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PRIME MINISTER

*seen and approved by the Prime Minister  
CDD 2/1*

VIENNA CSCE MEETING: MOSCOW HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

I sent you down some background papers this morning. I now attach a draft reply to President Reagan.

There seem to me a number of crucial questions:

- have the Russians already done, or promised to do, enough in the human rights field to warrant Western agreement to a Moscow Conference? The answer is that there have been some quite impressive developments in recent months. More are promised, for instance what Mr. Gorbachev had to say in his UN speech about embodying basic human rights in law. In addition, prominent human rights campaigners are saying that a Conference in Moscow will help keep the Soviet authorities up to the mark. I conclude that we have a good public case to make that we have used the prospect of a Moscow Human Rights Conference to secure important concessions from the Soviet Union with the promise of more to come. It is reasonable to agree to a Conference, provided it is clear that agreement is conditional on Soviet implementation of their undertakings, with no backsliding;
  
- is this consistent with the undertakings which you have given publicly? The key points of what you have said in letters and elsewhere are (a) that we would agree to the Conference only if there was a major improvement in Soviet human rights performance and (b) that we would not attend unless Soviet undertakings had been carried out, and were reflected in the country's legal code. Once again, this seems to me to enable us to agree to a Conference, but to make conditionality about attendance a crucial point;

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- is there a chance of extracting more from the Soviet Union as the price of attendance at a Conference? I find this harder to answer. The fact is that the Americans are the ones who have been negotiating with the Russians and they are clearly disinclined to press for more. It is most unlikely that the Russians would be prepared to bargain additionally with us at this stage;
  
- can we even now hold the Americans back? A very strong pitch from you might convince the President. But we would have to consider three points: what more we want the Americans to ask of the Russians: the implications of holding up a successful outcome in Vienna: and the impact on Mr. Gorbachev's proposed visit to the UK. Since Vienna can only be concluded on the basis of unanimity, it is open to us to hold out in isolation. That would, I think, earn you considerable credit in some quarters: but there would probably be a bigger wave of those accusing you of undermining the prospects for improving East/West relations. In substance they will be wrong: a sustained improvement of East/West relations is only possible when the Soviet Union fully honour their Helsinki obligations. But that is not how it will be presented, and the support of Sakharov and Bonner for a Conference will be quoted against you.

It is very much a matter for your political judgement. The conclusion which I draw is that we should conditionally agree to a Conference, provided we can tie the Americans (and preferably others as well) to the points set out in the attached message from you to the President.

Agree to send this message?

C.D.P.

CHARLES POWELL  
2 January 1989



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10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

*From the Private Secretary*

2 January 1989

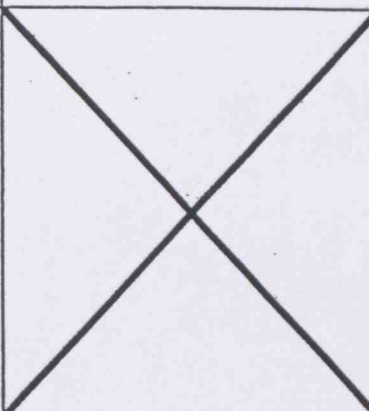
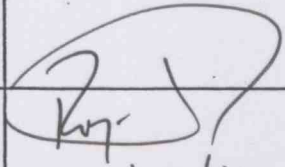
**VIENNA CSCE MEETING:  
MOSCOW HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE**

I enclose a reply to President Reagan's message about the Moscow Human Rights Conference. This has been seen and approved by the Prime Minister and I am despatching it on the direct line to the White House. You will no doubt want to telegraph the text flash to Kuwait for the Foreign Secretary and to the Embassy in Washington for their information.

**CHARLES POWELL**

Resident Clerk  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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DEPARTMENT/SERIES ..... <i>PREM 19</i> ..... PIECE/ITEM ..... <i>3174</i> ..... (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
Extract details: <i>T 2/89</i> <i>PM to US President 2 Jan 84</i>	
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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

2 January 1989

C Powell Esq  
Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street

CDD  
mi

*Dear Private Secretary,*

CSCE MEETING IN VIENNA: MOSCOW HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

Thank you for your letter of 2 January.

... I attach a draft reply from the Prime Minister to  
President Reagan, setting out the sort of conditionality  
we might wish to apply to agreement on a Moscow Conference.  
... This in turn reflects the earlier agreement with the  
Americans on preconditions for a Moscow Conference (also  
attached) but takes into account recent Soviet progress  
in fulfilling these.

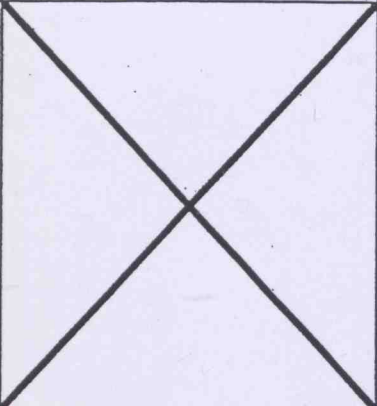
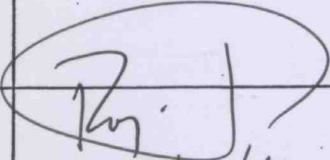
*Your sincerely,  
Greg Dorey*

G J Dorey  
CSCE Unit

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# The National Archives

DEPARTMENT/SERIES <p style="text-align: center;">PREM 19</p> ..... PIECE/ITEM ..... 3174 (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
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2 January 1989

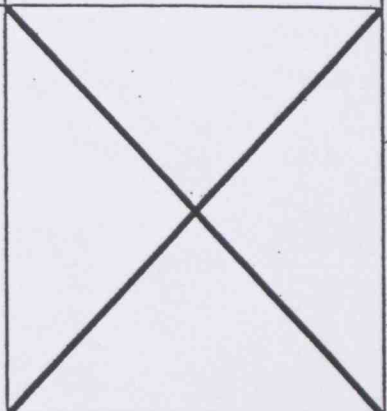
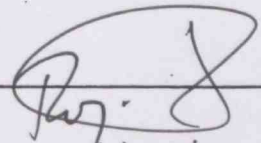
**CSCE MEETING IN VIENNA: MOSCOW HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE**

I enclose a copy of President Reagan's reply to the Prime Minister's message of 21 December on a Moscow Human Rights Conference. I should be grateful if you could send the text to the Foreign Secretary's party in Kuwait. As you will see, it is not entirely satisfactory, in that it does not say explicitly that Western (or at least American and British) participation in a Moscow Conference would be conditional upon the Soviet Union implementing in full its undertakings. Since the Americans are planning to announce their acceptance of a Moscow Conference tomorrow, 3 January, we shall need to send a further reply from the Prime Minister to President Reagan tonight. I am in touch with Mr Dorey about this.

CHARLES POWELL

Resident Clerk  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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