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From the Private Secretary

3 January 1989

MOSCOW HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

I sent you earlier this evening the text of the proposed White House Statement on the Moscow Human Rights Conference. It turned out to be rather better than we expected and to contain a clear statement that US attendance would depend on progress with human rights' reforms being maintained.

The Prime Minister has seen the American text and has decided that we should not raise any further points on it. She has also approved the text of our own statement, in the version enclosed.

I have subsequently told General Powell that we are content with the White House text and have sent him our own. We have agreed that the respective statements should be issued tomorrow, 4 January, at 0930 in California and 1730 in London. Meanwhile, the Americans will send off their message to Shevardnadze straight away.

C. D. POWELL

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MOSCOW HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE: LINE FOR THE PRESS

The Government has decided to agree in principle to the holding of a CSCE Conference on the Human Dimension in Moscow in 1991, provided that recent progress on human rights in the Soviet Union is maintained. We understand that the United States has reached a similar conclusion.

Progress made with the Soviet Union on human rights issues over the past few months has fully justified our insistence on firm commitments by the Soviet authorities in this field, as the condition for our agreement that the 1991 meeting be held in Moscow.

In particular:

- the great majority of family reunification cases have been resolved (the long-standing United Kingdom list was cleared last year);
- Jewish and other emigration figures have increased substantially and many long-term refuseniks have been allowed out;
- conditions on which refuseniks are allowed to emigrate have been substantially eased;
- all prisoners committed under the explicitly political and religious articles of the criminal code are being released and the Soviet authorities have undertaken to review all other outstanding cases;
- the jamming of Western broadcasts to the Soviet Union has ceased;
- President Gorbachev has given firm assurances before the world in his UN speech about the reform of the Soviet criminal code and the embodiment of human rights in legislation.

This is a substantial improvement in Soviet human rights' performance which we welcome. Nonetheless much remains to be done and we shall continue to monitor the reforms carefully between now and 1991. By that time we shall expect to see that:

the promised changes in Soviet criminal legislation have been implemented, including abolition or amendment of the 'political and religious' articles;

there are effective guarantees of free speech, freedom of religion, freedom to emigrate, as well as of genuine judicial independence;

people are no longer imprisoned (including in psychiatric wards) for their political and religious beliefs;

there are no remaining long-term refuseniks who are denied their right to emigrate;

the Moscow Conference is held under exactly the same conditions as the CSCE meetings in the West.

We look forward to the Soviet authorities implementing the assurances which they have given on these points, on which our participation in the Moscow Conference will depend.