

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR

LINE TO TAKE:

The Prime Minister saw the newly arrived Soviet Ambassador for half an hour this afternoon to take delivery of a message from Mr Gorbachev on a number of questions, among them arms control, and to discuss the nuclear accident in the Soviet Union. The call was at the Soviet Government's request.

The Prime Minister expressed the Government's sympathy for the accident at Chernobyl and offered British advice and technical assistance in dealing with the damaged reactor. The Soviet Ambassador undertook to report this offer.

The Prime Minister also told the Ambassador that we looked to the Soviet authorities for the fullest cooperation over the evacuation of British citizens from the areas of Kiev and Minsk. The Soviet Ambassador said that this would be provided.

The Prime Minister told the Ambassador that we very much regretted the delay in releasing information about the incident and the continuing lack of full information on the nature of the accident.

Did Mr Gorbachev's message deal with the nuclear accident?
No. It dealt with a number of international questions, in particular arms control.

Was it not unusual for the Prime Minister to see a new Ambassador so soon after his arrival?
These were exceptional circumstances.

Did the Soviet Ambassador give any further details of the accident and its effects?

The Ambassador was able to add a bit to our information.

Did Mr. Gorbachev invite the Prime Minister to visit the Soviet Union?

No. He expressed interest in continuing and building on the dialogue between him and the Prime Minister begun at Chequers and continued in Moscow.

30 April 1986