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Soviet Union

20 June, 1980.

CSCE

The Prime Minister has seen your letter to me of 18 June about our policy towards the CSCE Review Meeting in Madrid. She has commented that our approach seems too much like "business as usual". She has stressed the need for us to show clearly in Madrid our disapproval of Soviet action in Afghanistan.

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

G.G.H. Walden, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Prime Minister

I thought you would like

to have an account of how we are approaching this Autumn's CSCE Review Conference - Madrid. Are you content with the line so far?

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

18 June 1980

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It seems too much like "business as usual" how do we show our disapproval of USSR activities? Mr. Gorbachev not

Dear Michael,

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CSCE

Thank you for your letter of 9 June in which you asked about our policy towards the Madrid CSCE Review Meeting.

In brief, we continue to support the CSCE process which we see as a positive element in East/West relations. We intend to ensure that the Madrid meeting should involve as a first priority a thorough review of implementation and, secondly, the consideration of a limited number of new proposals designed to secure improved implementation in areas specifically of Western interest. It is, of course, a prime objective of ours that the Madrid meeting should fully reflect in its proceedings the setbacks to detente occasioned by Soviet actions both in the area of human rights and human contacts and in Afghanistan.

The CSCE has a useful, if modest, contribution to make to East/West relations. The Final Act provides a framework for a broad basis of East/West contacts, and the meetings which constitute the CSCE process keep alive the commitment of the signatory states to its implementation. Whatever the limitations of the CSCE Review Meetings hitherto, they provide an occasion for reminding the Eastern European countries that they have failed to fulfil many of the commitments they have undertaken in the Helsinki Final Act. This standing to criticise the Eastern European Governments' policies, both domestic and foreign, in an international forum is well worth preserving. In better days, the CSCE might also provide a means of promoting some improvement in East/West relations. At the present time, however, it is clearly important that the Madrid meeting should reflect the reality of East/West relations and should not seek to gloss over the profound differences of Eastern and Western interpretations both of the nature of detente and of the commitments undertaken in the Helsinki Final Act.

Against this background, our objectives at Madrid will be:

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- i. to reaffirm our view that detente requires progress in the humanitarian field;
- ii. to continue to press for improved implementation of the Helsinki Final Act;
- iii. to counter Warsaw Pact attempts to promote the impression that business is as usual and obtain agreement to a 'pan-European Conference on military detente';
- iv. to ensure that any subsequent meeting on the military aspects of security is confined to Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) and held on terms which help Western interests;
- v. to maintain the CSCE process in being.

It will be important to pursue these objectives in full cooperation with our partners in the Nine and our Allies in NATO.

The Madrid meeting will be in two main parts, a review of implementation and the consideration of new proposals.

The Review of Implementation will, so far as can be foreseen, be the more important part of the meeting. We shall wish to ensure that it is thorough and deals in detail with the failure of the Soviet Union to respect the principles of the Helsinki Final Act in its actions in Afghanistan and in its policies towards human rights and human contacts. The review will provide an opportunity for a more wide-ranging criticism of the Soviet Union's behaviour than at Belgrade. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was in complete disregard for most if not all of the 10 Principles of the Helsinki Final Act. In the human rights area too (on which Western criticism focused almost exclusively at Belgrade) much of the unacceptable behaviour of the Soviet Union has continued and indeed has even been stepped up. The United Kingdom Delegation and its allies will naturally put considerable emphasis on the Soviet Union's shortcomings in this area both under Principle VII, which specifically concerns human rights, and in the Third Basket which covers human contacts such as family reunion etc.

The consideration of new proposals: notwithstanding the present cool climate of East/West relations there will almost certainly be a second part of the meeting to deal

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with new proposals for developing the Helsinki process. In present circumstances our intention is to avoid cosmetic proposals, and to concentrate on those which can be seen as a test of the Soviet commitment to soundly-based detente. But there will be pressure from the Eastern European countries, the neutral and non-aligned, and indeed some Western countries, to agree to new proposals which are thin on substance in order to preserve the appearance of progress in detente. Even the United States is still considering proposals which, because of their lack of substance in terms of promoting the Western interest, seem inconsistent with the strong US reaction elsewhere to Soviet actions in Afghanistan.

Against this background, we are currently working in the Nine and NATO on new proposals which will be in the Western interest and which, if accepted, will improve the implementation of the Helsinki Final Act in two areas. The first comprises the military aspects of security. In this area Western countries are giving cautious support to the first phase of the French proposals for a conference on disarmament in Europe, which would be devoted to Confidence-Building Measures applicable to the whole of the European territory of the Soviet Union. The second area is Principle VII (Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms) and the section on human contacts and information in the Third Basket. Our proposals here will be for modest practical improvements concerning for example the reunification of families and the working conditions of journalists.

As will be seen from the above we intend that the proceedings at Madrid should deal with all the principles and provisions of the Helsinki Final Act in a full and balanced way, and that the outcome itself should be balanced.

(G G H Walden)
Private Secretary

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