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10 June 1988

Hoover Institution  
Stanford, California, 94305, USA.

Dear Prime Minister

Prime Minister  
The attachment is  
fascinating - but one  
swallow does not make  
a summer.

As ever, it was splendid to see you and hear you  
and talk to you the other day.

CDF 16/6

As to the approaching Party Conference in Moscow,  
on the face of it it looks as though Gorbachev will have to make concessions.  
You rightly said that this is often necessary in politics. The difficulty is  
that Gorbachev's perestroika programme is already the absolute minimum that  
could possibly save the economy; (as one of his supporters repeated a few  
days ago "You can't cross an abyss in two jumps".) Watered down it would be  
almost useless. - On one view Ligachev favours much perestroika, but believes  
it can be carried through by the old apparat - an ignis fatuus Gorbachev  
rightly sees as fatal.

Thus the political problem is now crucial. If  
Gorbachev cannot master the Party now, this may become even more difficult  
later. The present position seems to be that (after a process resembling  
elections in the most deplorable type of British Trade Union) Gorbachev will  
not have a majority at the Conference. He might, therefore, settle for a draw,  
in the hope of a later opportunity. However, he can yet use the Credentials  
Commission against opposing delegations - (and possibly, if large scandals  
are unearthed, actually to postpone the Conference). And even if he has no  
majority, he can try to hustle some of his less obdurate opponents into  
supporting him, by a speech made as an all-out political assault.

If, even then, he loses, would there be an attempt to unseat him? Gorbachevites have lately been saying that the opposition does not want to do this, it does not now want the responsibility of rule, and only wishes to slow him up. But some are now beginning to envisage at least the possibility of his losing power if it comes to a really forthright confrontation.

A general feeling seems to be that Gorbachev's style is such that if he sees any reasonable possibility of real victory he will go for it. There is even talk of his appealing to the Party membership over the heads of the Conference - though it is hard to see how that could work.

At any rate, while we may see a compromise, we may well see a dramatic crisis...

I shall be addressing the Atlantic Council of the United States in Washington next week, and while there will be talking to some of Dukakis's foreign policy advisers. Dukakis himself may be coming (as Reagan is): if so I will see if I can form an impression worth sending you !

I am enclosing excerpts from an astonishing Soviet article on foreign affairs, just in case you didn't see it. Though only representing one strand of present Soviet thought, and not yet anything approaching a dominant one, it makes it clear that we were all perfectly right in our assessments of Soviet actions and intentions over the past couple of decades.

With warmest wishes both to yourself personally and for even more, and more and more, successes,

*yours sincerely*

*Robert Caplan*



# HOOVER INSTITUTION

ON WAR, REVOLUTION AND PEACE

Stanford, California 94305-6010



10 June 1988

*Dear Charles,*

it was very good to see you, and to be given the chance once more to talk with the Prime Minister.

I am enclosing a letter to her, mainly on the coming Party Conference in Moscow. I'm enclosing excerpts from Dashichev's article on foreign policy, though I expect you have seen it. It is quite astonishing

I've also enclosed a translation ( from the Italian) of a fascinating interview given by a Gorbachevite , indeed a Yeltsinite) on Yeltsin's fall, though even more interesting as an example of the shamelessness and tenacity of the old apparat, in this case in Moscow itself.

I'll be in Australia/NZ for a couple of weeks. Hope to be in the USSR in September or so; if so will ring you about possibly consulting en route...

best wishes

yours ever,

*Bob*

Robert Conquest

I am asking my publishers to send a copy of my forthcoming book-New and Collected Poems to you for the Prime Minister, though I'm not sure they will be quite her cup of tea.

SOVIET UNION: Meeting  
with Robert  
Conquest #2





10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

*From the Private Secretary*

16 June 1988

Thank you for your letter of 10 June  
and for the two enclosures which I am sure  
that the Prime Minister will find fascinating.  
I hope you will manage a visit in September.

(C. D. POWELL)

Mr. Robert Conquest

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