



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

5 May 1985

The Duty Clerk  
No.10 Downing Street  
LONDON S W1

*Dear Duty Clerk,*

VE DAY: EXCHANGE OF MESSAGES

1. In his letter of 1 May Charles Powell recorded the Prime Minister's agreement to an exchange of messages with Mr Gorbachev and enclosed the text of the Prime Minister's message.
2. The Soviet Embassy have today delivered the text of Mr Gorbachev's message to the Prime Minister. We in turn handed over the text of the Prime Minister's message. I enclose copies of the texts.
3. The Russians said that they envisaged publication of the exchange in the Soviet press on 8 May. We said that we would report the text of Mr Gorbachev's message immediately and would confirm the details of publication after consulting Ministers.
4. We have discussed this with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the following reflects his views. Inevitably the Gorbachev message sets out firmly many of the well-known Soviet positions. But despite this it is, by Soviet standards, forthcoming in tone about the British contribution to the war (in contrast to some recent Soviet propaganda in the run-up to the commemorations in Moscow). It also avoids any attack on the FRG through references to "revanchism" or indeed on the United States. It could therefore have been a good deal worse. It offers some points on which we could build in future discussions.
5. A point which could cause comment is the contention that the Yalta and Potsdam Agreements 'determined' the basis for "security, peace and co-operation" in Europe. This is of course unwelcome and will attract criticism here. But the message will in any case be published in Moscow. If we are pressed afterwards to comment on this point we would say that we have always advocated the full implementation of the Yalta and Potsdam decisions. We have consistently argued for the full implementation of the Helsinki Final Act which inter alia provides for the peaceful change of frontiers and freer exchanges of people and information. But beyond this we would try to avoid being drawn into detailed textual comment on the Soviet message.

/6. The Foreign



6. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary proposes to inform the Russians now that we agree to publication of the texts on 8 May. They would be released in London either by the FCO News Department or, if the Prime Minister preferred, by No.10 under embargo on 7 May for publication on 8 May. I should be grateful if you would let us know the Prime Minister's preference as soon as possible.
7. The Soviet message is in fact dated 4 May. We have dated the Prime Minister's as 8 May. We will tell the Russians that the signed original of both messages must be dated the same day, preferably 8 May. We would also make it clear, if asked, that while there was prior agreement on an exchange of messages there was no pre-negotiation of the texts.
8. Our latest information from Moscow about the French and Americans is that although a US/Soviet exchange of messages has been agreed in principle, the US Ambassador still had neither an American nor a Soviet text. The French also intend to exchange messages but have not yet received a text from Paris. In earlier discussions the French said that their message would be very much on the same lines as ours.
9. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary proposes that we should now tell the French and Americans that our exchange of messages has taken place and that we are agreeing to joint publication on 8 May.
10. I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretary in the MOD and to the Cabinet Secretary's Private Secretary.

*D. F. Richmond*

D F Richmond

Resident Clerk

TRANSLATION

Her Excellency  
Mrs Margaret Thatcher  
Prime Minister of Great Britain

Dear Madam Prime Minister

On the day of the memorable jubilee, the 40th anniversary of the Great Victory over Hitlerite fascism in World War II, we in the Soviet Union warmly remember the combat co-operation among the states-members of the anti-Hitlerite coalition, of which our countries were participants. The Soviet people, which exerted gigantic efforts and made tremendous sacrifices in the name of saving mankind from fascist tyranny, treat with respect the courage of the British people which made a substantial contribution to the achievement of the victory.

For forty years peace has reigned on the European soil. Proceeding from the existing post-war territorial and political realities in Europe, it is important to maintain and further strengthen the basis of security, peace and co-operation on the continent as they were determined in the decisions of the Crimea and Postdam conferences and confirmed in the Helsinki Final Act.

The experience which the peoples of our countries have lived through shows that it is necessary to fight against war before it begins. In order to prevent a new world war, a climate of trust and mutual understanding among peoples is urgently needed, as well as consistent efforts by all states with the aim of stopping a dangerous build-up of nuclear armaments, preventing the militarisation of space, averting the

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the military threat which hangs over the world. The Soviet Union is ready to co-operate with her former ally in the anti-Hitlerite coalition - Great Britain - in achieving these noble goals.

Please accept, Madam Prime Minister, on this memorable day, sincere wishes of peace and prosperity to the people of Great Britain.

(signed)

M GORBACHEV

Moscow, The Kremlin

4 May 1985

On this 40th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe, ~~it is right that we should look back~~ <sup>we</sup> and pay tribute with pride and thankfulness for the ~~concern~~ <sup>the Soviet Union and the United States and other</sup> heroism of those in both our countries who fought in a ~~common cause~~ <sup>common cause</sup> and with ~~grief~~ <sup>grief</sup> for the terrible sufferings ~~involved~~ <sup>involved</sup>. ~~We in Britain re-dedicate ourselves on this~~ <sup>no many sacrifices will be forever remembered. The</sup> ~~occasion~~ <sup>day</sup> to the values of freedom with justice for which victory was won.

~~The experience of these 40 years points to the vital~~ <sup>may I remind you that we shall</sup> ~~importance of our efforts to work patiently and~~ <sup>persistently</sup> ~~realistically~~ for better understanding and co-operation between our two countries and peoples, ~~acknowledging our~~ <sup>the one the basis</sup> mutual desire for security and lasting peace.

~~Our generation has a duty to the~~ <sup>to do all</sup> ~~future to see that such~~ <sup>to avoid</sup> ~~conflict does~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~that we can~~ <sup>to prevent</sup> ~~to prevent~~ <sup>such</sup> ~~such~~ <sup>conflict</sup> ~~conflict~~ <sup>does</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~happen again.~~

8 May 1985

It is the purpose - duty of our generation to do all that we can to see that such <sup>major</sup> ~~conflict~~ <sup>never</sup> ~~does~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~happen again.~~

On this 40th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe, we pay tribute with pride and thankfulness for the courage and heroism of those in both our countries who fought in a common cause. Their sacrifice and the terrible sufferings of so many families will be for ever remembered. We in Britain re-dedicate ourselves on this day to the values of freedom with justice for which victory was won.

It is the purpose and duty of our generation to do all that we can to see that such tragic conflict never happens again.

May I assure you that we shall work patiently and persistently for better understanding and co-operation between our two countries and peoples, acknowledging our mutual desire for security and lasting peace.

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M GORBACHEV

Moscow, The Kremlin  
4 May 1985



On this 40th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe, it is right that we should look back and pay tribute with pride and thankfulness for the heroism of those in both our countries who fought in a common cause, and with grief for the terrible sufferings involved. We in Britain re-dedicate ourselves on this occasion to the values of freedom with justice for which victory was won.

The experience of these 40 years points to the vital importance of our efforts to work patiently and realistically for better understanding and co-operation between our two countries and peoples, acknowledging our mutual desire for security and lasting peace.

8 May 1985

## PM's REVISED VERSION

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It is the purpose and duty of our generation to do all that we can to see that such tragic conflict never happens again.

May I assure you that we shall work patiently and persistently for better understanding and co-operation between our two countries and peoples, acknowledging our mutual desire for security and lasting peace.

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