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PRIME MINISTER'S  
PERSONAL MESSAGE  
SERIAL No. TS4/87

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FM CABINET OFFICE LONDON  
TO THE WHITE HOUSE  
BT  
SECRET  
MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER  
TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

DEAR RON,

I WANT TO LET YOU KNOW HOW I AM APPROACHING MY VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION WHICH STARTS ON SATURDAY.

I WANT FIRST TO MAKE MY OWN ASSESSMENT OF HOW SERIOUS GORBACHEV IS ABOUT INTERNAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING: AND WHAT IMPACT THIS WILL HAVE ON SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY. THE SOVIET UNION'S WEAK ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE MUST BE PUSHING HIM TOWARDS CHANGE. BUT I AM SCEPTICAL WHETHER HE IS REALLY ABLE TO TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS, OR FULLY UNDERSTANDS WHAT IS NEEDED. PEOPLE WHO HAVE ONLY LIVED UNDER COMMUNISM FIND IT DIFFICULT TO COMPREHEND THE WORKINGS OF THE FREE MARKET ECONOMY.

I SHALL MAKE CLEAR THAT THE WEST DOES NOT WANT TO MAKE CHANGE IN THE SOVIET UNION MORE DIFFICULT. FAR FROM IT: IT IS ONLY WHEN THEY START TO TREAT THEIR OWN PEOPLE DECENTLY AND IMPLEMENT THE FREEDOMS CONFIRMED IN THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT THAT WE SHALL BE ABLE TO DEVELOP THE TRUST AND CONFIDENCE WHICH ARE NECESSARY FOR A MORE PEACEFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION. BUT WE SHALL NOT JUDGE THEM ON THE BASIS OF WHAT THEY SAY THEY WILL DO: WE SHALL WANT TO SEE ACTUAL RESULTS.

I SHALL REMIND HIM THAT ALTHOUGH DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES ARE SLOW TO DO BATTLE, HE SHOULD NOT DOUBT OUR DETERMINATION TO RETAIN STRONG DEFENCES BASED ON NUCLEAR DETERRENCE. NOR SHOULD HE BE UNDER ANY ILLUSION THAT HE CAN SEPARATE EUROPE FROM THE UNITED STATES. I MADE A POINT OF VISITING PRESIDENT MITTERRAND AND CHANCELLOR KOHL EARLIER THIS WEEK TO UNDERLINE WESTERN SOLIDARITY.

I SHALL BE HAVING SEVERAL HOURS OF TALKS WITH GORBACHEV IN A VERY RESTRICTED CIRCLE. IN THESE MEETINGS I PROPOSE TO PRESS HIM ON HUMAN RIGHTS - IN PARTICULAR THE RELEASE OF DISSIDENTS, AND END TO THE ABUSE OF PSYCHIATRY, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, AND JEWISH EMIGRATION.

ON REGIONAL ISSUES I INTEND TO FOCUS ON AFGHANISTAN AND THE MIDDLE EAST. ON AFGHANISTAN I SHALL TRY TO CONVINCE HIM THAT THE ONLY CHANCE FOR A SOLUTION LIES IN THE COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TROOPS IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND GENUINE SELF-DETERMINATION, POSSIBLY WITH SOME SORT OF NEUTRAL STATUS FOR AFGHANISTAN, WHICH COULD BE ON THE MODEL OF THE AUSTRIAN STATE TREATY. I SHALL MAKE CLEAR THAT WE WOULD NOT EXPLOIT A SETTLEMENT AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION.

ON THE MIDDLE EAST, I SHALL MAINTAIN THE CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN OUR SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AND THE SOVIET UNION'S POSITION. I SHALL MAKE CLEAR THAT THE ONUS NOW RESTS WITH THE PARTIES. I SHALL ALSO LOOK FOR SIGNS OF A GENUINE DESIRE ON GORBACHEV'S PART TO PLAY A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN THE PEACE PROCESS, AND TO SHOW REAL FLEXIBILITY OVER SOVIET RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL AND JEWISH EMIGRATION.

WE ARE BOUND TO SPEND MOST TIME ON ARMS CONTROL. MY AIM WILL BE TO GET GORBACHEV TO ACCEPT IN PRACTICE, IF NOT FORMALLY, THE PRIORITIES WHICH YOU AND I IDENTIFIED AT CAMP DAVID LAST NOVEMBER AND WHICH OUR NATO COLLEAGUES ENDORSED A FEW WEEKS LATER. I WILL PRESS HIM HARD TO ACCEPT YOUR PROPOSAL FOR HALVING STRATEGIC WEAPONS OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, AND TO REACH AGREEMENT ON LONGER-RANGE INF. I SHALL MAKE IT CLEAR THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO ENDORSE THE INF AGREEMENT ON WHICH YOU AND THE RUSSIANS ARE NOW WORKING, PROVIDED OUR CONDITIONS ON VERIFICATION AND SHORTER-RANGE SYSTEMS ARE SATISFIED. BUT I SHALL STRESS THAT WE DO NOT SEE AN INF AGREEMENT AS A FIRST STEP TOWARDS A DE-NUCLEARISED EUROPE, AND SHALL UNDERLINE THE NEED FOR NEGOTIATIONS TO DEAL WITH SOVIET CONVENTIONAL SUPERIORITY.

GORBACHEV IS BOUND TO STRESS HIS CONCERNS ABOUT SDI. I INTEND TO STICK TO THE POSITION WHICH YOU AND I AGREED AT CAMP DAVID IN 1984. I SHALL MAKE IT CLEAR THAT YOUR SDI PROGRAMME WILL CONTINUE (AS NO DOUBT WILL HIS) AND THAT SUCH RESEARCH SHOULD BE PURSUED TO THE POINT OF ESTABLISHING FEASIBILITY. I SHALL TRY TO PERSUADE HIM THAT STRATEGIC REDUCTIONS SHOULD NOT BE HELD HOSTAGE TO UNREALISTIC SOVIET ATTEMPTS TO IMPOSE NEW CONSTRAINTS IN PRACTICE ON THE U S PROGRAMME. HOWEVER, I BELIEVE THAT HE WILL NEED SOME ASSURANCE, IN THE FORM OF A SENSE OF PREDICTABILITY ABOUT THE SHAPE, SCOPE AND TIMESCALE OF PROGRAMMES IF YOU ARE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON DEEP CUTS IN STRATEGIC WEAPONS. I SHALL, THEREFORE, SUGGEST THAT FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH YOUR PEOPLE COULD BE USEFUL, IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH WHAT BOTH SIDES INTEND TO DO OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS. I WAS GLAD TO SEE FROM YOUR MESSAGE OF 23 MARCH THAT YOU REGARD THIS APPROACH AS LOGICAL. BUT I CAN UNDERSTAND THAT YOU WANT TO SEE WHETHER IT WILL WORK IN PRACTICE. I SHALL BE CAREFUL NOT TO GIVE GORBACHEV THE IMPRESSION THAT IT YET HAS YOUR ENDORESEMENT.

THERE WILL PROBABLY BE DISCUSSION OF A CHEMICAL WEAPONS BAN. I WILL MAKE IT CLEAR THAT NO AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED WITHOUT YOUR ENDORESEMENT- AND THAT THE RUSSIANS HAVE TO CONVINCE US THAT THEY ARE TRULY INTERESTED IN A COMPREHENSIVE BAN WITH AN EFFECTIVE VERIFICATION REGIME.

I HAVE NO EXAGGERATED EXPECTATIONS AND AM NOT LOOKING FOR ANY AGREEMENTS (OTHER THAN SOME MINOR BILATERAL ACCORDS WHICH WILL BE SIGNED WHILE I AM THERE). BUT WE HAVE A MAJOR INTEREST IN GETTING THE RUSSIANS TO BEHAVE LESS AGGRESSIVELY. I SHALL BE DOING MY BEST TO GET GORBACHEV TO SEE THAT HE HAS AN INTEREST IN THIS TOO.

WITH WARM REGARDS,

YOURS,

MARGARET

BT



SECRET



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10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

*From the Private Secretary*

25 March 1987

Prime Minister's Visit to Moscow  
Message to President Reagan

I enclose a revised version of the Prime Minister's message to President Reagan in a form which she has approved. I should be grateful if you could let me know urgently whether there are any problems with the text before I despatch it later today.

(CHARLES POWELL)

A.C. Galsworthy, Esq., CMG,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

PRIME MINISTER

**MOSCOW VISIT: MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT REAGAN**

I attach a draft message for you to send President Reagan about your forthcoming visit to Moscow.

C.D.P.

(C.D. Powell)

24 March 1987



B H 2 B DCF

Dear Ron,

I want to let you know how I am approaching my visit to the Soviet Union which starts on Saturday.

I want first to make my own assessment of how serious Gorbachev is about internal political and economic restructuring: and what impact this will have on Soviet foreign policy. The Soviet Union's weak economic performance must be pushing him towards change. But I am sceptical whether he is really <sup>to</sup> capable of taking the necessary steps, or ~~even~~ understands what is needed. After all, he does not know anything except Communism. *People who have only lived under Communism find it difficult to comprehend the workings of the free market economy.* *fully*

I shall make clear that the West will not obstruct change in the Soviet Union. Far from it: it is only when they start to treat their own people decently and implement the freedoms confirmed in the Helsinki Final Act that we shall be able to develop the trust and confidence which are necessary for a more peaceful relationship with the Soviet Union. But we shall not judge them on the basis of what they say they will do: we shall want to see actual results.

*Not sure yet*

I shall remind him that *although democratic countries are slow to do better* ~~historically the democratic countries have never been aggressors,~~ ~~But~~ he should not doubt our determination to retain strong defences based on nuclear deterrence. ~~A nuclear-free world is a very distant dream.~~ Nor should he be under any illusion that he can separate Europe from the United States. I made a point of visiting President Mitterrand and Chancellor Kohl earlier this week to underline Western solidarity.

I shall be having several hours of talks with Gorbachev in a very restricted circle. In these meetings I propose to press him on human rights - in particular the release of dissidents, an end to the abuse of psychiatry, religious freedom, and Jewish emigration.



On regional issues I intend to focus on Afghanistan and the Middle East. On Afghanistan I shall try to convince him that the only chance for a solution lies in the complete withdrawal of Soviet troops in the near future and genuine self-determination, possibly with some sort of neutral status for Afghanistan, which could be on the model of the Austrian State Treaty. I shall make clear that we would not exploit a settlement against the Soviet Union.

On the Middle East, I shall maintain the clear distinction between our support in principle for an international conference and the Soviet Union's position. I shall make clear that the onus now rests with the parties. I shall also look for signs of a genuine desire on Gorbachev's part to play a constructive role in the peace process, and to show real flexibility over Soviet relations with Israel and Jewish emigration.

We are bound to spend most time on arms control. My aim will be to get Gorbachev to accept in practice, if not formally, the priorities which you and I identified at Camp David last November and which our NATO colleagues endorsed a few weeks later. I will press him hard to accept your proposal for halving strategic weapons over the next five years, and to reach agreement on longer-range INF. I shall make it clear that we are prepared to endorse the INF agreement on which you and the Russians are now working, provided our conditions on verification and shorter-range systems are satisfied. But I shall stress that we do not see an INF agreement as a first step towards a de-nuclearised Europe, and shall underline the need for negotiations to deal with Soviet conventional ~~superiority~~ <sup>superiority</sup>, ~~superiority~~

Gorbachev is bound to stress his concerns about SDI. I intend to stick to the position which you and I agreed at Camp David in 1984. I shall make it clear that your SDI programme will continue (as no doubt will his) and that such research should be pursued to the point of establishing feasibility. I shall try to persuade him that strategic reductions should not

be held hostage to unrealistic Soviet attempts to impose new constraints in practice on the US programme. However, I believe that he will need some assurance, in the form of a sense of predictability about the shape, scope and timescale of programmes if you are to reach agreement on deep cuts in strategic weapons. I shall, therefore, suggest that further discussion with your people could be useful, in order to establish what both sides intend to do over the next few years. I was glad to see from your message of 23 March that you regard this approach as logical. But I can understand that you want to see whether it will work in practice. I shall be careful not to give Gorbachev the impression that it yet has your endorsement.

There will probably be discussion of a chemical weapons ban. I will make it clear that no agreement can be reached without your own endorsement; and that the Russians have to convince us that they are truly interested in a comprehensive ban with an effective verification regime.

I have no exaggerated expectations and am not looking for any agreements (other than some minor bilateral accords which will be signed while I am there). (Nor shall I be offering myself as in any way a mediator between Gorbachev and you. That's impossible since I am firmly on your side!) But we have a major interest in getting the Russians to behave less aggressively. I shall be doing my best to get Gorbachev to see that he has an interest in this too.

With warm regards,

Yours,

Margaret