



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

19 December 1989

Dear Charles,

Visit of Mr Shevardnadze

In your letter of 18 December, you asked for briefing about two additional points which Mr Shevardnadze intended to raise today with the Prime Minister.

Four Power Discussions

Mr Shevardnadze may propose that the scope of the Four Power talks should be expanded to cover the German question as a whole. As far as the Allies are concerned, the talks are about Berlin. We cannot stop the Russians raising other issues, as Kochemasov did on 11 December, but we do no more than take note. This position was agreed in advance with the West Germans, who attach importance to it. The fact of the Four Power meeting has, in itself, been a salutary reminder to the FRG of the need to consult and carry the other Western Allies along at each stage. It has been useful that the Russians were able to let off steam at the Ambassadors' meeting. But none of the four Western Allies would want explicitly to agree with the Russians to discuss wider questions in the Four Power forum. This would imply that the Four Powers were seeking to control events over the heads of the Germans and would risk undermining the Western position. The Russians have an interest in playing the four Western Allies off against each other. If asked, the Prime Minister might say (in addition to the points in our earlier letter):

- the Four Power talks in Berlin are about our responsibilities for the city. We are ready to listen to your other concerns but we do not think it right to engage in wider discussion in this forum. We agree that we should keep fully in touch, making use of the other ministerial and official channels available.

Visit to Berlin

We agree that there would be difficulties about a meeting with Modrow in East Berlin. The Russians may well be making mischief by suggesting it. Baker met Modrow in Potsdam, in the GDR. That apart, there is a case for supporting Modrow, whose legitimacy rests almost entirely on his continuing popularity, in order to promote stability in the difficult period before the elections planned for next May. We have been considering whether a visit quite soon by the Foreign Secretary would be the right way of doing this. President



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Mitterrand's visit was set up earlier this year, well in advance of the present crisis.

Assistance to the GDR

The West Germans have also suggested to us that it would be most helpful if we could refute any Soviet criticism to the effect that the FRG had given a diktat by making economic assistance to the GDR conditional upon irreversible change in the GDR's basic political and economic system (the third of Kohl's ten points). If Mr Shevardnadze raises this, the Prime Minister might take the line that common language in both the Strasbourg and NATO Declarations reflects the Western position that aid to the newly-liberalising countries of Eastern Europe is conditional on their progress towards pluralistic democratic reform. It is a high priority for the FRG and all of us to ensure stability in the GDR.

Yours,  
Steph Wall

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*From the Private Secretary*

18 December 1989

*Dear Stefan,*

VISIT OF MR SHEVARDNADZE

While I was at the Soviet Embassy with the Prime Minister this afternoon for the Armenian Awards ceremony, I was taken aside by Mr Krasnov, who said he had come from Moscow to prepare for Shevardnadze's visit. Shevardnadze wanted the Prime Minister to be aware in advance of two points which he was intending to raise. These were:

He would like to discuss with her arrangements for activating the 4-Power mechanism in Berlin and making more use of it. I said that we had already activated the mechanism and agreement had been reached to continue contacts. I was not sure what further aspects Mr Shevardnadze would wish to discuss. Mr Krasnov was not very clear on the point, saying only that the Russians would like to see the scope of 4-Power exchanges extended. This whole business of reunification was very difficult for Mr Gorbachev in domestic terms, bearing in mind what the Soviet Union had suffered at the hands of Germany.

The second matter was the possibility of the Prime Minister paying an early visit to Berlin, in the course of which she might cross over to East Berlin to meet Mr Modrow, rather on the lines that Secretary Baker had just done. Mr Gorbachev thought this could be very useful in present circumstances. I said that I would report this, but there were obvious difficulties about a meeting in East Berlin itself. My own view is that we need to proceed rather cautiously on this.

I should be grateful if you could let me have any necessary additional briefing on these two points.

*Charles Powell*  
CHARLES POWELL

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