

PRIME MINISTER

INTERVIEW WITH SOVIET TELEVISION

You are giving a short interview to Soviet TV this morning about the INF Agreement, the way ahead on arms control and Anglo-Soviet relations.

You will want to balance words of welcome for the INF Agreement and of hope for future arms control agreements with sober reminders of some of the problems which still lie ahead. You have a reputation with a large Russian audience for plain speaking and you preserve that.

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On the INF Agreement and arms control the main points are:

- the INF Agreement is a success for both East and West. It reinforces the Christmas message of peace and goodwill to all men;
- it shows that with patience and persistence agreements can be negotiated which reduce nuclear weapons but do not leave either side feeling less secure;
- that lesson should now be applied by working out further agreements to reduce not only strategic nuclear weapons, but chemical weapons and conventional forces. The Soviet Union has a very considerable superiority in these weapons. Agreements will therefore require the Soviet Union the biggest reductions, so that the balance can be redressed;
- you very much welcome Mr. Gorbachev's public confirmation that the Soviet Union is doing extensive work on strategic defence. It is natural that both sides should be doing this and certainly there is no

way to stop it. It should be possible for the US and the Soviet Union to reach an understanding in this area based on three points:

- (1) an agreed period of years during which neither side will withdraw from the ABM Treaty;
- (2) a confirmation that deployment of strategic defence weapons in space would be a matter for negotiation;
- (3) an explanation by both sides of their intended research activities over the next few years so that both can have confidence in the other's intentions;

- but despite the promising prospects, we must not be euphoric. Further arms control agreements will call for greater trust and confidence. Nothing would do more to promote that than for the Soviet Union to accelerate the changes it is introducing in improved human rights including the right of Jewish people to emigration; and secondly for the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan in 1988, leaving a non-aligned country;
- the other points in that nuclear weapons will remain vital to preserving peace, particularly while the Soviet Union continues to enjoy superiority in chemical and conventional weapons. This history of the last 40 years shows that deterrence based on nuclear weapons works. A war-free world is the most important objective. A sufficiency of nuclear weapons on each side is the best way to achieve that. That does, of course, leave scope for considerable reductions from the numbers there are now.

On Anglo-Soviet relations the main points are:

- these relations have reached a new high point;
- the very open and frank relationship which you and Mr. Gorbachev have made a big contribution to this;
- we were delighted by their brief visit to Britain earlier this week. The warmth of the welcome which both Mr. and Mrs. Gorbachev received shows how much people want better relations;
- it was a particular pleasure to see how warmly our young school children responded to Mrs. Gorbachev;
- we look forward to the General Secretary returning to pay an official visit as soon as possible, perhaps next year;
- you strongly support Mr. Gorbachev's policies of 'Perestroika' and 'Glasnost' and hope that they will succeed. In Mr. Gorbachev, the Soviet people have a bold and courageous leader.

C. D. POWELL

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