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From the Private Secretary

2 December 1987

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH MR. GORBACHEV

The United States Ambassador came to see me this morning to talk about the Prime Minister's meeting with Mr. Gorbachev. He left a note of points which the Americans would find it helpful for the Prime Minister to raise with Mr. Gorbachev. I enclose a copy. I said that, on a quick reading, they seemed to fit quite easily with our own thinking. I would make sure that the Prime Minister saw them.

You may wish to take account of them in providing briefing for the meeting.

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

CHARLES POWELL

Lyn Parker, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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1. Human Rights:

It would be helpful for Mrs. Thatcher to stress to Gorbachev that further Soviet movement on human rights is essential to a sustained improvement in East-West relations, and will be vital to the INF Treaty ratification process. (FYI: The U.S. is still pressing the Soviets for the establishment of some formal institutional mechanism for resolution of individual cases. But even more significant would be modifications to the Soviet criminal code to abolish the crime of "anti-Soviet agitation," a demonstrable liberalization of the criteria for applications for exit permission, and a marked reduction in the denial of exit visas on grounds of "possession of state secrets." End FYI)

2. Afghanistan:

We would also appreciate it if the Prime Minister placed similar emphasis on the need for tangible steps toward a withdrawal from Afghanistan. The Thatcher-Gorbachev meeting will take place just after the release of the EC statement on Afghanistan. We would suggest that the Prime Minister not only reinforce the strong message in that statement, but also emphasize the importance of Afghanistan to the entire civilized world. It would be helpful for Mrs. Thatcher to make the point that, if the Soviets are going to withdraw -- as they keep saying they are -- then they should do it soon and quickly; it is not in their own interest to prolong either the occupation or the period of withdrawal.

We would also suggest one additional point: like human rights improvements, concrete moves toward withdrawal from Afghanistan could have a major impact on prospects for INF ratification.

3. Verification:

We suggest that the Prime Minister, in welcoming Soviet agreement to extensive on-site inspection measures in the INF Treaty, underscore the need to go even further in the case of START. In particular, it is essential that the Soviets present proposals for the verification of mobile ICBM deployments. In Washington's view, the ball is in the Soviets' court on mobiles; without a proposal, the U.S. will persist in demanding a complete ban on these systems.

4. START/SDI Linkage:

We would also appreciate the Prime Minister reinforcing the current U.S. position on START/SDI linkage: Even if the Soviets are not willing to proceed with strategic arms reductions without a solution on SDI testing, they should put the linkage issue aside for now and get on with the completion of a draft START Treaty.

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