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ACTION: AmEmbassy - London Immediate
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cc: all
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FROM: SecState Washdc

SUBJECT: Vice President's Meeting with Prime Minister Thatcher
TAGS: OVIP

On May 5, 1990, Vice President Quayle met privately with Prime Minister Thatcher in the library at Chequers prior to an informal dinner. Also present were Ambassador Henry Catto, Carnes Lord, National Security Advisor to the Vice President, and the Prime Minister's private secretary Charles Powell. The discussion focused principally on NATO issues, and was extremely cordial.

The Prime Minister led off by remarking that she thought the President's Oklahoma State speech had been very good. Concerning SNF, we all knew Congress wouldn't fund the Lance follow-on (FOTL), thus the President was right to preempt them. | (b)(1)
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(b)(1) At the Two Plus Four talks, Shevardnadze is playing it quiet; but we don't yet have all the information.

Vice President Quayle said that Genscher was playing a game with TASM -- he will certainly push for a zero outcome on ground-based systems, then go after TASM. And Congress will play its own game with the Germans -- threatening not to fund TASM until the Germans request it.

The Prime Minister replied |
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(b)(1) The Comprehensive Concept has good language -- no new negotiations until CFE is "being implemented." Some variant of this should be devised.

The Vice President commented that he was not sure how much

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leverage we have with Kohl and Genscher. Would they commit to this in public? The Prime Minister replied that she had got Genscher to agree to the formula that nuclear weapons should be "kept up to date."

The Vice President said that the President was not eager to begin SNF negotiations -- this was a tactic. Arms control generally has moved ahead, but the Soviets have taken some steps backward recently, both in START and CFE. This leads to a larger question. Gorbachev is in a lot of trouble, with the Baltics, the economy, and so forth; the argument is that we need to help him to keep him in. On the other hand, if he is so weak, what leverage does he really have in arms control?

The Prime Minister replied that Gorbachev's leverage is the need for agreement among the four wartime allies. Gorbachev is getting tough on the Baltics. We must insist that the dispute be settled peacefully, while recognizing their right to self-determination and the illegality of the annexation. | (b)(1)
(b)(1)

The Vice President asked: how much trouble is Gorbachev in? The Prime Minister replied that she would not like to say. She said that she had seen Yeltsin (and told Gorbachev it was customary to see the opposition). | (b)(1)
he has an effective strategy, and | (b)(1)
(b)(1)

(b)(1) We need to be watchful of Gorbachev's position; but we also should be mindful of the Baltics' right to independence. The Baltics -- and Moldavia -- are in a different class. There is little we can do, except perhaps humanitarian aid (but then the whole Soviet Union needs it). Mrs. Prunskiene is coming shortly, but we will receive her only as an elected official, not as prime minister.

The Vice President wondered whether the Prime Minister had heard rumors of a military coup in the USSR. | (b)(1)
(b)(1)

(b)(1) We hear these rumors, the Vice President added; but you have to wonder about them since they are so very convenient in strengthening the Soviets' bargaining position.

The Vice President then asked Prime Minister Thatcher what result she would like to see at the NATO summit. She replied

that the four points of the President's speech were a good statement of it. It is a time of real uncertainty, and thus it should be easier to get a strong statement on the future of NATO, including nuclear weapons.

The Vice President noted that we were in some trouble at home on force levels and the defense budget. Congress seemed to have no bottom line. The Prime Minister jokingly wondered whether she could expect a new bottom line on CFE from the US -- perhaps she would hear about it from Gates and Eagleburger after they had "taken their usual seats."

A short discussion of the hostage situation followed. The Vice President reiterated the President's opposition to any bargaining in spite of domestic pressure on the issue and the frenzied behavior of the press. The Prime Minister spoke briefly about Britain's strained relations with Iran and Syria. The Vice President noted that Iran had initially wanted no credit for the hostage release and the President had not thanked them, but when Syria took all the credit the Iranians seemed to resent it, so after Reed the President thanked them both. In our view they will now wait on some response by the US.