

ccpc (2)



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Prime Minister

This is very unfortunate. I don't think it will lead to the Russians no cancel the proposed visit. But I think you will probably want to
Dear Charles, tell the Gorbachevs

24 November 1987

Soviet protest about the Observer article on Raisa Gorbacheva

Yes - 1655
Sulka from the
Observer
mt

how sorry you are.
CDP
24 xi

I attach Moscow telegram no 1671 reporting Sir Bryan Cartledge's summons last night by First Deputy Minister Kovalev. I also attach a copy of the offending Observer article.

Sir Bryan asks for instructions on whether he should tell the Observer correspondent that he has himself been summoned. We have also considered whether, if the Observer are to be told, this might be better done in London. Our firm recommendation is against informing the Observer. In the first place we should not act as a channel for Russian complaints about the British press. In the second, the Observer would probably use an approach as justification for a further story drawing on the Ambassador's summons as evidence that they have touched on raw Soviet nerves. This would appear just as Mr Gorbachev is about to arrive here.

There is an implicit threat in what Kovalev said about the "forthcoming contact" but it seems unlikely that the stopover will in fact be threatened by this incident. Should the story of Sir Bryan's summons leak either indirectly or because the Russians themselves release it, we propose to confirm that the Ambassador was summoned and that he told the Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister that freedom of the press was an important part of British democracy and that the Government was not in any way responsible for what the press writes. It would clearly be best not to be drawn into discussion of the substance of the Observer's allegations.

I attach a draft telegram to Moscow with instructions to Sir Bryan Cartledge along these lines.

Yours ever,
(Signature)

(A C Galsworthy)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

166360
MDHIAN 7238

CONFIDENTIAL

FM MOSCOW

TO DESKBY 232200Z FCO

TELNO 1671

OF 232045Z NOVEMBER 87

SOVIET PROTEST ABOUT OBSERVER ARTICLE ON RAISA GORBACHEVA

SUMMARY

1. LATE NIGHT SUMMONS TO RECEIVE COMPLAINT FROM FIRST DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ABOUT THE OBSERVER'S (22 NOV) FRONT PAGE ARTICLE ON RAISA GORBACHEVA. OFFICIAL REQUEST THAT THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD BE INFORMED, IN THE CONTEXT OF 'FORTHCOMING

CONTACT'.

DETAIL

2. FIRST DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER KOVALEV SUMMONED ME TO SEE HIM AT 10.00 PM (LOCAL) ON 23 NOVEMBER. KOVALEV WAS FLANKED BY GERASIMOV, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN. GERASIMOV DESCRIBED IN DETAIL HIS EXCHANGES EARLIER TODAY WITH THE OBSERVER'S MOSCOW CORRESPONDENT, ANDREW WILSON, ABOUT THE LATTER'S FRONT PAGE ARTICLE ON 22 NOVEMBER. GERASIMOV HAD DEMANDED TO KNOW WILSON'S SOURCES FOR THE 'SLANDEROUS LIES' CONCERNING MRS GORBACHEVA. HE HAD DENIED THAT SHE HAD BEEN MENTIONED BY ELTSIN AT THE CC PLENUM, AND THAT SHE RECEIVED ANY REMUNERATION FROM THE CULTURAL FUND, ALL OF WHOSE OFFICERS OFFERED THEIR SERVICES GRATIS. WILSON HAD STATED ONLY THAT THE STORY WAS FOUNDED ON A SOURCE IN WHICH HE HAD COMPLETE CONFIDENCE, AND HAD REFUSED TO APOLOGISE.

3. GERASIMOV HAD ALSO TAKEN EXCEPTION TO THE STATEMENT THAT MRS GORBACHEVA'S VISIT TO A SHIP HAD CAUSED DISCONTENT. HE FURTHER COMPLAINED ABOUT DISSEMINATION OF THE STORY ON THE BBC RUSSIAN SERVICE AND IN OTHER PAPERS.

4. THE ESSENCE OF MY REPLY WAS THAT WHAT APPEARED IN OUR NEWSPAPERS WAS ENTIRELY A MATTER FOR THEM AND NOT FOR THE GOVERNMENT. PUBLIC FIGURES IN THE WEST HAD TO ACCEPT DISOBLIGING ARTICLES, WHETHER WELL FOUNDED OR NOT. I HAD

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NOT SEEN WILSON'S STORY AND COULD NOT COMMENT ON IT. I KNEW HIM TO BE AN HONEST REPORTER WHO BORE THE SOVIET UNION NO ILL WILL, BUT SOMETIMES JOURNALISTS GOT THINGS WRONG OR HAD BAD SOURCES.

5. KOVALEV INSISTED REPEATEDLY THAT THE MATTER SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE PERSONAL ATTENTION OF THE PRIME MINISTER: THIS REQUEST WAS EVIDENTLY THE MAIN PURPOSE OF MY SUMMONS. I SAID THAT I WOULD REPORT TO YOU, AND YOU TO HER. I EMPHASISED THAT IT WAS NOT WITHIN THE POWER OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO TAKE CORRECTIVE ACTION, IF THAT WAS WHAT HE WAS SUGGESTING. OTHER THAN A GLANCING REFERENCE TO THE OPTION OF A LIBEL SUIT BY THE CULTURAL FUND AGAINST WILSON, KOVALEV MADE NO DIRECT THREAT. HOWEVER, AT THE END OF OUR EXCHANGES, HE REFERRED TO THE RELEVANCE OF THIS MATTER TO A 'FORTHCOMING CONTACT', ON WHICH HE DECLINED TO ELABORATE BUT TO WHICH, HE SAID, 'WE SHALL REVERT'.

6. I SHALL SEND A FULLER REPORT SEPARATELY. THE SENSITIVITY IN THE KREMLIN WHICH THIS ARTICLE HAS REVEALED IS STRIKING AND INTERESTING. MEANWHILE, I SHOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR GUIDANCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE ON 24 NOVEMBER ON WHAT ACTION, IF ANY, YOU WOULD LIKE ME TO TAKE WITH WILSON. I WAS NOT/NOT ASKED TO TREAT THE SOVIET DEMARCHE AS CONFIDENTIAL, AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WILL THEMSELVES LET IT BE KNOWN THAT THEY HAVE MADE REPRESENTATIONS ABOUT WILSON'S 'SLANDEROUS CONCOCTIONS'. WILSON WILL KNOW FROM HIS CONVERSATION WITH GERASIMOV THAT HE HAS TOUCHED ON A VERY SENSITIVE NERVE. IF I INFORM HIM OF THE MEETING, IT WILL GIVE HIM AND OTHER CORRESPONDENTS ANOTHER STORY TO WRITE, ALTHOUGH YOU MAY CONSIDER THAT THERE IS A NEED TO INFORM THE OBSERVER WHEN REPRESENTATIONS OF THIS KIND ARE MADE: IN SO DOING, YOU WOULD I HOPE MAKE IT CLEAR THAT I FIRMLY DEFENDED THE FREEDOM OF THE BRITISH PRESS. HOWEVER, MY INSTINCT IS THAT IT WOULD BE ADVISABLE NOT/NOT TO REVEAL THE FACT OF THE SOVIET DEMARCHE FOR THE TIME BEING, UNLESS AN MFA STATEMENT OBLIGES US TO CONFIRM IT.

7. RESIDENT CLERK PLEASE INFORM HEADS OF SOVIET AND NEWS DEPARTMENTS.

CARTLEDGE

YYYY

PAGE 2
CONFIDENTIAL



LIFE ON CLOUD NINE
—BY GEORGE HARRISON



REVIEW
Filming with Attenborough 19



FASHION
Flirting with the Tyrol 49



WEEKEND
After the storm 8-PAGE SPREAD

10233

SUNDAY 22 NOVEMBER 1987

OBSERVER



Kremlin row over Raisa's job

ANDREW WILSON ■ Moscow

IT IS now known that Boris Yeltsin, the disgraced Moscow party leader, made a bitter personal attack on Mikhail Gorbachov's wife, Raisa, at the fateful Central Committee meeting on 21 October.

Yeltsin criticised her for accepting a highly-paid Government job that many people had supposed was voluntary, and for encouraging the development of a personality cult by adopting the role of 'First Lady.'

Details of the attack, given to the *Observer* this weekend, help to explain Gorbachov's acquiescence in suppression of a full report of Yeltsin's controversial speech, in which he also accused senior members of the Politburo of obstructing the *perestroika* reforms.

The speech resulted in Yeltsin being stripped of his post as chief of the Moscow Party, although he has since been given the post of Construction Minister, as a partial recompense.

The event has caused a wave of

unprecedented restlessness and rumour in Moscow, including unfounded reports last week that Yeltsin had attempted to commit suicide.

Yeltsin's attack on the party leader's wife came at a time of rising disquiet over the leading lady's taste for smart foreign clothes and her open pleasure in the television cameras. The fact that, this time, open criticism was coming from a friend and protégé of Gorbachov made Yeltsin's dramatic intervention all the more painful.

On Friday, Gorbachov made a new appeal for party unity in the wake of Yeltsin's departure. 'We cannot conduct affairs in the old way,' he told leading members of the Central Committee in a special session. He also called on party organs to get rid of 'inertia, conservatism and over-organisation.'

The appeal is seen as an attempt to reassure people who, like Yeltsin, fear that *perestroika* is faltering.

■ How Yeltsin lost his job, page 12.



Fighting the flak: Gorbachov has taken a firm stand following Boris Yeltsin's fierce personal attack on the 'First Lady'

Hurd to back Nazi

King's Cross inquest will be told

POLICE have pinpointed the cause of last week's King's Cross fire disaster but are refusing to reveal it

Police so

Yeltsin lost job after 'cult' attack on Raisa

BORIS YELTSIN, the disgraced former boss of the Moscow Communist Party, launched a fierce personal attack on Raisa Gorbachov during his controversial speech last month, *The Observer* has now learnt.

In the speech, Yeltsin accused the leader's wife of improperly taking a highly-paid government job and of creating the 'pre-condition' of a personality cult of herself and her husband. The directness of the attack has led Mikhail Gorbachov to go along with suppressing publication of the speech.

It also helps explain the iciness with which Gorbachov put the final knife into his erstwhile colleague and friend after Yeltsin's speech. Besides rebuking colleagues for obstructing *perestroika* (restructuring), Yeltsin turned specifically to Mrs Gorbachov, attacking her for two things.

The first was her acceptance of a monthly salary of 780 roubles (the same sum in pounds at official rates, but much more in reality) for work the Cultural Fund set up to help collect and preserve the national heritage. Up to now most people had assumed that her position on the fund's board was voluntary; not that it carried four times the national average wage and 280 roubles more than the pay of an academic. The revelation is particularly embarrassing when many workers here are having to take pay cuts as industry is 'restructured.'

The second criticism concerned a

ANDREW WILSON in Moscow reveals why Gorbachov refused to save his protégé.

visit by the Gorbachovs to Murmansk last month. During the visit she went aboard a warship and was photographed by the Press among a group of sailors.

According to Yeltsin, the incident offended naval tradition (women are not allowed aboard Soviet warships) and was another instance of Mrs Gorbachov putting herself forward as a 'First Lady', for which the Soviet system makes no provision.

The attack (which must have delighted some Party members otherwise critical of Yeltsin) is seen as the reason for Gorbachov's failure to get



Yeltsin: Public sympathy.

the speech published, as *glasnost* would demand.

It could also explain the unexpected severity of his own speech condemning Yeltsin at the 11 October meeting of the Moscow Party.

Some amends were made last week when Yeltsin was appointed to ministerial rank as deputy chairman of the State construction committee.

But as the dust begins to settle, it is clear that while Gorbachov has safeguarded his position of authority in the Party, he has suffered badly in popularity and loss of public confidence—at least in Moscow. And just when he badly needs both to get the economy moving.

Three things stick in the public gullet. First is his failure to say a single warm word in mitigation of his former friend's conduct. Whatever Yeltsin's faults of impetuosity and intemperance, Gorbachov could at least have paid tribute to his energetic fight against corruption. The second is the choice of speakers at the Moscow Party meeting. Nearly all the 24 who so mercilessly attacked Yeltsin were members of the Brezhnev-appointed *Nomenklatura*. Only the cosmonaut Alexei Yeliseyev and one other called for moderation in the Party's judgment.

The third is what people now know about Yeltsin's heart condition at the

time of his inquisition. Admitted to hospital with a damaged aorta, he was obliged to leave his sick-bed to face the judgment of colleagues and 'friends.'

All this has contributed to the mood of public sympathy for Yeltsin.

At one point there was even to have been a popular demonstration in his favour. It was called off after disagreements among the organisers, the so-called 'Federation of Socialist Clubs,' which claims the adherence of 12 small groups 'working for the *perestroika*.'

On Sunday evening the same organisation called a meeting in a Moscow ceramics factory at the behest, no less, of the state broadcasting organisation Gostelradio, which was supposed to film it for a current affairs 'after midnight.' At seven o'clock police entered the building and told the organisers to close the proceedings and told the camera crew to stop recording, which they did.

At the same time, unbiased evidence of Yeltsin's unfitness to continue in office continues to accumulate—often coming from the same people who bitterly resent the manner in which he has been dropped.

Last week a Moscow *rayon* (city district) party secretary told how, after replacing corrupt *rayon* officials with young reformists, Yeltsin had alienated his own appointees by sending commissions to report on their work secretly, to himself alone. 'And for a district head to get him on the telephone took anything from two to three days,' added his once-enthusiastic supporter.



Mrs Gorbachov: 'High pay, high profile.'

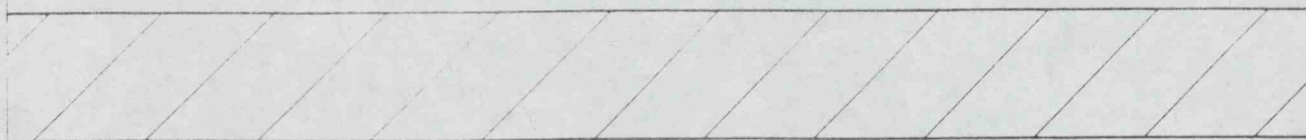
OUT TELEGRAM

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1 ZCZC
2 CONFIDENTIAL
3
4 FM FCO
5 TO DESKBY MOSCOW
6 TELNO
7 OF NOVEMBER 87
8

9
10 YOUR TELNO 1671: SOVIET PROTEST ABOUT OBSERVER ARTICLE
11 1. You should not (not) tell Wilson of your summons by
12 Kovalev. We shall not be informing the Observer in London
13 either. In our view to do either would give the Observer an
14 excuse to run a second story showing the content of Soviet
15 sensitivity. Nor do we wish to act as a conduit for Russian
16 complaints about the British press.
17 2. It is however possible that the story will leak either
18 because Moscow based or other correspondents put two and two
19 together, or if the Russians themselves put it about in the
20 course of denying the allegations themselves. If this happens
21 we shall confirm that you were summoned and that you replied
22 to Kovalev that freedom of the press is an essential part of
23 British democracy and that the British Government is in no way
24 responsible for what the press may write about public figures
25 whether in Britain or elsewhere. We would refuse to be drawn
26 into any discussion of the substance of the allegations. You
27 should take a similar line. Please report by immediate telegram
28 if the fact of your summons becomes public knowledge in Moscow.
29



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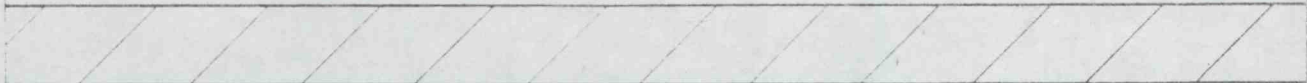
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- 9 NEWS DEPT
- 10 INFORMATION DEPT
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- 12 PS
- 13 PS/MR MELLOR
- 14 PS/MRS CHALKER
- 15 SIR J FRETWELL
- 16 PS/PUS
- 17 MISS PESTELL
- 18 MR RATFORD
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For distribution order see Page Catchword.



File SWACI
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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

27 November 1987

Dear Lyn:

SOVIET UNION: OBSERVER STORY ON MRS. GORBACHEV

I wrote to you this morning about how we should react to Mr. Shevardnadze's representations to HM Ambassador Moscow about the Observer's article on Mrs. Gorbachev.

I have conveyed to the Prime Minister the Foreign Secretary's judgment that the most effective response would be for her to give an interview to Gordon Martin on the BBC World Service about Mr. Gorbachev's forthcoming visit, in the course of which he would ask a question about the Observer article. The Prime Minister remains firmly of the view, however, that this would only serve to attract attention to the issue; and given that the Observer has made her a particular target, any comments which she makes about their story on Mrs. Gorbachev would be a particular incentive to the Observer to re-kindle the whole issue. She thinks that the Foreign Secretary is the natural person to give the interview and hopes that he will do so as soon as possible after his return tomorrow. An interview tomorrow would have the additional advantage that it would come too late for the Observer to make any reference to it in next Sunday's edition. The Prime Minister hopes that the Foreign Office will also take very early action with the BBC external services to discourage them from carrying any further stories about Mrs. Gorbachev similar to that published by the Observer. You told me that this was in hand.

There remains the question of further action with the Soviet Ambassador here. It seems essential that we should say something to him today, so that he can report that Shevardnadze's representations are being actively considered and followed up. I am perfectly willing to contact him myself. But you might think it more appropriate, given that the representations came from the Soviet foreign ministry, for a Foreign Office Minister or senior official to speak to him on his return from Brize Norton. There would be no objection to telling him that Mr. Shevardnadze's comments have been brought to the Prime Minister's attention and that she is herself considering how we can best help, subject to the overriding consideration of not simply drawing further attention to the original story which is in no one's interests. I should be grateful if you would let me know how it is proposed to pursue this.

Yours sincerely
Charles Powell
C. D. POWELL

Lyn Parker, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

27 November 1987

SOVIET UNION: OBSERVER STORY ON MRS. GORBACHEV

I have seen copies of Moscow telegram numbers 1692 and 1693 reporting Sir Bryan Cartledge's interview yesterday with the Soviet Foreign Minister about the Observer's article on Mrs. Gorbachev. I have also discussed them with the Prime Minister.

The great danger is, as Sir Bryan Cartledge correctly assesses, that any action we take here will only have the effect of reviving the Observer story and drawing even greater attention to it. That would be the last thing which the Soviet authorities would want, and we must somehow get that point across to them. At the same time, it is quite clear that we need to take some action to show the Soviet leadership that our concern is not just a matter of words.

Bernard Ingham's advice is that the course proposed by Sir Bryan Cartledge in paragraph 5 of telegram number 1693, sub paragraphs B, C and D, would have the effect of reviving the story and drawing further attention to it. Our alternative suggestion is that the Foreign Secretary could give an interview, as soon as possible, to the BBC external services about Gorbachev's forthcoming visit, in the course of which he would be asked about allegations made in the Observer, and take the opportunity to dismiss them as contemptible, say how distressed the Prime Minister was to read them and add that she herself is frequently subject to similar attacks of that sort. Alternatively, the Prime Minister herself might give such an interview. That might give it even more weight vis-à-vis a Soviet audience. But equally there must be some risk that the very fact of the Prime Minister involving herself in this matter would lead to a revival of interest in the story in our own press. There is such pressure for interviews with the Prime Minister that anything she said would be bound to be given prominence here. It would be more natural for the Foreign Secretary to do it. Whichever course we adopted we could also ask Zamyatin to come in again later today and go over with him the difficulties of taking action on the lines suggested by Shevardnadze, urging him to explain these to the Soviet leadership (he must, after all, understand them). We could also inform him of the intention of the Foreign

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Secretary/Prime Minister to give an interview to the BBC Russian service. (I assume this would be preferable to the World Service.)

You will wish to consult the Foreign Secretary about this as soon as possible after his arrival in Madrid. I should be grateful for early advice. If the Prime Minister were to do the interview herself, it could most conveniently be done later today.

(C. D. POWELL)

Lyn Parker, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Sov UNION: Situation
Relations

pt 9





10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister

Bryan Cottle's Meeting with the
Soviet Foreign Minister.

You will wish to read the attached Telegrams. The Ambassadors are clearly deeply upset by the Observer article. Your kind remarks of yesterday have helped, but are not in themselves enough.

I have consulted Bernard on Bryan Cottle's suggestion. We see a risk that it will only serve to revive interest in the Observer story, when we need - as to bury it. We have an alternative plan. Under



10 DOWNING STREET

this:

(a) you - or I on your behalf - would see Zamyatin later today (when he returns from Brize Norton), explain once again your personal distress, & try to enlist his help in explaining to the Soviet leadership that the sort of action which they want would actually make matters worse;

(b) get David Meller to do an interview on BBC External Services about the forthcoming Gorbachev visit. In the course of this, arrange for him to be asked about the Observer story, & so for that he can dismiss it with contempt, & say how distressed you are by such personal attacks, from which you also suffer. EDP 27/81

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MDADAN 6915

ADVANCE COPY

SECRET

FM MOSCOW

TO DESKBY 262100Z FCO

TELNO 1692

OF 261930Z NOVEMBER 87

RESIDENT CLERK PLEASE INFORM HEAD OF SOVIET DEPARTMENT AND
PRIVATE SECRETARY

YOUR TELNOS 1199 AND 1204: CALL ON SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER

SUMMARY

1. SHEVARDNADZE INSISTENT THAT WE SHOULD NOT LET THE MATTER OF
THE OBSERVER ARTICLE REST: REQUESTS BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO TAKE
ACTION TO REFUTE THE OBSERVER'S 'SLANDER'. FOREIGN MINISTRY
INFORMS SOVIET MEDIA THAT I CALLED TO DISCUSS BILATERAL MATTERS.

DETAIL

2. I CALLED ON SHEVARDNADZE FOR HALF AN HOUR FROM 20.30 LOCAL ON 26
NOVEMBER TO CARRY OUT THE INSTRUCTIONS IN YOUR TURS.

3. AS AGREED IN TELECON POWELL/LYNE, I EXPRESSED THE PRIME
MINISTER'S DEEP PERSONAL DISTRESS ABOUT THE ARTICLE, WHICH CONCERNED
SOMEONE FOR WHOM SHE HAD THE GREATEST RESPECT, ASKED SHEVARDNADZE
TO CONVEY HER REACTION TO MR AND MRS GORBACHEV, AND REFERRED TO
THE PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING TODAY WITH THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR.
HAVING SPOKEN ON THESE LINES AT SOME LENGTH, I WENT ON TO REPEAT
THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAD NO CONTROL OVER WHAT APPEARED IN
OUR NEWSPAPERS. THIS SOMETIMES CAUSED HURT AND MISUNDERSTANDING,
BUT THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS WAS A VITAL PART OF OUR DEMOCRATIC
SYSTEM: ITS INCONVENIENCES WERE OUTWEIGHTED BY VALUE TO US, AND
WE DEFENDED IT.

4. SHEVARDNADZE SAID THAT HE HAD READ ZAMYATIN'S REPORTING TELEGRAM
AND WAS AWARE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S INDIGNATION AT THE CONDUCT OF
THE JOURNALIST CONCERNED. HOWEVER WHAT I HAD SAID AND OTHERS HAD SAID
WAS TAKING PLACE BEHIND CLOSED DOORS: BUT WHAT THE CORRESPONDENT HAD
WRITTEN HAD BECOME KNOWN WIDELY TO PEOPLE IN THE SOVIET UNION AND
ELSEWHERE. IN HIS OPINION SLANDER COULD NOT BE COMBINED WITH
DEMOCRACY. SHEVARDNADZE RECALLED THE INCAUTIOUS REMARKS OF
CHANCELLOR KOHL, WHICH HAD SHOWN PERSONAL DISRESPECT TO MR GORBACHEV

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(I.E. THE 'GOEBBELS' INCIDENT). THIS MATTER HAD GONE TO THE BUNDESTAG AND HAD CAUSED 'MAJOR DISTRESS'. THE PEOPLE OF THE SOVIET UNION HAD PLACED THEIR CONFIDENCE IN THEIR LEADERSHIP AND THE PRESTIGE WHICH MR GORBACHEV AND HIS FAMILY ENJOYED IN THE SOVIET UNION WAS VALUED. WHAT KOVALOV HAD TOLD ME THEREFORE REMAINED IN FORCE.

5. SHEVARDNADZE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE INITIATIVE FOR THE LONDON STOP-OVER HAD COME FROM THE BRITISH SIDE. THE SOVIET SIDE HAD IN PRINCIPLE BEEN PLANNING ON A DIFFERENT LOCATION. THEIR DECISION WAS A FURTHER CONFIRMATION OF THEIR RESPECT FOR THE PRIME MINISTER. THIS WAS CERTAINLY NOT A TECHNICAL STOP-OVER BUT WOULD BE A CONTINUATION OF THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE GENERAL SECRETARY AND THE PRIME MINISTER. HE THEN SAID: 'PLEASE FIND A WAY OF EXTRICATING US FROM THIS SITUATION'. WE HAD THE EXPERTISE. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE NEWSPAPER DID NOT WANT TO FIND A WAY OUT. IT WAS NOT FOR HIM TO ADVISE US WHAT TO DO, BUT SOME OF THE THINGS WHICH HAD BEEN WRITTEN WERE 'QUITE INADMISSIBLE'. IF CORRECTIVE ACTION WAS NOT TAKEN, THE SOVIET PEOPLE WOULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY MR GORBACHEV WAS MAKING A STOP-OVER THE IN THE UK. THIS WAS WHY HE HAD ASKED TO SEE ME PERSONALLY, AT A DIFFICULT TIME FOR HIMSELF. HE WANTED TO EMPHASISE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INCIDENT. WE SHOULD THINK IT OVER.

6. I REPLIED THAT WE HAD DELIBERATELY KEPT SILENT ABOUT THE SOVIET REPRESENTATIONS IN ORDER NOT TO CREATE A NEW STORY. IN ALL SINCERITY I BELIEVED THAT ANY FURTHER ACTION WOULD DRAW GREATER AND UNWELCOME ATTENTION TO THE MATTER - EVEN IF IT WERE POSSIBLE FOR THE PRIME MINISTER OR GOVERNMENT TO TAKE SUCH ACTION IN RELATION TO A FREE NEWSPAPER, WHICH IT WAS NOT. AS I HAD SAID TO KOVALEV, ANY CORRECTIVE ACTION WAS NOT ONLY PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE BUT WOULD ACTUALLY MAKE THE SITUATION WORSE. MRS THATCHER HAD ANNOUNCED MR GORBACHEV'S FORTHCOMING SHORT VISIT IN PARLIAMENT TODAY. THE MANNER IN WHICH SHE WOULD RECEIVE MR AND MRS GORBACHEV WOULD IN ITSELF BE THE BEST ANSWER TO THE FALSE IMPRESSION CREATED BY ONE ISOLATED ARTICLE.

7. SHEVARDNADZE DID NOT AGREE. WHAT I HAD SAID WAS NEITHER AN ARGUMENT NOR AN EXPLANATION. HE SAID HEATEDLY THAT THE ARTICLE WAS AN INSULT AND A SLANDER. HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT FORM OF ACTION WE WOULD TAKE. PERHAPS A NEWSPAPER COULD DESCRIBE THE ARTICLE AS AN INSULT. HE WAS NOT DICTATING OUR ACTION, BUT SOMETHING MUST BE DONE. OTHERWISE, WHAT WOULD THE SOVIET PEOPLE SAY, GIVEN THE DECISION BY MR GORBACHEV TO VISIT BRITAIN. I SAID THAT THE SOVIET PEOPLE KNEW THAT THE BRITISH PRESS WAS NOT CONTROLLED BY THE GOVERNMENT. I DID NOT THINK THEY WOULD MAKE A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE

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MDADAN 6915

STOP-OVER AND ONE ISOLATED ARTICLE. THE SOVIET PUBLIC WAS MATURE ENOUGH TO MAKE THAT DISTINCTION. SHEVARDNADZE REPLIED THAT I HAD NOT CONVINCED HIM. HE KNEW ABOUT THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE PRESS, BUT WAS WELL AWARE THAT THERE WERE BY MEANS BY WHICH THE GOVERNMENT COULD INDICATE ITS ATTITUDE. THE GOVERNMENT COULD SAY THAT THE CORRESPONDENT WAS LYING. "ELEMENTARY DECENCY ASKS FOR SOME KIND OF ACTION". HE WAS SPEAKING EMOTIONALLY BECAUSE HE KNEW THE GORBACHEV FAIRLY WELL AND HAD HIMSELF BEEN VERY UPSET. WHEN CORRESPONDENTS IN THE SOVIET UNION WERE IRRESPONSIBLE OR MADE MISTAKES, AN OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN EXPRESSED THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE, HE REPEATED THAT WE SHOULD THINK IT OVER.

8. I PROMISED TO REPORT, BUT THOUGHT MY SUPERIORS WOULD JUDGE THAT PROLONGATION OF THIS MATTER WOULD MILITATE AGAINST THE OBJECTIVE WHICH WE BOTH WANTED, NAMELY THAT THE INCIDENT SHOULD BE FORGOTTEN AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. SHEVARDNADZE INTERJECTED: "YOU MAY FORGET, BUT WE CANNOT FORGET. YOUR CORRESPONDENT HAS TOUCHED UPON A VERY SACRED THING. THIS IS A VERY SERIOUS MATTER FOR US. I DO NOT WANT OUR CONVERSATION TO BE KNOWN TO OTHERS, BUT I AM SURE THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO FIND AN ACCEPTABLE WAY OUT".

STOP-OVER

9. SHEVARDNADZE SAID THAT THE PROGRAMME PUT BY THE PRIME MINISTER TO ZAMYATIN WAS IN PRINCIPLE ACCEPTABLE. MR GORBACHEV'S AIRCRAFT WOULD LAND AT 11.35 FOR A TWO HOUR STOP-OVER. HE HAD NOT YET DISCUSSED THE PRIME MINISTER'S SUGGESTIONS WITH MR GORBACHEV BUT EXPECTED TO DEAL WITH THIS TOMORROW. HE WENT ON TO SAY: "WE NEED THIS MEETING". IT WAS IMPORTANT TO CONTINUE THE DIALOGUE. CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND MR GORBACHEV WERE ALWAYS INTERESTING. THEIR RELATIONSHIP HAD NOW BEEN ESTABLISHED AND "SHOULD NOT BE DARKENED BY INCIDENTS SUCH AS THIS. I THEREFORE WANTED TO CONVEY CONFIDENTIALLY TO YOU HOW SENSITIVE THIS MATTER IS"

10. I THEN TRANSMITTED YOUR ORAL MESSAGE (YOUR TELNO 1204), INCLUDING YOUR CONGRATULATIONS ON THE INF AGREEMENT. SHEVARDNADZE EXPRESSED GRATITUDE AND SAID THAT YOU TOO WERE TO BE CONGRATULATED ON THE

EVENT. THE AGREEMENT WAS IN OUR COMMON INTERESTS. AT HIS GENEVA

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PRESS CONFERENCE HAD SAID THAT CONCLUSION OF THE AGREEMENT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE GDR AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA. THE SAME WAS TRUE OF THE ALLIES OF THE UNITED STATES. IF THERE WAS NO VERIFICATION WHERE THE MISSILES WERE BASED, THE PROCESS WOULD NOT WORK.

11. SHEVARDNADZE CONTINUED THAT THE PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS WERE GOOD, BUT THAT THEY WOULD TAKE TIME. HE NOTED THAT THERE WAS TIME PRESSURE DUE TO THE US ELECTION CAMPAIGN. HOWEVER, AS IN A GAME OF CHESS, IT WAS POSSIBLE TO FIND THE CORRECT MOVES WHEN TIME WAS RUNNING OUT.

LINE TO TAKE WITH THE PRESS

12. YOU WILL NOTE SHEVARDNADZE'S EMPHASIS ON CONFIDENTIALITY. WITHIN MINUTES OF MY DEPARTURE, SOVIET TV HAD ANNOUNCED MY MEETING WITH SHEVARDNADZE ON ITS MAIN NEWS BULLETIN, SAYING ONLY THAT I HAD CALLED TO DISCUSS 'BILATERAL ITEMS'. WE HAVE AGREED WITH THE MFA THAT, IN RESPONSE TO PRESS ENQUIRIES, WE SHALL SAY THAT THESE ITEMS INCLUDED ARRANGEMENTS FOR MR GORBACHEV'S VISIT AND YOUR CONGRATULATIONS TO SHEVARDANDZE ON THE INF AGREEMENT.

13. THE RUSSIANS HAVE NOT YET FORMALLY ANNOUNCED THE STOP-OVER (THE LEADERSHIP'S TRAVEL DETAILS ARE CUSTOMARILY GIVEN OUT VERY LATE), BUT THE MFA SPOKESMAN IS TELLING WESTERN CORRESPONDENTS THAT GORBACHEV'S MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER WILL TAKE PLACE AROUND LUNCHTIME WITH NO FIXED AGENDA. HE IS EXPLAINING THE DECISION TO VISIT THE UK IN TERMS OF MRS THATCHER'S GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH MR GORBACHEV, SAYING THAT LONDON IS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD BETWEEN MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE.

14. SEE MIFT

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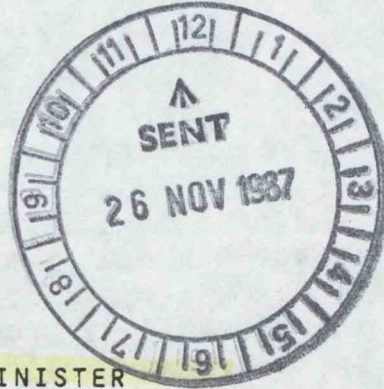
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MIPT: MEETING WITH SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER

1. SHEVARDNADZE WAS VERY TIRED, AND WE SHOULD TAKE AT FACE VALUE HIS REMARKS ABOUT THE SERIOUSNESS OF HIS DECISION TO MEET ME AT THE END OF A LONG DAY (WHICH PRESUMABLY INCLUDED THE REGULAR POLITBURO MEETING) WHEN HE COULD (AS HE SAID) EASILY HAVE DEPUTED THE TASK. BECUASE HE WAS BOTH TIRED AND I THINK GENUINELY UPSET ABOUT THE ARTICLE I DID NOT PRESS TO THE LIMIT MY POINTS ABOUT THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY. TO HAVE DONE SO WOULD HAVE LED TO AN UNPRODUCTIVE AND ILL-TIMED ROW. THE RUSSIANS KNOW OUR POSITION ON THIS BUT WE SHALL NEVER GET THEM TO ACCEPT IT. IN PARTICULAR, THEY WILL NEVER BELIEVE THAT THE GOVERNMENT-FUNDED BBC EXTERNAL SERVICES ARE BEYOND CONTROL.
2. FOR THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER TO CHOOSE TO INVOLVE HIMSELF DIRECTLY IN WHAT SHOULD BE A MINOR ROW IS EXTRAORDINARY. WHY ARE THE RUSSIANS SHOWING SUCH HYPER-SENSIVITY ? TO A FAR GREATER DEGREE THAN HE PROBABLY REALISES, ANDREW WILSON HAS TOUCHED ON A VERY SORE POINT. FOR QUITE A LONG TIME THERE HAS BEEN WIDESPREAD GRUMBLING HERE ABOUT RAISA GORBACHEVA. THE SOVIET PEOPLE ARE SIMPLY NOT ACCUSTOMED TO THE DEGREE OF VISIBILITY AND INFLUENCE WHICH SHE ENJOYS. WHATEVER HER ASSETS IN THE EXTERNAL DIPLOMATIC CONTEXT, SHE HAS BECOME A DEFINITE POLITICAL LIABILITY FOR GORBACHEV AT HOME. HE IS PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TO ALLEGATIONS OF EXTRAVAGANCE, LET ALONE PECULATION, ON HER PART BECAUSE THIS IS ONE OF THE ISSUES ON WHICH FIRST ANDROPOV, AND THEN GORBACHEV AND HIS SUPPORTERS, HAVE ATTACKED BREZHNEV'S MEMORY, HIS FAMILY AND THEIR CRONIES. THIS IS WHY WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED SUCH AN EXTREMELY SENSITIVE REACTION, AND I DO NOT DOUBT THAT BOTH KOVALEV (WHO MAY HAVE PERSONAL LINKS TO THE GORBACHEVS THROUGH HIS LITERARY ACTIVITIES) AND SHEVARDNADZE WERE ACTING ON DIRECT INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE GORBACHEVS.
3. WHAT HAS MADE MATTERS WORSE IS THE WIDE DISSEMINATION OF WILSON'S STORY, CONTAINING AS IT DID APPARENTLY PLAUSIBLE AND SPECIFIC FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS. I AM TOLD THAT IT HAS BEEN CARRIED BY THE AMERICAN AND WEST GERMAN MEDIA BUT WHAT HAS DONE THE GREATEST DAMAGE, SO FAR AS THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP IS CONCERNED, IS ITS

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DISSEMINATION ON THE BBC EXTERNAL SERVICES. WE HAVE DIRECT EVIDENCE THAT SHEVARDNADZE WAS NOT EXAGGERATING WHEN HE SPOKE OF ITS EFFECT UPON THE PEOPLE: AT A PACKED PUBLIC MEETING LAST NIGHT, ORGANISED BY 'MOSCOW NEWS' AND ATTENDED BY MY STAFF, A QUESTIONER ASKED THE PLATFORM ABOUT RAISA GORBACHEVA'S CONDUCT, QUOTING THE BBC AS A SOURCE. PROXIMITY TO THE SUMMIT IS YET ANOTHER CAUSE FOR EMBARRASSMENT.

4. WHAT SHOULD, OR CAN, WE DO ? THE ANGER OF THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP COULD HAVE A CERTAIN EFFECT UPON OUR RELATIONS, IF WE ARE SEEN TO MAKING NO APPARENT EFFORT TO HELP TO 'EXTRICATE' THEM (AS SHEVARDNADZE PUT IT). HOWEVER, IT IS IMPORTANT TO BEAR IN MIND THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF LEVERAGE. THE STOP-OVER ANNOUNCEMENT HAS NOW BEEN MADE. THERE WAS NOT EVEN AN INDIRECT THREAT BY SHEVARDNADZE TO CHANGE THE ARRANGEMENT: NOR DID HE SAY THAT SUCH A COURSE MIGHT HAVE BEEN CONTEMPLATED BEFORE THE ANNOUNCEMENT. HE SPOKE VERY POSITIVELY ABOUT THE PROGRAMME SUGGESTED BY THE PRIME MINISTER, SOME DETAILS OF WHICH HIS SPOKESMAN IS NOW GIVING TO WESTERN JOURNALISTS. INDEED, THE RUSSIANS WOULD LOOK VERY FOOLISH IF THEY CANCELLED THE VISIT BECAUSE WE HAD DEFENDED THE FREEDOM OF THE BRITISH PRESS AND HAD FAILED TO MAKE AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT REBUTTING WILSON'S ARTICLE. IF THEY EVER CONSIDERED SUCH A COURSE, THEY MUST BY NOW HAVE DISCOUNTED IT.

5. IT IS IN ANY CASE NOT WITHIN OUR POWER TO LANCE THE BOIL. THE FACTS ARE NOT AT OUR DISPOSAL. THEY CAN ONLY COME FROM THE SOVIET SIDE. I THINK THAT WE SHOULD AIM TO FIND A WAY OF REDUCING THE TEMPERATURE WITH THE RUSSIANS WHICH IS NOT COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE EITHER BY REVIVING INTEREST IN WILSON'S STORY OR BY ATTRACTING DOMESTIC CRITICISM. I BELIEVE THAT ONE WAY OF DOING THIS WOULD BE FOR THE PRIVATE SECRETARY AT NO 10 TO INVITE ZAMYATIN OR HIS DEPUTY TO CALL EARLY TOMORROW, 27 NOVEMBER. THE P.S. COULD SAY THAT HE WAS ACTING ON THE PERSONAL INSTRUCTIONS OF THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO HAD READ MY REPORT ON THE CONVERSATION WITH SHEVARDNADZE. HE COULD THEN:

(A) ASK ZAMYATIN (PERHAPS WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE NO 10 PRESS SECRETARY) TO EXPLAIN TO THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP WHY THE SORT OF CORRECTIVE ACTION BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WHICH SHEVARDNADZE IMPLIED WOULD BE HARMFUL TO SOVIET INTERESTS, IN THAT IT WOULD GIVE RENEWED IMPETUS TO A STORY WHICH IS RAPIDLY BEING OVERTAKEN IN THE NEWS COLUMNS. HE COULD ALSO EXPLAIN THAT SUCH ACTION IS GENUINELY UNTHINKABLE FOR THE GOVERNMENT, AS WE DO NOT POSSESS THE FACTS AND WOULD BE CRITICISED SEVERELY FOR TRYING TO STIFLE

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PRESS COMMENT ON BEHALF OF THE SOVIET UNION.

- (B) TELL ZAMYATIN THAT ONLY THE RUSSIANS COULD TAKE EFFECTIVE CORRECTIVE ACTION, AND SUGGEST THAT HE (ZAMYATIN) SHOULD WRITE AT ONCE TO THE OBSERVER (FOR PUBLICATION THIS SUNDAY) AND TO THE BBC. IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT THAT ZAMYATIN'S LETTER SHOULD SET OUT THE FACTS WITHOUT POLEMICS. HE COULD ASK THE BBC EXTERNAL SERVICES TO REPORT HIS LETTER, IN THE INTERESTS OF BALANCE AND FAIRNESS, IN THE SAME WAY THAT THEY HAD REPORTED THE ORIGINAL STORY.
- (C) IF ZAMYATIN ACTED THUS, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD LOOK FOR A NATURAL WAY OF COMMENTING ON HIS LETTER. (WHILE WE SHOULD NOT COMMIT OURSELVES SPECIFICALLY WHAT I HAVE IN MIND IS THAT A SUPPLEMENTARY MIGHT BE ASKED IN THE HOUSE, WITHOUT BEING PLANTED OBVIOUSLY, OR THAT SOME COMMENT MIGHT BE MADE BY THE NO 10 PRESS OFFICE). COULD WE ALSO DISCREETLY ENCOURAGE BUSH HOUSE TO CARRY IT ?
- (D) SO LONG AS MATTERS ARE HANDLED IN THIS WAY, THERE IS A VERY GOOD CHANCE THAT ANY FURTHER INTEREST IN THE STORY WILL BE SUBMERGED IN THE WAVE OF POSITIVE NEWS STORIES AND COMMENT WHICH WILL ALREADY BE APPEARING ABOUT THE PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH GORBACHEV AND THE SUMMIT ITSELF.

6. I COULD MAKE SUPPORTING REMARKS TO THE MFA, PREFERABLY AT NOT TOO HIGH A LEVEL: BUT I AM SURE THAT FURTHER ACTION IS BEST TAKEN IN LONDON. IN THE LIGHT OF MY MEETING WITH SHEVARDNADZE, I SHALL NOT MAKE ANY FURTHER HEADWAY HERE: AND WE HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF EXPLAINING TO SOVIET OFFICIALS IN LONDON HOW BEST TO MANAGE THE BRITISH PRESS.

7. I SHOULD ADD THAT I WOULD NOT MAKE SUCH A LENGTHY AND ELABORATE RECOMMENDATION WHERE I NOT CONVINCED THAT BEHIND AN APPARENTLY EPHEMERAL AND, IN WESTERN TERMS, TRIVIAL INCIDENT LIES A REAL AND MAJOR POLITICAL PROBLEM. GORBACHEV HAS, AT PRESENT DIFFICULTIES ENOUGH WITHOUT THIS. IF WE ARE SINCERE IN WISHING HIM AND PERESTROIKA WELL, I BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD EASE HIS PASSAGE THROUGH THIS PARTICULAR PATCH OF TURBULENCE IF WE CAN DO SO WITHOUT COMPROMISING OUR OWN PRINCIPLES.

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From the Private Secretary

25 November 1987

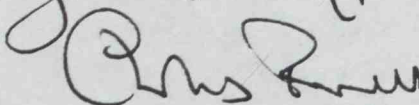
Dear Tony,

SOVIET PROTEST ABOUT THE OBSERVER ARTICLE
ON RAISA GORBACHEVA

Thank you for your letter of 24 November about the representations made to Sir Bryan Cartledge by the Soviet authorities about articles in our Sunday Observer on Mrs. Gorbachev. I have drawn this to the Prime Minister's attention and I see no harm in telling the Russians this. The Prime Minister has commented that she will certainly herself tell Mr. and Mrs. Gorbachev how distressed she was about the article (if she has an opportunity), while making the point that she too suffers frequently from attacks in the Observer.

You may like to amend the proposed telegram to Moscow to give Sir Bryan Cartledge discretion to say that the matter has been drawn to the Prime Minister's attention. If you judge it advisable, you could also say - while sticking to the line that we have no control over what appears in the British press - that the Prime Minister was distressed to learn of such a disparaging article about someone for whom she has great respect.

We shall have to hope that the article does not have any repercussions: but I am a bit apprehensive about the delay in announcing Mr. Gorbachev's intended stopover.

Yours sincerely,


C. D. Powell

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