

Subject cc Master

SECRET

SRWACO file

LCEPC



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

30 April 1986

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR

The Prime Minister saw the new Soviet Ambassador, Mr. Zamyatin, for an hour this afternoon at his request. He was accompanied by Mr. Kossov who interpreted.

Mr. Zamyatin apologised for being so insistent upon having an early interview with the Prime Minister. But Mr. Gorbachev had most particularly wanted him to see her before she met President Reagan at the Tokyo Economic Summit. The Prime Minister said that she attached great importance to her dialogue with Mr. Gorbachev and that was the reason why she had agreed to see Mr. Zamyatin. She did so on the understanding that Sir Bryan Cartledge would be received in a similar manner whenever we had an important message to communicate to the highest levels of the Soviet leadership. Mr. Zamyatin acknowledged that this should be the case.

Mr. Zamyatin said that he had seen the General Secretary very recently. Mr. Gorbachev had asked him to hand over a personal message to the Prime Minister (text enclosed). Mr. Gorbachev had in addition asked him to say to the Prime Minister that, even though they had their differences about the reasons for certain international events, he wanted to maintain a regular dialogue with her. This could take place either in Moscow or in London and whenever either side considered it necessary to consult. Mr. Gorbachev had found his meetings with the Prime Minister at Chequers and in Moscow extremely useful. In preparing for his Summit meeting with President Reagan, he had taken heed of the advice the Prime Minister had given him about President Reagan. A great deal of what she had told him about the President's personality and way of doing business had been confirmed when they met in Geneva. Mr. Gorbachev agreed with the Prime Minister that President Reagan was someone with whom one could do business and have useful talks. Mr. Gorbachev also recalled from his talks at Chequers that the United Kingdom clearly had a special relationship with the United States, and the Prime Minister a particularly close personal relationship with President Reagan which enabled her to speak frankly with him. It was for this reason that he wanted to share with the Prime Minister a number of thoughts before she went to Tokyo for

SECRET

SMH

the Economic Summit where she would undoubtedly have a meeting with the President. Mr. Gorbachev would like the Prime Minister to convey to the President his reflections on the next Summit.

Mr. Zamyatin continued that Mr. Gorbachev was of the opinion that a second Summit meeting would be useful. He wanted it to be held. Both the Soviet Union and the United States should follow the programme for future action which had been established at Geneva. The next Summit should be more productive of results and lead to the solution of specific problems. The priority area for such agreement was arms control. At the same time, Mr. Gorbachev was concerned by the apparent incoherence in Washington. While this had to some extent been evident at the Geneva Summit it had subsequently become much clearer. There were those in Washington who were clearly reluctant to see agreements reached with the Soviet Union and would be content if there was no further Summit. They were responsible for attempts to heighten tension. It was suggested in some quarters that Mr. Gorbachev had no option but to attend a further Summit regardless of developments. This was not the case.

The Prime Minister said that she was grateful to Mr. Gorbachev for his message. He clearly remembered and valued their talks at Chequers as she did. She believed they had set a tone in relations between the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union and perhaps more widely for East/West relations which was valuable. The Geneva Summit had gone well from the point of view of both the United States and the Soviet Union. It had also raised expectations throughout the world of a better relationship between East and West. She agreed that there had to be another Summit, that it should be this year, and there should be concrete agreements at it. However, there seemed to her to have been some slippage in the Soviet position since the Geneva Summit. She was not sure of the reasons for this. Various explanations had been suggested: that the Soviet Union was preoccupied with domestic issues and putting foreign affairs to one side; or that there were difficulties in agreeing a clear and consistent policy line. Whatever the reason, Soviet proposals in recent months had been cast in very general terms and appeared to reflect a desire to make propaganda rather than to negotiate seriously. She was confident that the United States was anxious to have a further Summit this year and to register results. So the task was to recapture the atmosphere which had existed at the Geneva Summit and at the same time to get down to serious and detailed negotiations on specific proposals.

Turning to Mr. Gorbachev's message, the Prime Minister noted that it dealt with a Comprehensive Test Ban, INF negotiations, conventional forces and regional issues. She was rather surprised to note the omission of chemical weapons. In none of the negotiations on these issues did we find the Soviet position sufficiently serious. Moreover there appeared to be particular difficulties over verification which was a disappointment in view of Soviet statements indicating a more positive approach to the

problem of verification. There was no substitute for serious detailed negotiations if progress was to be made.

The Prime Minister said there was a further point which she wished to stress very strongly to the Ambassador. The United Kingdom was very concerned at the growth of terrorism, above all state-sponsored terrorism. She supposed that the Soviet Union must also be concerned. It was essential that all civilised countries should come together to say clearly that state-sponsored terrorism was not a permissible way of conducting affairs and should be rejected utterly. To show the seriousness of this condemnation, all arms supplies to countries which adopted state terrorism as a policy should be suspended. In particular, the Soviet Union should stop supplying Colonel Qaddafi with weapons which enabled him to promote and support terrorism.

Mr. Zamyatin said that he would like to follow up the number of points made by the Prime Minister. On verification, the Soviet position had shifted significantly. The West would find that if agreement was close on specific arms control measures, verification would not be a problem. The Soviet Union would be able to go very far on verification. In particular there had been a substantial change as regards verification of a ban on chemical weapons.

Mr. Zamyatin continued that he noted that the Prime Minister was confident that the United States wanted a further Summit. But he persisted in believing that there were those in the United States who did not. As an example, he would quote the appearance of US warships in the Black Sea only six miles off the Crimean coast close to a resort used by the Soviet leadership. The Soviet Union had seen this as a deliberate provocation and had been tempted to retaliate. This had been personally countermanded by Mr. Gorbachev. There were many occasions of this sort by the United States and the only motive for them appeared to be to complicate the international atmosphere.

Mr. Zamyatin recalled that at the Geneva Summit, Mr. Gorbachev and President Reagan had agreed that regional problems should be settled peacefully wherever they occurred. The Soviet Union was prepared to proceed in this way, whether it was in Afghanistan or Angola. But they could not accept attempts to exert pressure from outside through so-called freedom-fighters. This would not solve anything. However, it was a positive sign that the Soviet Union and the United States had agreed to start a series of consultations on regional problems. These would begin soon.

Mr. Zamyatin said that the Prime Minister had mentioned conventional weapons. Mr. Gorbachev had recently made some far-reaching proposals for reductions in such weapons and hoped for early progress in this area. The Soviet Union was firmly opposed to terrorism which was barbaric behaviour, but differed from the West in its attitude to the most effective way in which to deal with those allegedly engaged

in it. The difference was over method, not principle. The Prime Minister said that there could be no doubt at all of Qadaffi's direct involvement in terrorism. This could not be tolerated. Mr. Zamyatin said that the Soviet Union had been worried that the United States action against Libya might be taken as a precedent for similar action against Nicaragua or Cuba. The laws of accepted international behaviour had been broken. The Prime Minister said that indeed they had: by Colonel Qadaffi.

The Prime Minister said that she wanted to express great sympathy for the accident which had occurred at the Chernobyl nuclear power station in the Soviet Union and to express her condolences to all those who had suffered as a result, although we had no precise information on numbers. Accidents tended to draw nations together. The United Kingdom was ready to offer any technical help or advice which the Soviet Union required. We had British students in Minsk and Kiev who we were anxious to get out. We looked to the Soviet Union to provide full cooperation. Mr. Zamyatin said that he would report the offer of technical advice. He could confirm that the Soviet Union would most certainly help with evacuation of the students.

The Prime Minister asked whether Mr. Zamyatin could tell her more about the details of the accident. Mr. Zamyatin said that the accident itself had happened in one of four reactors. There had been a fire leading to a radiation leak. The other three reactors had been promptly shut down. The fire appeared to be out but the nuclear reaction was continuing. A group of leading scientists were now on the spot to deal with the situation. Everyone within a 30 kilometer radius of the accident had been evacuated by helicopter and aircraft. The radioactivity in the atmosphere was at an insignificant level which would not affect human beings, although naturally a careful check was being kept.

The Prime Minister said that we regretted the Soviet Union's delay in releasing information about the accident and the continuing lack of full information of the nature of it. She recalled that the Soviet Union was a member of the Special Reporting Facility of the International Atomic Energy Agency. She hoped therefore that the Soviet Union would provide the fullest details promptly to other countries concerned and allow IAEA inspectors to visit the scene of the accident. There was criticism in this country of the lack of openness and a feeling that something very serious had happened and that the rest of us had not been told enough about it.

Mr. Zamyatin said that his Embassy had conveyed such information as was available to the Foreign Office that morning, although they still did not have many specific details. He repeated that a Commission was now operating which included people connected with the IAEA. Inevitably a certain amount of time was required to assemble the information but he would ensure that the British side was kept fully informed. Mr. Zamyatin added that the Soviet

SECRET

- 5 -

Union had taken steps to inform President Reagan "immediately the explosion took place" so that what had happened should not be mistaken for something else. The Prime Minister enquired whether other reactors of a similar type in the Soviet Union would now be closed down. Mr. Zamyatin said that they were continuing to operate normally.

In conclusion the Prime Minister said that she would consider Mr. Gorbachev's message carefully and make a detailed reply.

I enclose a copy of the line given to the No.10 spokesman after the meeting.

Would you please note that the reference to President Reagan having been informed is sensitive and knowledge of it should be closely restricted.

I am copying this letter and enclosures to John Howe (Ministry of Defence) and Michael Stark (Cabinet Office). I am arranging separately for the section on the nuclear accident to be copied to the Department of Energy and the Department of the Environment.

(C. D. POWELL)

Colin Budd Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

SECRET