

CONFIDENTIAL

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RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN

THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER

AT 10 DOWNING STREET ON MONDAY 14 JULY AT 1500

Present:

The Prime Minister
The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary
HM Ambassador, Moscow
Mr. C. D. Powell
Mr. K. A. Bishop

Mr. Shevardnadze
The Soviet Ambassador
Mr. N. N. Uspensky
Mr. S. P. Tarasenko
Mr. G. P. Gusarov

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The Prime Minister welcomed Mr. Shevardnadze and enquired after Mr. Gorbachev. Mr Shevardnadze expressed gratitude for the hospitality extended to him and thanked the Prime Minister for finding time to see him so soon after her return from Canada. He had talked to Mr. Gorbachev shortly before his departure. Mr. Gorbachev had asked him to give the Prime Minister his cordial greetings. He had warm recollections of his own visit to the United Kingdom and his meetings with the Prime Minister. These had made an impression more widely within the Soviet Union. Mr. Gorbachev wanted to stress the importance he attached to the dialogue which he had established with the Prime Minister in 1984 and his readiness to continue it. Mr. Gorbachev had also asked him to hand over a message (text enclosed with this record).

The Prime Minister asked Mr. Shevardnadze to thank Mr. Gorbachev for the message. She would study it carefully and reply. She too looked forward to continuing the dialogue in due course. Mr. Shevardnadze pointed out that the message contained an invitation to the Prime Minister to pay an official visit to the Soviet Union. The Prime Minister said that she was grateful to Mr. Gorbachev for the invitation. She believed such a visit could be helpful and she would like to undertake it at a moment which both sides judged propitious.

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EAST/WEST RELATIONS AND ARMS CONTROL

Mr. Shevardnadze said that Mr. Gorbachev's message summarised developments since the United States/Soviet Summit in Geneva and expressed his readiness to hold a further Summit provided agreement could be reached on certain important issues. The message urged the Prime Minister to take an active role in preparations for a further Summit. It also set out the Soviet position in the Geneva arms control talks and described the various steps which the Soviet Union was taking, both internally and in its foreign policy, to remove the accumulation of mistrust built up over tens of years.

The Prime Minister recalled the basis on which she had told Mr. Gorbachev that discussions between the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union could bear fruit. They should be held on the basis of mutual respect, with the aim of securing a balance of armaments. Respect and balance together gave security, which was vital to both sides. In addition, all governments wanted to be able to spend more money on raising living standards and less on arms. We also wanted to avoid another war in Europe. Discussions took place on the basis of membership of our respective alliances. But they must also encompass wider world issues, with the aim of ensuring that local conflicts did not escalate.

The Prime Minister agreed that it was important to hold a further Summit between President Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev and that some concrete result should emerge from that meeting. The aim should be to bring the arms control negotiations in Geneva to the stage where practical results could be announced when the Summit took place. The last meeting had been useful in dispelling some of the suspicion and mistrust which characterised East-West relations. Now it was time to take a further step forward.

The Prime Minister continued that one area in which we believed early progress should be made was chemical weapons. Lord Whitelaw had reported on his discussions with Mr. Gorbachev and it seemed that the Soviet Union too was ready for progress in this field. It was important to take an early step forward since use of such weapons was becoming more common, for instance in the war between Iran and Iraq.

Another area for early progress was INF. Soviet and American proposals were on the table and there should be intensive negotiations to work out an agreement. We would also like to see progress in the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks.

The Prime Minister recalled that she had made clear publicly that, in a world where there was little enforceable international law, it was very important for the great powers to keep to their arms control treaties. This applied in particular to the ABM Treaty and to SALT I and II. She was aware that the Soviet Union had proposed an extension of the period of notice for withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. She understood the reasoning behind this, in that it would give greater predictability about the possible deployment of new weapons. The precise period of any extension would no doubt be a subject for negotiation. Britain had also expressed the view that SALT II should continue to be upheld. The United States had told us that they had raised their concerns about Soviet non-compliance with that agreement many times in the Standing Consultative Commission but without any satisfactory result. Both sides should comply with the Treaty and be seen to do so.

Mr. Shevardnadze said that he agreed with virtually everything that the Prime Minister had said, and in particular with her remarks about the responsibilities which all parties had under the various arms control agreements. Of course there was a global East-West relationship, but this was a very general concept. In practice it relied upon dialogue between individual states. The United Kingdom/Soviet relationship had an important role to play in resolving general East-West problems. Both sides had been ready to put aside their differences and work together in the past, in times of great danger. He approved the Prime Minister's general approach to East-West relations, with its stress on learning to live together. This corresponded to Soviet thinking. The Soviet Union had established plans to improve living standards and build socialist democracy. But they could be implemented successfully only if there was peace. This was why, in his statement of 15 January, Mr. Gorbachev had spelled out proposals for the step by step removal of the nuclear menace. A large number of other more specific arms control proposals had also been made.

Mr. Shevardnadze continued that the Soviet/United States relationship was obviously of central importance. The Soviet Union was sincere in its wish for better relations. The Summit meeting in Geneva had been an important step. Unfortunately, subsequent events gave rise to considerable concern. The Soviet side had taken decisions to suspend nuclear tests unilaterally, to freeze the deployment of intermediate nuclear weapons in Europe and not to launch ASAT. The United States had, in contrast, taken no positive steps. Instead it had decided not to abide by SALT I and II. This was cause for profound concern. The SALT agreements were "treaties for eternity" and must be preserved until better agreements could be put in their place. Of hardly less concern were American statements asking for a revision of the ABM Treaty. When people intended to undermine a Treaty they started to look for justifications, in this case by talking of Soviet superiority in space research and alleged violations of SALT. The Standing Consultative Commission had indeed discussed alleged violations of the SALT agreements fully but had not found proof of any serious non-compliance by the Soviet Union either on the encryption of telemetry or the development of the SS25. It had also been claimed that the new Krasnoyarsk radar was a violation of the ABM Treaty. This was not the case. The main function of Krasnoyarsk when completed would be to track objects in space. The United States for its part was building new radar stations outside its national territory, both in Greenland and in the United Kingdom. This was why the Soviet union had suggested freezing the construction both of Krasnoyarsk and of the similar stations in Greenland and at Fylingdales. The Soviet Union remained ready to take that decision.

The Prime Minister said that she would like to make some additional points on arms control. First, extension of the period of notice of withdrawal from the ABM Treaty strengthened the need for satisfactory arrangements to ensure compliance. Second, the United Kingdom would retain its independent nuclear deterrent and would modernise it. Failure to do so would mean disarming by obsolescence. The same applied to Fylingdales which pre-dated the ABM Treaty and must be modernised. Third, the United Kingdom was playing a part in research on strategic defence. The Soviet Union was no doubt also undertaking research. Indeed its reputation in the field of lasers was outstanding. Neither side could stop such research because there was

no means of verification. But if there was to be any question of deploying ballistic missile defence, that would be a matter for negotiation under the ABM Treaty. Finally, she wanted to stress the United Kingdom's interest in reducing conventional arms, particularly in the MBFR talks in Vienna.

Mr. Shevardnadze said that the Soviet Union had put forward proposals in Geneva on space defence which took into account earlier United States proposals. Now they had proposed a compromise covering INF, START and space. The Soviet Union had never denied that it was carrying out fundamental research into space defence. Indeed such research must be carried out. But it was essential to make a clear distinction between research on the one hand and development and production on the other. On INF, the Prime Minister would know that the United Kingdom's nuclear weapons were not the subject of negotiation between the Soviet Union and the United States. However, the Soviet proposal that there should be no quantitative increase in the British and French nuclear arsenals was a legitimate one.

The Prime Minister said that she and Mr. Shevardnadze could not enter detailed negotiations. But she could say that President Reagan was very anxious for a further Summit and wanted progress in the Geneva talks. She hoped there would be a Summit by the end of 1986.

Mr. Shevardnadze asked what more the Soviet Union had to do to convince the United States of its sincerity. They had already made important concessions. The Prime Minister said that the recent Soviet proposals had aroused considerable interest in Washington. They were being seriously considered and a reply was being prepared. She would report to President Reagan the terms in which Mr. Shevardnadze had raised these matters with her.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The Prime Minister said that she wished to raise a matter which Mr. Shevardnadze might find difficult. She would try to do so in a constructive way. It was a matter which went to the heart of relations between Britain and the Soviet Union. We found it difficult to understand why a country refused to let some of its people leave. There were three particular cases which she would cite: those of Ida

Nudel, Irina Ratushinskaya and Dr. Sakharov. We were also concerned more generally with the position of Soviet Jewry which was constantly raised in Parliament. She was aware that the Soviet Union regarded these an internal matters. Nonetheless it seemed to her that the Soviet Union could considerably improve its international standing by allowing such people to leave the Soviet Union.

Mr. Shevardnadze said that, on the right of nationalities including people of Jewish origin to leave the Soviet Union, every country had its own laws and customs. Soviet laws provided both for visits abroad and for emigration. The process was going on all the time. 279,000 people of Jewish religion had emigrated from the Soviet Union in recent times. This was not in response to appeals from outside but through the normal process of application within the Soviet Union. Soviet representatives were constantly being handed lists of names. That was perfectly legitimate. But there were specific cases where it was not possible to reach a positive decision. These were particularly where the security of the country was concerned. There were similar rules in the United Kingdom. Some cases concerned criminals who were serving prison terms. These problems called for objective and calm consideration. Where decisions were possible, the Soviet Union would make them.

The Prime Minister said that it would be very helpful if the Soviet authorities could do more in this area. She found herself constantly pressed to take action with the Soviet authorities and always made a point of saying that it was best to do so quietly. In the present instance, she would say publicly that she had raised the matter with Mr. Shevardnadze but not go beyond that. The Foreign Secretary recalled that there were two distinct categories of people involved: bilateral cases involving family reunions, of which we had handed over a list of 7 cases some weeks ago, and wider human rights cases including Soviet Jewry. Mr. Shevardnadze said that the Prime Minister should say that she had raised the problem and that he had explained the Soviet position, saying that legitimate representations would be considered. Mr. Zamyatin said that frequently cases raised concerned people who had been condemned by the courts and were serving prison terms. This applied to Irina Ratushinskaya. The Soviet authorities could no more over-rule the verdict of a court than could

the British Government. It would be better if such cases were eliminated from the lists submitted to the Soviet authorities.

TERRORISM

The Prime Minister said that it was important that governments should co-operate to deal with state-sponsored terrorism, and should not sell arms to countries which practised it. Mr. Shevardnadze said that the attitude of the Soviet leadership had been expressed publicly in speeches at the 27th Party Congress. Of course the struggle against terrorism was necessary and the Soviet Union was prepared to play an appropriate part. It did not wish to evade discussion. He suggested that the two foreign ministries should have direct consultations to explain their respective positions.

The Prime Minister recalled that she had also mentioned the question of supply of arms. Mr. Shevardnadze said that Libya was an independent country and was perfectly entitled to obtain arms. He recalled that aggression had been practised against Libya with the moral support of the United Kingdom. This could be equated with state terrorism. The Prime Minister said that we had seen murder on our streets carried out by people acting on the instructions of Colonel Qaddafi. If Qaddafi believed that he could get away with such behaviour, he would go on to kill other innocent people. She knew that Soviet diplomats had also been victims of terrorism. Even the Soviet Union seemed to find Qaddafi difficult to deal with.

Mr. Shevardnadze said that he did not want to act as a lawyer for Colonel Qaddafi. But there was no proof of the Libyan leader's involvement in terrorism. Moreover, there were a number of governments which were very odious such as those of South Africa and Chile. The West should not apply double standards. Why did it not organise an offensive against South Africa? The Prime Minister said that no other country had proclaimed its intention to employ terrorism and then carried it out in the same way as Libya. Mr. Shevardnadze said that South Africa had attacked neighbouring states. All manifestations of state terrorism should be condemned. He repeated his proposal for contact between experts on this problem.

AFGHANISTAN

The Prime Minister said that the Geneva Summit had awakened hopes for Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. She wondered whether there had been any subsequent development in Soviet intentions. Mr. Shevardnadze said that he was glad that the Prime Minister distinguished between terrorism and the problem of Afghanistan. The Prime Minister said that the problem of Afghanistan was that it was an occupied country. Mr. Shevardnadze said that was her opinion. Afghanistan was a very acute problem, of more concern to people in the Soviet Union than in the United States and Britain. The Soviet Union was not looking for any advantages in Afghanistan. A process of normalisation was in train and would be brought to its logical conclusion, provided that it was not hampered by outside forces. He was sure that the United Kingdom would want to contribute to a peaceful settlement. Talks were also going on and a time table had been produced for the withdrawal of Soviet troops. He did not rule out unilateral steps by the Soviet Union in that respect. But the Soviet Union could not leave without guarantees of non-interference. The people of Afghanistan had their own system of government. Afghanistan should be a non-aligned, neutral country and a good neighbour to the Soviet Union and other countries. The Prime Minister said that the Afghans were sturdy fighters and would not be governed by anyone outside their territory. They would want their own form of government, chosen by them alone. Mr. Shevardnadze said that there were no difference between him and the Prime Minister on this last point.

CHERNOBYL

The Prime Minister said that we welcomed the prospect of discussion in the IAEA on nuclear safety. We had heard of the outstanding bravery shown by those who had to cope with the disaster at Chernobyl. This had made a great impression. Mr. Shevardnadze expressed gratitude for the help received from the United Kingdom in dealing with the Chernobyl accident. The lessons of Chernobyl were lessons for everyone. The IAEA offered a good avenue for developing co-operation between governments. The paper put in by the Foreign Office dealing with compensation had caused concern to the Soviet authorities.

However they had replied and the matter was closed. The Foreign Secretary said that there had been an exchange of notes. The United Kingdom had taken the precautionary step of entering a possible claim and the Soviet Union had replied. Both documents were on the table.

The Prime Minister, in conclusion, said that it was important that such discussions between the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union be frank and not limited to repetition of established positions. Mr. Shevardnadze said that he had tried to avoid controversial subjects on his first visit to the United Kingdom and to focus on positive aspects. He had found the discussion very useful. The Prime Minister asked Mr. Shevardnadze to convey her best wishes to Mr. Gorbachev.

The meeting ended at 1700.

C.D.P.

Charles Powell

14 July 1986

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cc: PC

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

14 July 1986

Dear Tony,

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH
THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER
MONDAY 14 JULY, 1500

I enclose a record of the Prime Minister's meeting this afternoon with the Soviet Foreign Minister.

I am copying this letter and enclosure to John Howe (Ministry of Defence) and to Michael Stark (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely
Charles Powell

CHARLES POWELL

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

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PRIME MINISTER
THE RT.HON.MARGARET THATCHER, M.P.

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