.

Central Asia: Content to stay within system, but will need to be given more say.

Problem of getting people to work harder Small Working through small factory groups.

Consumer in USSR more tolerant of low or falling living standards. But if GNP  $< 1\%$ , people will complain and become more demoralised. Andropov saying: working for yourself, work for Russia. Got to have more flexible system to give work groups incentive.  $\$$

Higher standard of education.

## Bordeaux

Soviet system built on denial of human rights. Could not fulfil Helsinki arrangements

Attempt to remove religion endemic. Religion is alternative way of thought.

Andropov cracking down

Phantom church: but producing pseudo-Churchmen to go round to World Council of Churches.

Election of Pope John Paul II threat to his policy.

Church has power to reintroduce dignity into system, because of grass roots effect.

Father to eradicate religion.

What do Churchmen ask for? Little - freedom to hold open services and some freedom to print literature.

Helsinki agreement - Good thing: set standard to which people rally

World Council of Churches - Listen less to Russian placement than they need to.

③

Nationalism: overkill nationalism very strong. But internal nationalism dangerous.

Basis for anti-Semitism: ~~cultural problem~~. Not ruled out from Party membership. But culturally difficult to assimilate and thought to have links with U.S.  
Moscow has been allowing more power to republics

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Amman

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Psychological effect of failure.

Radical concern with equality becomes petty bourgeois deviation.

Positive freedom outweighs negative freedom

Bourgeois democracy is a facade

Achievement of real Communism becomes timelier

Technocratic version of state power

Not technologically stagnant in military goods

But in civilian industries behind.

Last 3 5 year plans decline in new prototypes.

Decline does not lie in size of R & D effort. No extensive destalinisation of economy. Can they re-write science and production

System of incentives ineffective, perhaps counterproductive  
Paralysing bureaucracy

Is analysis right? Is partial reform possible?

Role of Western technology?

What contribution can Western Governments make?

Node Reform of price system crucial.

Amman <sup>Technology do not</sup> Imported ~~design~~ help much because they are difficult to diffuse



Donnelly Military Design so good that they make

Russian lost as many men in Leningrad in last 6 months as was at Britain in 6 years.

Military one of greatest supporters of system

Russia only influential because of military power

Military small voice in political decisions; unlikely to change.

Principles of war uniform.

Greater stability of system.

Consistency of defence planning.

Military determines what is produced for it to use. Concept of operations rigid and cannot be changed.

Soviets can ~~change~~ <sup>adapt</sup> their concept of operations more quickly than we can

Warsaw Pact only an extension of Russian army.

Schöpfer

Maintenance of Party power ultimate aim

But Party discipline cannot solve all problems and other means of solving them are not consistent with Party discipline  
Corruption

Node Nobody would want to stop all exports.

Donnelly Within military system, competition among designers



Do Russians want arms limitation?

Amman Yes: to ease strains on economy

Brown Military yes: politicians yes.

Do they really believe war is possible?

Brown In 1970s they thought war with West impossible and China possible. But Reagan right.

Nade From US it is believed that US aim is total superiority

Donnelly First use of military is not to fight war; but to achieve objectives with out it

Should PM visit Eastern European

Schoplin Yes. Always welcome to enhance status.

Cartledge But we must discriminate.

PM Invite successors?

Bordeaux BBC policy is not to use material from Russia or Eastern Europe unless discussed here. They are reflecting British life.

British Council policy Directives given to exchange student not to become involved in human rights.

- ① People should be allowed to travel more
- ② BBC external services
- ③ Invite Romanov + Gorbachev

They pretend to pay us, and we pretend to work  
Road reform