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PRIME MINISTER

VIENNA CSCE MEETING: MOSCOW HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

General Powell from the White House telephoned me early this morning from California. He said that the President, George Shultz and he had discussed the prospects for ending the Vienna CSCE meeting and reaching agreement on a human rights conference in Moscow in 1991. Quite considerable progress had in fact been made with the Russians, including over the past few days, on human rights issues. The President's inclination was to try to reach a conclusion in Vienna before his term of office ended. There would be an opportunity for a final round of discussion at Foreign Minister level in the margins of the Meeting of Chemical Weapons in Paris later this week. George Shultz would speak to the Foreign Secretary later today to explain the position in more detail. The main outstanding question was the degree of conditionality which should be attached to Western participation in a Moscow conference. On this, the State Department were not as robust as the White House would like. It would be helpful if the UK could continue to argue strongly for conditionality.

I said this was very much our intention. The proposed Moscow meeting was controversial in this country. A large number of MPs had put down a Motion urging the Government not to agree to such a conference and there was considerable pressure from human rights and Jewish organisations. We had to consider how those who had fought for human rights in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe would feel if we agreed to a conference. We must not put ourselves in a position where we were committed to attending a Moscow meeting whatever happened. For instance, Mr. Gorbachev might be removed: or there might be some new bout of repression within the Soviet Union. I did not think you would be prepared to agree in principle to a Moscow conference unless it was quite clear that a final decision whether to attend would be taken only in the light of actual Soviet performance in the intervening two years. General Powell did not dissent from this. He said that the

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President would be replying to your message, probably on 2 January. It would be helpful to have a further reaction from you as soon as possible.

I reported the above to you and subsequently spoke to the Foreign Secretary's Private Secretary urging that he should take a rather firm line with George Shultz on the question of conditionality when they spoke. Mr. Wall's minute (attached) records the main points of that conversation.

I subsequently spoke again to General Powell this evening to say that I thought it very important that the President did reply to your message (George Shultz seemed to imply that he would not do so). General Powell said that he had the draft of a reply in front of him and had every intention of sending it. It would not go into great detail. I said it seemed to me there were two crucial points on the way ahead:

- first, we should try to agree between us the language for the conclusion of the Vienna meeting which we would both support, making clear that participation in a Moscow conference would depend upon Soviet implementation of their undertakings;

and

- second, that we should both agree the language we would use publicly in describing exactly what our position was, i.e. how we would interpret the conclusion at Vienna.

General Powell said that he agreed with this although it would be difficult to agree language in Vienna with the Russians, the neutrals and even the other Europeans. It would be very useful if we could propose some language since the State Department were being resistant on this point. It was still not absolutely clear that the Americans would agree to a Moscow conference: there had been a scorching editorial in the Washington Post that day opposing it and there would be

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difficulties with Congress. The Administration would be beginning consultations with Congress early this week. But the President had pretty well made up his mind that he wanted to conclude the Vienna meeting before he left office. General Powell's view was that he would do so.

I am asking the Foreign Office to do some very urgent work on their wording for the conclusions which describe our position accurately and in terms which make it clear we have not given way, but are successfully using the prospect of a Moscow conference as a leverage for extracting further progress on human rights from the Soviet Union. I shall let you have this as soon as possible. This note is by way of an interim report.

CDP

CHARLES POWELL

1 January 1989

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INFO IMMEDIATE MOSCOW, UKDEL CSCE VIENNA

FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY

CSCE: MOSCOW CONFERENCE

SUMMARY

1. General Powell and Shultz have both telephoned to explain conditions in which the US proposes to agree to Moscow Conference. These are on the right lines but require further clarification and detail. General Powell telephoned Charles Powell (No 10) early this morning to say that the US was ready to move to a conclusion of the CSCE <sup>including</sup> ~~based on~~ agreement to attend the Moscow Conference. There would be a degree of conditionality though General Powell thought it would be difficult to spell out in a text what the conditions would be. Shultz would be telephoning the Secretary of State later in the day to give further details.
2. Shultz telephoned early this afternoon. He said the Americans continued to be impressed by the changes that were taking place in the Soviet Union. The political prisoners had been released, the nine bilateral cases had been reduced to zero, jamming had been stopped. There remained a grey area

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on refusniks but mechanisms were in place for dealing with this. The US was being urged by Sakharov and Bonner to agree to the Moscow Conference on the basis that this would reinforce the reform process. Shultz did, however, acknowledge that there was a risk that Soviet dissidents could be more discouraged than encouraged if they thought the West was giving up its pressure on the Soviet Union.

5. Shultz said he proposed to tell Shevardnadze when he saw him in Paris on 7 January that if the reform process was interrupted or there was any backsliding on the release of political prisoners there would be no question of the US attending the Moscow Conference. Shultz added that there were in any case one or two other outstanding issues which must be resolved for the CSCE to be brought to a conclusion, in particular the Greek/Turkish boundary problem and the issue of the Bonn Economic Conference which, in Shultz's view, and contrary to that of Genscher, should be at a sub-ministerial level. Shultz said he thought the ~~issue of the number of~~ follow-up meetings to Vienna had been satisfactorily <sup>reduced from 11 to 8.</sup> resolved.

6. The Secretary of State said we remained deeply anxious about agreeing now to a Moscow Conference. It was important that the Soviet Union should be held to conditions in the run up to the Conference and for the Conference itself.

After some discussion the Secretary of State got Shultz to agree that, in the press conference he proposes to give in Paris next weekend, <sup>Shultz</sup> he would make it clear that US attendance was conditional upon progress in the human rights field continuing on its present path. In response to questions he would also make clear:

- (a) that the US would not attend if there were still political prisoners in Soviet jails at the time of the Conference;
- (b) that the Moscow Conference must be held in the same conditions as the Conferences to be held in the West.

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The Secretary of State <sup>explained</sup> also made clear our insistence on the importance of human rights being enshrined as a legal right within the Soviet Union and not left as a matter of administrative discretion. Shultz agreed but clearly thought the existing assurances given by Gorbachev in his recent speech at the UN adequate.

COMMENT

5. General Powell indicated that there would be a letter setting out the US position. This has not yet been received. In the light of further contacts with General Powell which may take place later today we may need to establish clearly <sup>with the Americans</sup> that

- (i) an agreed form of words which both we and the Americans could use, setting out the conditions of our acceptance <sup>of the Vienna Conference</sup>; and
- (ii) appropriate language to be used in Vienna itself in bringing the CSCE Conference to a conclusion.

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