

PRIME MINISTER

MEETING WITH THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR

You are to see the Soviet Ambassador on Monday. I attach a speaking note for you to use. It would be helpful to know before the weekend whether it is on the right lines.

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CHARLES POWELL

25 February 1988

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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

25 February 1988

From the Private Secretary

MEETING WITH THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR

I enclose a copy of the speaking note which I have put to the Prime Minister for use with the Soviet Ambassador on Monday.

CHARLES POWELL

A. C. Galsworthy, Esq., C.M.G.,
Foreign and Commonwealth office.

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POINTS FOR THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR

- Understand that Mr. Gorbachev wants to know whether there has been any change in our attitude towards the Soviet Union.
- The answer is that there has not. We still proceed on the basis of the principles on which Mr. Gorbachev and I agreed at our first meeting in 1984, namely:
 - mutual respect;
 - recognition of equal right of both countries to feel secure;
 - no point in trying to detach each other from our respective alliances;
 - frank speaking as the best way to overcome differences.
- Much progress has been made since that first meeting in 1984. We want it to continue.
- You have given public support and encouragement - including in your recent remarks to NATO - to the changes which Mr. Gorbachev is making in the Soviet Union.
- You have welcomed Mr. Gorbachev's statement of the Soviet Union's intention to withdraw from Afghanistan. We hope it will be implemented rapidly.
- You have welcomed the progress made on family reunifications.
- But it is necessary to be realistic about the differences which remain between our systems and about our respective concerns over each other's policies. It does no-one a service to indulge in false optimism.

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- We remain concerned about the scale of the Soviet Union's military might which seems to us far larger than required for legitimate defence.
- We see a continuing Soviet effort to denuclearise Europe. We believe this would jeopardise our security.
- We note Soviet support for Vietnam's subjugation of Cambodia, Soviet arms supplies to Nicaragua, their direct involvement in the conflict in Angola.
- We still do not see all the principles of the Helsinki Final Act being implemented in the Soviet Union.
- In the face of this, we are naturally determined to maintain a sure defence just as the Soviet Union is.
- That means continuing to modernise our weapons. You cannot deter war with obsolescent weapons. But of course we stick absolutely to our obligations under the INF Treaty.
- We also reaffirm our commitments to the ideals and purposes of NATO as a defensive alliance. That is the point of the NATO Summit.
- And we shall be no less forceful and robust than Soviet spokesmen in putting over our own point of view on all these issues.
- But our aim remains that of diminishing hostility and reducing armaments. We continue to support 50 per cent reduction in United States and Soviet strategic nuclear weapons, verifiable arrangements for the elimination of chemical weapons and the establishment of conventional balance.

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We seek security at a lower level of armaments. Balance is critical. Without it we shall only have fears and suspicions and greater instability.

- Realism is also essential. Neither side is going to convert the other. But we can learn to understand each other better and live together more easily.
- Talking freely and openly is the best way to overcome misunderstandings and resolve differences. There is nothing to be gained by sweeping problems under the carpet.
- You very much hope that Mr. Gorbachev will - as a respected friend - take up the invitation to visit Britain. Past meetings have led to good progress in our relations. There is every reason to expect future meetings to do so too.
- Convey warm greetings to Mr. and Mrs. Gorbachev.