


 UNITED KINGDOM MISSION
 TO THE UNITED NATIONS

 845 THIRD AVENUE
 NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

18 November 1988

 Charles Powell Esq
 10 DOWNING STREET

My dear Charles,
*Prime Minister
 I think you may
 find this of interest
 CP22/xi*

THE PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH MR GORBACHEV

I do not know whether you saw a copy of my telno 1571 about Soviet views on the environment. In any event I enclose a copy. I believe that you know Vavilov of old. He spoke warmly of you and Carla when I saw him again today.

2. Vavilov called this morning within a few hours of his return to Moscow. He said he had reflected on the conversation recorded in my telno 1571. He then made some points which indicated pretty clearly that he was acting under instructions from Moscow. Throughout he underlined that "the new thinking" in Moscow was under constant threat, and that the new thinkers, including Gorbachev himself, needed all the help they could get.

3. He said that the meeting between the Prime Minister and Gorbachev would be particularly important for Gorbachev. He did not want to venture into the agenda, which was not directly his business. But he allowed himself to hope that the Prime Minister would take account of four points:

- Both Gorbachev and Shevardnadze had said publicly many times that Soviet foreign policy should have the ideology taken out of it. The more that people in the West could recognize these statements, and acknowledge that this was what the Russians were trying to do, the more it would help Gorbachev and Shevardnadze, who faced real opposition on this point within the Politburo. I said that we had recognized the importance of Soviet statements to this effect from the beginning, and that the Foreign Secretary had drawn particular attention to them in his speech at Oxford on 27 October. I then gave Vavilov a copy of the Oxford speech.
- Vavilov said that one of the most important aspects of Glasnost was freer diffusion of information. This was particularly important in relation to environmental issues. The Russians meant what they said when they sought to encourage the widest possible flow of information across frontiers. I remarked that the readiness of the Russians to be open about the Chernobyl disaster had made a favourable impression. Vavilov replied that this was only the beginning. Again he hoped that the Prime Minister could recognize Soviet efforts in this respect. They needed all possible encouragement.



- Vavilov said that we should realize that the Russians generally, and Gorbachev in particular, sometimes got hooked on certain formulas: hence Soviet insistence in their proposals on the environment on the need to achieve environmental "security". I said we all understood what the Russians wanted, but the use of the word security was inappropriate (after all there was no such thing), and that it had become unfortunately linked to the Soviet proposals for a Comprehensive System of International Peace and Security, to which he knew we had objections. Vavilov said he agreed in substance but hoped we could do something to help over the formula. The Prime Minister might find that Gorbachev would mention this apparently unimportant question. I said that the right solution was surely to look for better protection from environmental hazards.
- Vavilov said that the next century would see the development of new technologies of every kind. In some countries, including his own, there had been a reaction against science and technology following Chernobyl. People had to realize that disasters did not mean that they should go backwards but that better ways had to be found of going forwards. Gorbachev believed whole-heartedly in the cooperative development of technology, and wanted this also to be better recognized.

Finally Vavilov said that he hoped very much that environmental questions would figure on the agenda of the Prime Minister's meeting. The trouble with Gorbachev was that he talked about whatever was in the front of his mind, and that meant that the urgent sometimes overshadowed the important.

4. I pass on this curious conversation for what it is worth. Vavilov made it clear without specifically saying that he hoped I would convey it to you. At one point he let fall that his thinking was shared in high places, and this made me wonder if it did not come from Shevardnadze or Petrovsky.

5. I am sending a copy of this letter to Duncan Slater at the Office, but am giving it no further circulation.

Yours ever

[Signature]

Crispin Tickell

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SENT: 1916/16 NOVEMBER

FM UKMIS NEW YORK

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELNO 1571

OF 162345Z NOVEMBER 88

INFO PRIORITY MOSCOW, UKMIS GENEVA, NAIROBI

SOVIET VIEWS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

SUMMARY

1. SOVIET OFFICIAL THINKS GORBACHEV WILL RAISE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES WHEN HE ADDRESSES THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN DECEMBER AND MAY ALSO WISH TO DISCUSS THEM WITH THE PRIME MINISTER.

DETAIL

2. VAVILOV, HEAD OF A NEW SECTION OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE SOVIET MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEALING WITH THE ENVIRONMENT, CALLED ON ME ON 16 NOVEMBER.

3. WE DISCUSSED RECENT SOVIET INITIATIVES ON THE ENVIRONMENT, NOTABLY SHEVARDNADZE'S PROPOSALS IN THE GENERAL DEBATE (MY TELNO 1185) THE ELABORATION OF THESE IN PETROVSKY'S SUBSEQUENT PRESS CONFERENCE (TEXT SENT BY FAX TO MAED) AND THE MORE PERSONAL SUGGESTIONS MADE BY PETROVSKY IN MY BILATERAL MEETINGS WITH HIM (MY LETTER TO SLATER OF 21 OCTOBER).

4. VAVILOV SAID THAT WORK WAS CONTINUING ON SHEVARDNADZE'S PROPOSALS FOR A CONSULTATIVE MEETING OF EXPERTS IN 1989 TO DISCUSS THE HEALTH OF THE EARTH AND A SUMMIT MEETING OF THE LEADERS OF 15 OR 20 STATES IN 1990. HE AGREED THAT ANY SUMMIT MEETING WOULD NEED VERY CAREFUL PREPARATION. HE ALSO SHARED OUR VIEW THAT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE FOR THE 1992 CONFERENCE PROPOSED BY CANADA AND THE NORDICS TO GET SIDE-TRACKED INTO ISSUES NOT ESSENTIAL TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE ENVIRONMENT. SEPARATELY VAVILOV HAS TOLD US THAT PERSONALLY HE WOULD HAVE NO DIFFICULTY OVER DROPPING THE REFERENCE TO DEVELOPMENT IN THE TITLE OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE 1992 CONFERENCE.

5. VAVILOV CONFIRMED THAT WORK WAS CONTINUING BOTH ON SHEVARDNADZE'S PROPOSAL TO UPGRADE THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP) INTO AN ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL AND ON PETROVSKY'S ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL TO CONVERT THE U.N. TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL INTO A TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT WHICH WOULD ACT AS A CO-ORDINATING BODY. VAVILOV SAID THAT THIS WORK HAD NOT SO FAR BEEN GIVEN PRIORITY. THE RUSSIANS WOULD WELCOME OUR IDEAS BEFORE THEIR OWN BECOME TOO DETAILED. HE AGREED THAT DIFFICULTIES WOULD ARISE OVER THE TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL PROPOSAL IF IT BECAME NECESSARY (AS WOULD SEEM INEVITABLE) TO AMEND THE UN CHARTER.

6. VAVILOV THOUGHT IT LIKELY THAT GORBACHEV WOULD RAISE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES WHEN HE ADDRESSED THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON 7 DECEMBER. BUT GORBACHEV WAS A LAW UNTO HIMSELF, AND VAVILOV DID NOT EXPECT SOVIET OFFICIALS TO RECEIVE ADVANCE NOTICE OF WHAT HE WOULD SAY. NEVERTHELESS IT WOULD BE LOGICAL FOR GORBACHEV TO CARRY FORWARD VIEWS ALREADY EXPRESSED OF SHEVARDNADZE AND PETROVSKY. VAVILOV WAS PRETTY SURE THAT GORBACHEV WOULD ALSO WISH TO DISCUSS ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES WITH THE PRIME MINISTER IN VIEW OF HER KNOWN INTEREST.

COMMENT

8. VAVILOV, A FORMER DEPUTY LEADER OF THE SOVIET DISARMAMENT DELEGATION IN GENEVA, IS SHARP, PERSUASIVE AND WELL-INFORMED. I DO NOT KNOW HOW MUCH WEIGHT HE CARRIES AT HOME BUT HE IS THE ANCHOR MAN ON ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS IN THE ENLARGED SOVIET DELEGATION TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

TICKELL

DIST: MISSION
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SECRET AND PERSONAL

Original to DP.

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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

21 November 1988

ANDREI VAVILOV

You may be interested in the enclosed letter from Sir Crispin Tickell in New York which propels Andrei Vavilov once more into my life. He seems to speak with some authority.

(CHARLES POWELL)

James Richards, Esq.,
Century House.

SECRET AND PERSONAL