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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

11 March 1988

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Dear Charles,

In your letter of 26 February you asked me to let you know if we thought that the Prime Minister should reply to a paper which Yuri Orlov had written on Gorbachev's reforms.

I am sending you separately a commentary on the paper. Our advice would be for the Prime Minister not to be drawn into a substantive dialogue with Orlov. His paper is highly subjective and with the nationalities issue now dominating a great deal of Soviet thinking and the June Party Conference looming there will be plenty of signals from Moscow on the state of play in the leadership without adding the Orlov dimension.

Yours ever,

L Parker

(L Parker)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
PS/No 10 Downing Street

From: G D G Murrell

Date: 3 March 1988

Mr Hemans *W.*
Soviet Department

ORLOV'S PAPER

I agree with A. Murrell's two points. But I would be disinclined to submit further a comment to No 10. Both issues go to the heart of the debate about Soviet reform and cannot be properly dealt with in passing.

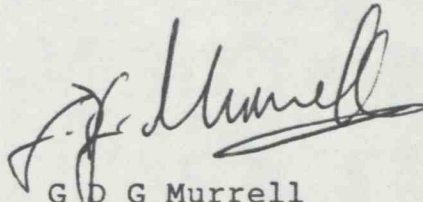
1. Mr Orlov makes a number of valid points in his paper but there are 2 issues in particular where I feel he is significantly wrong and which perhaps require comment:

a. I think it is unrealistic to suggest that Gorbachev's reforms are primarily motivated by concern for Soviet geo-political aims rather than the state of the system itself. The widening economic and technological gap with the West was certainly a major component of the Soviet thinking behind perestroika, but the alarm in the leadership about an impending social and political as well as economic crisis within the system (which is well documented) has certainly been the main driving force. The Soviet leadership would surely not embark on radical policies carrying certain risks of internal instability largely for the sake of long-term geo-political objectives.

b. Orlov is also, in my view, wrong to maintain that there are no differences in the leadership and that Gorbachev is under no kind of pressure. There is solid evidence of differences of view between Gorbachev and Ligachev about glasnost, economic and cultural policies and that at times Gorbachev has been under a certain amount of pressure. It is also clear that there are many elements of Gorbachev's policies which must be unwelcome to the KGB, the Party bureaucracy and the military - which is not to say that they are totally opposed to his policies. I would not suggest that Gorbachev's position is in any immediate danger but, following the

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serious nationalist disturbances in Armenia and Azerbaijan, any further setbacks in the Soviet Union (or in Eastern Europe) attributable to his policies would certainly make him vulnerable.



G D G Murrell

Soviet & East European Region

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From the Private Secretary

26 February 1988

I enclose a copy of a paper written by Yuri Orlov on Gorbachev's reforms which he has asked should be passed to the Prime Minister. You may well have received a copy yourselves from Lord Bethell. I do not see any particular need for the Prime Minister to comment but if you think there are points to which she should respond I should be grateful if you would let me know.

Charles Powell

Lyn Parker, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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10 DOWNING STREET
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From the Private Secretary

26 February 1988

Thank you for your letter of 25 February enclosing the memorandum from Yuri Orlov. I look forward to getting a copy of your note about the US/Soviet human rights conference and to hearing how your visit to Moscow goes.

(C.D. POWELL)

The Lord Bethell, M.E.P.



FROM
NICHOLAS
BETHELL

TELEPHONE
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73 SUSSEX SQUARE
LONDON W2 2SS

Charles Powell Esq
10 Downing Street
London SW1

25th February 1988

Dear Charles,

I just received a letter from Yuri Orlov enclosing a memorandum which he asked me to forward to the Prime Minister. It seems to me well written, but not to contain an awful lot that is new. Anyway, here it is.

I am very interested in the agreement that Geoffrey Howe made in Moscow for a British-Soviet bilateral discussion between Foreign Office officials and experts on the subject of human rights.

The Americans have had such an arrangement for some months and so, to a lesser extent, have the French. It is certainly encouraging that the Soviets seem willing to talk to major countries about the changes that they are making in their internal structures.

Ambassador Richard Schifter, head of the State Department's human rights unit, was in Moscow a few days ago with Mr Schultz. He took part in another round of the US-Soviet human rights "conference" and he kindly told me about it in Brussels the day before yesterday, when he and his boss stopped over to meet the NATO foreign ministers. I am writing a note about this for Geoffrey Howe and, if I may, I will send you a copy.

I was sorry not to have the chance of a word with you at last Friday's lunch for Mr Gerasimov. I will be flying to Moscow for six days on Wednesday week, March 9th, visa permitting, and look forward to seeing Dr Sakharov again, although he seems temporarily to have sidelined himself from the human rights movement.

Yours ever,

Nicholas

Lord Bethell, MEP