

Dear Mrs.Thatcher,

As I recall clearly, in our meetings and in the exchange of letters between us you have made the point that it has been a long time since the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR visited Britain and that there has thus been a pause in the contacts between our two countries. I am pleased that E.A.Shevardnadze's visit to your country is now under way, and should like in a confidential manner to reinforce the political dialogue developing between us with remarks on what we in Moscow see as the ways of solving the priority problems of reducing the nuclear threat and enhancing international security.

Leaders of many countries in the world have welcomed the positive opportunities opened up by the Soviet-American Summit meeting in November 1985. The Soviet side has actively got down to work for the realization of those opportunities in the interests of creating a healthier international environment, curbing the nuclear arms race and establishing an all-embracing system of international security. Let me say frankly, however, that no breakthrough, or even a change for the better in the international situation, is yet apparent. It is rather the opposite--the situation has become even more complicated. We can differ in our assessments as to why this is happening, but

Mrs.Margaret THATCHER,
Prime Minister of the
United Kingdom of
Great Britain and
Northern Ireland

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the fact itself does not seem to be in doubt.

I recall vividly what you have said about the importance of a Soviet-American summit meeting. For our part, we have been telling President Reagan honestly and openly that we regard a new meeting with the US President as possible, that we favour dialogue with Washington and are not shutting the door for it. Of course, what is required for this is an atmosphere that would open up prospects for reaching real agreements. As we see it, Great Britain could help to ensure that a new Soviet-American meeting is a constructive one and does not become a disappointment for the Americans, for Europe, or for ourselves. We would welcome steps that you would find it appropriate to take in this regard. I believe that, given the nature of British-American relations, the British leadership have arguments they could put on the scales in this matter, which is important to all of us.

We firmly believe that the USSR and Great Britain, given their influence and role in Europe, could also work bilaterally to inject dynamism in the search for ways to curtail the arms race. As I understand from the exchange of letters between us, this is not inconsistent with the intentions of the British side.

The British side is aware of the proposals we have submitted at the Soviet-American talks in Geneva, which suggest ways to disentangle the problems regarding medium-range nuclear systems in Europe. Naturally, Britain's national armaments are not the subject of those negotiations. We do not infringe on Britain's status as a nuclear power, addressing only the quantitative parameters, so that, in the context of reductions in appropriate

Soviet and US weapons, there should be no increase in the nuclear threat to us from US allies. I am convinced that the British leadership could give a practical and substantial impetus to solving the problem of medium-range missiles in Europe. We are ready for direct one-to-one discussions with the British side on matters involved here. One could also consider, if there is interest on your part, the possibility of subsequent reciprocal stage-by-stage and equivalent reductions of the Soviet Union's and Britain's nuclear arsenals under reliable control.

From discussions I have had with you and your colleagues I recall the British side's attention to the questions of conventional arms in Europe. We understand such attention as concern for national security in a situation when the historical destinies of all countries in this continent are closely interlinked. You are aware of the substance of the proposals put forward in the Appeal addressed by the states parties to the Warsaw Treaty to the member states of NATO. Let me just mention that, in our view, Britain has an opportunity of making its own substantial contribution in this area at the Vienna talks and, primarily, at Stockholm. These and other questions could be made the subject of a specific exchange of views between us.

I think that, in light of the decisions adopted by the June Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, increasing numbers of people in the West-- on the Thames, on the Potomac, and in other capitals--are becoming convinced that we intend firmly to follow the course set by

the 27th CPSU Congress--to attain a real breakthrough in domestic affairs, to strive for a radical turn for the better in world affairs, for removing the suspicions and apprehensions that have been piling up for decades and for strengthening mutual understanding and trust.

Agreeing on practical steps to ensure such a turn in world affairs is seen by us as the principal goal of our exchange of views with the British leadership.

I am confident that your discussions with E.A. Shevardnadze will be held in precisely such a spirit.

We welcome the interest you have expressed in continuing direct dialogue. I am pleased to convey to you, on behalf of the Soviet leadership, an invitation to pay an official visit to the USSR. Meetings in Moscow will undoubtedly enable us to continue to actively search for and realize the possibilities of interaction between the USSR and Great Britain to strengthen international security.

Respectfully yours,

M. GORBACHEV

July 10, 1986