



Re 6 19

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

7 December 1987

From the Private Secretary

SUBJECT CC MASTER

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH MR GORBACHEV:
TELEPHONE CALL WITH PRESIDENT REAGAN

The Prime Minister telephoned President Reagan on her return to Downing Street from Brize Norton to give him an account of her meeting with Mr Gorbachev.

The Prime Minister said that she had found Mr Gorbachev in lively and confident form. There was nothing in his manner or in what he said to suggest that he was in any sort of difficulty at home. He was very clearly determined to press ahead with internal reforms. His enthusiasm for these seemed in no way diminished.

The Prime Minister continued that Mr Gorbachev was obviously very pleased about the INF agreement. She had told him of her support for it. She had also warned him of the possible difficulties over ratification by the United States' Senate. The best way to overcome these difficulties would be for Mr Gorbachev to be as forthcoming as he could on human rights and Afghanistan. She had herself raised both matters with him, underlining that the impression he made in the United States would depend crucially on what he could offer on these two points. His reaction had been quite touchy.

The Prime Minister continued that she had found Mr Gorbachev optimistic on the prospects for a START agreement. She had made the point about the need for the Soviet Union to come forward with credible proposals for verification of limits on mobile ICBMs. Mr Gorbachev had left a clear impression that he believed the problems over this could be overcome. He had clearly attached high priority to negotiations for reductions in conventional forces and was also likely to press hard for an agreement to eliminate chemical weapons. He had suggested that British enthusiasm for this had been dampened by the United States. She had made clear the very real problems of verification, but had repeated her commitment to seek agreement. It had been noteworthy that, in discussing SDI, Mr Gorbachev had not made any linkage with the START negotiations. She had

herself renewed her proposal that there should be agreement on a period of non-withdrawal from the ABM treaty and that each side should be ready to spell out the nature of the research which it intended to pursue. This would give the reassurance of predictability, which should allow START negotiations to go ahead. Mr Gorbachev had asked how such an arrangement could be verified. She had replied that there was no way in which research could be verified or constrained. But a combination of a commitment not to deploy strategic defences without negotiation, a lengthy period during which both sides committed themselves not to withdraw from the ABM treaty and mutual information on research plans should provide adequate assurance against unexpected developments.

The Prime Minister said that her dominant impressions were of Mr Gorbachev's commitment to continue the process of perestroika and glasnost, his optimism about the prospects for a START agreement, his acceptance of the step by step approach to arms control, and the degree to which he seemed to be looking for ways to manage the problem of strategic defences rather than making it a bar to reductions in strategic nuclear weapons.

The Prime Minister continued that she believed that Mr Gorbachev was genuinely ready for further arms control agreements. He both wanted and needed them. She thought he was a man with a sense of history and was genuinely prepared to work for improved East/West relations in a new spirit of co-operation. The President should tackle him on human rights matters but must be prepared for a sharp reaction. She wanted to stress again that there was no signs of diminished confidence on Gorbachev's part. He was clearly looking forward to his visit to Washington.

The President said that he was grateful for the Prime Minister's extensive report. He had been looking forward to some tough sessions with Mr Gorbachev, but the Prime Minister had clearly softened him up. She had covered a great deal of ground. He wondered whether she would like to come over and sit in on his meetings. The Prime Minister said that the President should speak very frankly to Mr Gorbachev, while at the same time showing understanding for some of the problems and difficulties which he faced. He responded well to friendship.

The President asked whether the Prime Minister had raised the incident in Moscow in which the KGB had attacked Jewish demonstrators. The Prime Minister said that she had not done so. When asked by the press about it, she had described it as a tragic incident but had said that one setback should not detract from the larger goal of seeing real progress on human rights.

The President asked whether the Prime Minister thought that he should try to get on first name terms with Mr Gorbachev. The Prime Minister advised him to go very gently on this. Her own impression was that, while frank and open in his manner of talking, Mr Gorbachev was quite

formal and of course the Soviet system encouraged this tendency.

The Prime Minister suggested that she and the President should talk further after Mr Gorbachev's visit to Washington. The President agreed.

I am copying this letter to John Howe (Ministry of Defence) and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Charles Powell

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