

How can there be any prospect

PRIME MINISTER

of a conference in Moscow - the country which CSCE (other than here) has the worst record on human rights. And is still in Afghanistan. What sort of signal is that to those who close the closing stages of the CSCE follow-up meeting and seeks your approval for it.

of the oppression?

East and West will be able to agree on negotiations on conventional arms reductions to begin next year. But the human rights negotiations are more difficult.

Demands must be

In the Foreign Secretary's submission, a successful conclusion on human rights is likely to turn on whether we are ready, at the end of the day, to agree to a conference on human contacts in Moscow. The French have tabled a proposal which envisages a conference in Paris in 1989 to review progress on human rights issues, another conference on human rights in a western capital in 1990 and a conference on human contacts (ie emigration family reunification) in Moscow also in 1990. The argument is that if the Russians have the prospect of a conference some years away, they will have a strong incentive to improve their human rights performance in the meantime. Other governments, including the Americans, are said to be moving towards support for the French proposal. Even Yuri Orlov is said to give it qualified support.

placed on the USSR before any such conference is considered

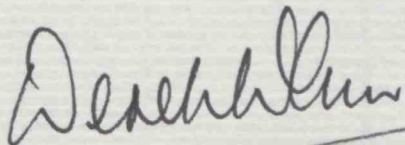
There is a logic to this argument. But you should at least consider the counter-arguments which are not put in the Foreign Secretary's note.

The assured prospect of a human rights/human contacts meeting would make it appear that the West was giving the Russians the gold seal of approval for their human rights performance. Realistically, once the Conference is promised, it is not going to be taken away. It would therefore detract from the pressure on them to improve their performance. Brave talk of using a conference in Moscow to expose Russian failings on human rights is likely to prove just that - talk - when it

comes to grips with the reality of Soviet bureaucracy and control. It's all very well to talk of setting a high price for a conference in terms of Soviet promises to do better. But the fact of the matter is that we are not going to get explicit commitments; and whatever commitments we do get are quite likely to be ignored in practice, just as the Helsinki Agreements have been. A conference on the other hand is a specific commitment, and by conceding it we are paying in advance for goods we may not get. And if one does not believe that the Russians are going to improve their behaviour significantly anyway, then there is no point in agreeing to a conference.

Personally, I find this line of argument the more convincing. But there are two problems: the fact that others seem prepared to concede a conference in Moscow, which would leave us isolated; and the fact that a break-down of the Vienna Agreement might be an even worse result for those deprived of their rights in the Soviet Union than agreement to a conference in 1990 (although I am not convinced that this is so). But neither point argues for agreeing now to a conference.

I expect I am a bit of a cave-man on these issues. But I just feel that there is something almost obscene about a meeting in Moscow on human contacts, that it would represent the ultimate triumph for Soviet propaganda. You might want me at least to put the alternative arguments to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and say that you are not prepared to concede - even in our own deliberations at this stage - the possibility of a Conference in Moscow. Only when we have a much clearer idea of the commitments the Russians are ready to undertake are you prepared even to consider it.



Duty Clerk

J C D POWELL

1 October 1987



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*cc pc*

10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

*From the Private Secretary*

2 October 1987

**CSCE: WESTERN STRATEGY**

Thank you for your letter of 1 October setting out a proposed strategy for the closing stages of the Vienna follow-up meeting of the CSCE.

The Prime Minister does not see how we can even contemplate a conference on human contacts in Moscow while the Soviet Union's record on human rights remains as bad as it is and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan continues. Even to signal the possibility of it would let down those fighting oppression in the Soviet Union. She would also argue that conceding a conference, which is a specific commitment, in return for Soviet undertakings which will inevitably be less specific and quite likely to be ignored in practice as were the Helsinki agreements, would be a most unsatisfactory bargain from the West's point of view.

The Prime Minister therefore takes the view that we should continue to negotiate on the assumption that a conference in Moscow would not be acceptable and that the western side should not put forward proposals which admit the possibility of it. Only when we have a much clearer idea of what commitments the Russians are ready to undertake on human rights and contacts - and in her view, they would have to be much firmer than anything hitherto seen - should we be prepared even to consider it. For now, she remains firmly opposed and would wish this to be clearly reflected in what we say.

I am copying this letter to John Howe (Ministry of Defence).

C D POWELL

Lyn Parker, Esq.  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

1 October 1987

Dear Charles,

CSCE : Western Strategy

The Vienna follow-up meeting of the CSCE resumed on 22 September. This will probably be its final round. We hope that it will conclude before Christmas.

The Foreign Secretary has been reflecting on the strategy we need to adopt to secure a satisfactory outcome. He would welcome the Prime Minister's endorsement of what follows.

The CSCE process has two key elements: security including conventional arms control; and human rights and contacts (known in CSCE jargon as the "human dimension"). Progress on both is important; and they must be kept in balance.

In the security area, the West has tabled good proposals for a future negotiation on confidence and security building measures (CSBMs) and for conventional stability negotiations to take place in the Group of 23 NATO and Warsaw Pact countries, but "within the CSCE process". There is a good prospect of reaching an acceptable agreement by the end of the year enabling these two sets of negotiations to begin in the spring or summer of 1988. The Russians want this. So do we.

In the human dimension we are working for steady improvement of the Soviet and East European human rights performance. We therefore need a forward programme for human rights and human contacts. The Western proposal for the human dimension (summary at Annex A) was designed to achieve this through the creation of new procedures for continuing scrutiny of Soviet and East European performance, ending with a conference, probably in a Western or neutral capital.

Sir Geoffrey believes that it is important that the West should win agreement to something on the lines of this proposal. It would give us a new lever to secure

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better human rights performance. If we fail, the Russians will have succeeded in largely draining the CSCE process of its human rights content and tilting it sharply towards the European security forum which they have always wanted it to be.

The human dimension is thus of critical importance. We do not have many levers with which to get what we want in Vienna. But one lever is the Soviet proposal for a humanitarian conference in Moscow. This had few attractions when Shevardnadze launched it last November: it could all too easily be turned by the Russians into a propanganda circus. We have treated it with great scepticism.

Most of our allies, including the US, are however now ready to explore the possibility. A recent French modification of the earlier Western human dimension proposal (summarised at Annex A) envisages a process of scrutiny including a meeting on the human dimension in Paris in 1989, followed by meetings in 1990 on human rights in a Western capital, and on human contacts (family reunification, emigration etc) in Moscow. This has the merit of putting the possibility of a Moscow meeting right at the end of the sequence, prolonging the period in which the Russians would have to prove themselves through good behaviour; and of confining discussion of human rights to meetings in the West. Most of the Western Group would probably go along with something on these lines. American officials say the US will be prepared to do so, provided the price we extract from the Russians is a high one.

Clearly if anything like this was to happen the conditions for a Moscow conference - on access and openness - would be crucial. So would Soviet performance in the meanwhile. With this proviso, a meeting in Moscow would offer an opportunity to take the struggle into the Soviet camp. The Russians have come quite a long way over the past year in releasing some dissidents, increasing the figures for emigration, and allowing more open expression of dissenting views. We could use the prospect of a meeting in Moscow - and the meeting itself - as a lever for more extensive change.

There will be differing views among the emigre and Jewish communities about the wisdom of going to Moscow. Within the last few days Charter 77 have announced that they approve of the holding of a meeting in Moscow provided non-governmental organisations can participate. The Americans have told us that Yuri Orlov has taken up a



"yes if" position rather than a "no because". Sir Geoffrey believes that this should be our position too. We would however need to make our conditions tough and clear.

Apart from the intrinsic advantages of taking the battle into the Soviet camp, readiness to envisage a meeting in Moscow could be the key that opens the door to agreement on a whole follow-up process in the human dimension on the lines of the Western proposals. This in turn would give us the chance to secure a balanced and substantial CSCE outcome including:

- A final document which ties down the Russians to detailed commitments on implementation in the area of human rights and human contacts:
- a follow-up process allowing the West to keep up pressure for improvements:
- in the field of military security, satisfactory terms of reference for future negotiations on confidence building and on conventional stability.

In all this, Sir Geoffrey is conscious that to carry public opinion, we must make the process simple and intelligible. We also need to whittle down the proliferation of proposed CSCE events to a sensible core, sufficient to satisfy the Eastern Europeans and neutrals as well as the Western Group.

We shall not need to decide until much later whether the package emerging in Vienna is good enough to justify an ambitious conclusion to the meeting including an eventual conference in Moscow. But the time is approaching when, for negotiating purposes, we shall need to know whether at the end of the day we would be prepared to agree to a Moscow meeting, on the right terms. It will be important however to avoid premature concessions: any deal should be struck at the last moment.

We have set out guidance for the next phase of the meeting in the enclosed guidelines for our delegation (Annex B). Sir Geoffrey is content with these and commends them to the Prime Minister.

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I am copying this letter to John Howe (Ministry of Defence).

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'L. Parker', written in a cursive style.

(L Parker)  
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq  
10 Downing Street

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ANNEX A

The original Western proposal for the human dimension (human rights and human contacts) provided for an action programme in the following stages:

- (i) bilateral meetings with other CSCE states to examine specific human rights and human contacts cases;
- (ii) possibility of one state convoking a special meeting of all 35 to discuss specific cases, with an obligation on the "culprit" state to attend;
- (iii) a meeting of the 35 to review progress on all the above and recommend new measures; and to fix by consensus the place and date for:
- (iv) a Conference on the Human Dimension.

The recent French modification leaves the initial stages (i) and (ii) substantially unchanged, though the French believe that the obligation on the "culprit" state to attend will prove unnegotiable, and will have to go eventually. The later stages in the new French model are however changed:

- (iii) 1989: Conference in Paris to review progress and discuss improvements, at eight separate round tables covering different aspects of human rights and human contacts;
- (iv) 1990: further Conference on Human Rights in a Western capital;
- (v) 1990: Conference on Human Contacts in Moscow.



ANNEX BGuidelines

- The Vienna concluding document should be balanced and substantial: ie agreement on follow-up in the military dimension (Conferences on CSBMs and on conventional stability) must be balanced by a substantial outcome on human rights and contacts; both in the content of the concluding document, and as a forward programme of meetings allowing scrutiny of Soviet and Eastern European implementation of Helsinki commitments.
  
- As part of a balanced and substantial outcome, and provided satisfactory conditions on access etc can be obtained (on the lines of those agreed by the Twelve) the UK should be prepared to agree to a meeting in Moscow on human contacts and other aspects of Basket III.
  
- We should continue to exert pressure on the Russians for further improvements in implementation before being ready to conclude a deal including provision for a meeting in Moscow.
  
- We should aim to conclude the Vienna meeting by Christmas, but without establishing a cut-off date, which could work against Western interests. If the Russians refuse to concede enough in the field of human rights and contacts (both follow-up process and concluding document) we should be prepared to hang on until 1988 as long as is necessary to secure a balanced and substantial *outcome*.



- We should work for an outcome as follows in terms of expert meetings to follow Vienna, subject to agreement on a satisfactory package including final document:
  1. CSBMs and conventional stability meetings (in an NNA capital)
  2. A CDH process including meetings in Paris (human rights) and Moscow (human contacts/Basket III)
  3. An economic forum (FRG)
  4. Our own Information Forum (London)
  5. One Mediterranean meeting on Cooperation (not security)
  6. A Scientific Forum (Italy)
  
- For the time being the West should not table a revised CDH proposal. There should be no indication of readiness to agree to a Moscow meeting.