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(MR GORBACHEV'S VISIT: MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT MITTERRAND

1. Following is text:

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Dear Francois

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I thought you might like to have my impressions of my talks last week with Mr Gorbachev.

To all outward appearances Gorbachev remains ebullient, self-assured and relaxed. His style went down well with our public opinion. In private I found him frank about the enormous problems which confront him in the Soviet Union, above all the economy and the nationalities. The latter is obviously a major worry to which he does not pretend to have an answer. He is fearful that the West will try to exploit the issue against him. He claims to be absolutely determined to press ahead with perestroika and I believe him. But he was also rather defensive about reports in the West that perestroika was running into trouble and that we did not want it to succeed. I assured him that I supported what he was doing in the Soviet Union, but did so only on the basis that we keep our defences absolutely sure.

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He had little new to say on arms control. I took him to task on the disparity between Soviet statements about their chemical weapons' capability and our knowledge of the real situation. He was rather defensive and suggested further contacts to remove misunderstandings. The announcement in his speech that the Soviet Union would suspend production of military grade uranium and reduce production of military grade plutonium is of no practical significance, and we are making that clear publicly. Indeed one gets the feeling that he is running out of ideas in the arms control area. French and British weapons were not mentioned at all. He adopted a rather menacing tone on modernisation of NATO's SNF, conveniently ignoring the modernisation which the Soviet Union has already conducted. We should turn this to our advantage in NATO, by arguing that failure to take an adequate decision on modernisation at the Summit would appear weak. More generally, any risk of euphoria as a result of his visit has been largely dispelled by subsequent events: the accident with the nuclear submarine and the killing of demonstrators in Georgia

where I did detect some progress was in his attitude on regional problems. He was actively helpful over Namibia, and constructive on the Middle East. Shevardnadze told Geoffrey Howe, that the Russians were trying to shift the Syrians on Lebanon but that their influence was limited. I took him to the conduct of Cuba and Nicaragua in Central America. He claimed to be firmly in favour of a political settlement in the region.

He professed concern about delay in the United States coming forward with new policies and a firm commitment to continue the arms control negotiations. His spokesman also made play with this to the press. I took the line that a measured approach in coming forward with new policies was right. I have told George Bush, of whom Mr Gorbachev spoke noticeably warmly,

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that dim Baker's trip to Moscow in May is particularly well timed in this regard.

I twice raised the Soviet sale of Fencer to Libya but got

no, response.

My overall impression is that he is more conscious of Soviet weakness than strength. He is relying heavily on his personal style and its attractiveness to Western public opinion to counter this. He is prepared to a limited degree to work with us on regional problems where he feels the Soviet Union is over-extended and there is more to be gained from a show of statesmanship than unproductive confrontation. But old habits die hard, and we shall continue to face traditional Soviet tactics of deceit and subversion where they judge they can get away with them.

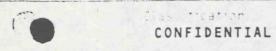
The conclusions I draw are:

- we should continue to declare our support for his internal policies. The more we can encourage him forward, the more difficult it will be for him to turn back without losing ground with Western opinion, yet the more he will face agonizing choices,
- but we must remain absolutely firm on defence and on maintaining NATO's strength and unity. That is what has brought us this far. Above all we must not seem to back down in the face of Soviet bluster on modernisation. The fact is that the West is winning, however hard Gorbachev strives to seize the high ground. We shall only lose the advantage if we show weakness.

I hope this is some help.

Warm regards
Margaret New Color

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LONDON SWIA 2AA

From the Private Secretary

11 April 1989

MR. GORBACHEV'S VISIT: MESSAGES TO KOHL AND MITTERRAND

Thank you for your letter of 11 April enclosing draft messages from the Prime Minister to Chancellor Kohl and President Mitterrand about her recent meeting with Mr. Gorbachev. I think that the Prime Minister would be content for the messages to issue with the manuscript amendments indicated on the enclosed texts.

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I should be grateful if they could be despatched tonight.

(C. D. POWELL)

Stephen Wall, Esq., Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Mr Gorbachev's visit: Messages to Kohl and Mitterrand

In your letter of 7 April you suggested that the Prime Minister would be prepared to consider sending messages to Chancellor Kohl and President Mitterrand. The Foreign Secretary thinks it would be worth giving both of them a fuller briefing than they will otherwise have received and also sharing with them the Prime Minister's impressions of the visit and of the way ahead.

I enclose draft messages to Chancellor Kohl and to President Mitterrand following the line of the message to President Bush with adjustments to take particular concerns into account (eg President Mitterrand having asked us to raise Lebanon).

The separate square brackets indicate suggested deletions, our thought being that, while we need to keep pressing the message on modernisation with Chancellor Kohl, the soft sell may work better with President Mitterrand.

(J S Wall)

Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq 10 Downing Street



10 DOWNING STREET LONDON SWIA 2AA

From the Private Secretary

7 April 1989

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MR. GORBACHEV'S VISIT

I am sure the Prime Minister will want to send a message to President Bush about Mr. Gorbachev's visit to the United Kingdom. This should not only respond to Bush's own message about Central America and the further message which General Scowcroft sent me, but convey some conclusions from the visit and thoughts on the way ahead. I should be grateful for your help in preparing a draft which the Prime Minister could see as early as possible next week.

I am copying this letter to Brian Hawtin (Ministry of Defence) and Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

think the Prime Ringer would Stephen Wall, Esq., Foreign and Commonwealth Office

C D POWELL

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