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PRIME MINISTER

MOSCOW HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

I attach a further message from General Powell giving the text of the proposed White House press statement on the Moscow Human Rights Conference. It is not too bad, indeed better than I expected. The key phrase is: "lack of future and institutionalised progress or a reversal of progress made to date will cause us to reconsider our decision to attend a Moscow Conference in 1991". That is the conditionality we want to see: but, it is not as specific as we want: and is expressed in negative terms i.e. they will attend a conference unless ... while ours is positive i.e. we shall only attend a conference if ...

There are two ways to proceed:

- we could suggest some changes to the US text. For instance, we could propose that they add: "we shall monitor ^{would do} implementation of promised reforms very carefully over the period between now and 1991" after the first sentence of paragraph 3. And we could suggest that they add right at the end the text: "We look forward to the Soviet authorities implementing the assurances which they have given, on which our participation in the Moscow Conference will depend". I rather doubt whether the US will accept these points. If they did, they might want us to adopt their text (with the substitution of Prime Minister for President in the opening paras.);

- or, we could say that we welcome their text which is compatible with what we intend to say and let them see our own proposed statement (attached). This is considerably more specific, along the lines of your message to the President. We would try to ensure that both statements were issued at about the same time.

SECRET

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b

My own view is that we have broken the back of this: there is sufficient conditionality in the US statement to make clear that our positions are basically similar. It does not now matter much whether we go for a joint statement, separate identical statements or separate statements.

Agree that I should try to persuade the White House to strengthen their statement, but settle for two separate statements if necessary?

C.D?

(C. D. POWELL)

3 January 1988

SECRET

MOSCOW HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE:
LINE FOR THE PRESS

The Government has decided to agree in principle to the holding of a CSCE Conference on the Human Dimension in Moscow in 1991. ^{provided that} Our ~~attendance~~ will however ^{depend} [be conditional] on recent progress on human rights ~~matters~~ in the Soviet Union ^{is} ~~being~~ maintained. We understand that the United States has reached a similar conclusion.

Progress made with the Soviet Union on human rights issues over the past few months has fully justified our insistence on firm commitments by the Soviet authorities in this field, as the ^{condition for} ~~price~~ of our agreement ^{that} to ~~holding~~ the 1991 meeting ^{be held} in Moscow.

In particular:

- the great majority of family reunification cases have been resolved (the long-standing United Kingdom list was cleared last year);
- Jewish and other emigration figures have increased substantially and many long-term refuseniks have been allowed out;
- conditions on which refuseniks are allowed to emigrate have been substantially eased;
- all prisoners committed under the explicitly political and religious articles of the criminal code are being released and the Soviet authorities have undertaken to review all other outstanding cases;
- the jamming of Western broadcasts to the Soviet Union has ceased;
- President Gorbachev has given firm assurances before the world in his UN speech about the reform of the

Soviet criminal code and the embodiment of human rights in legislation.

This ^{is} amounts to a substantial improvement in Soviet human rights' performance which we welcome. ~~The trend is clearly in the right direction.~~

Nonetheless much remains to be done and we shall continue to monitor ~~implementation of these reforms very carefully over the period~~ between now and 1991. ~~Our attendance at the Conference in Moscow will~~ ^{depend.} ~~be conditional~~ upon progress in the human rights field being maintained. We shall need to be ^{By that time} satisfied, for example, that: ^{we shall expect to see that}

the promised changes in Soviet criminal legislation have been implemented ~~and applied in practice,~~ including abolition or amendment of the 'political and religious' articles;

there are effective guarantees of free speech, freedom of religion, freedom to emigrate, as well as of genuine judicial independence;

people are no longer imprisoned (including in psychiatric wards) for their political and religious beliefs;

there are no remaining long-term refuseniks who are denied their right to emigrate;

the Moscow Conference is held under exactly the same conditions as the CSCE meetings in the West.

We look forward to the Soviet authorities implementing the assurances which they have given on these points, on which our participation in the Moscow Conference will depend.