

CONFIDENTIAL

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

18 February 1985

SOVIET MESSAGE TO THE PRIME MINISTER

Colin Budd wrote to me on 15 February to convey the request from the Soviet Ambassador to call on the Prime Minister on 18 February to deliver a reply from President Chernenko to the Prime Minister's letter to him of 3 January.

The Prime Minister would have wished to see the Soviet Ambassador to receive this message. When I telephoned at 0915 this morning to inform you of this I was told that the Foreign Secretary was already seeing him.

The Prime Minister is very angry indeed at being pre-empted in this way and wishes this to be known.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

(CHARLES POWELL)

L.V. Appleyard, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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trg



1 Apr - a
brief visit
in the best
course & the

10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

The Foreign Secretary
recommends that you do
not receive the Soviet
Ambassador on Monday, with
a reply to your message
to Chernenko.

I think you ought
to see him. Any
communication from Chernenko
on the eve of your
departure from Washington is
potentially important. I don't
see that the risk of
speculation matters.
Agree to see him?
C.D.P. 15/1.



Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

15 February 1985

Dear Charles,

Soviet Message for the Prime Minister

The Soviet Embassy have informed us that the Soviet Ambassador would like to call on the Prime Minister on 18 February to deliver a reply from President Chernenko to the Prime Minister's letter to him of 3 January (copy enclosed).

On this occasion the Foreign Secretary considers that it would be more appropriate for him to receive the Soviet Ambassador. If the Prime Minister were to do so it would attract a great deal of public attention and it would be difficult not to refer to the reason for the call. This would be likely to provoke considerable press speculation, given the rumours about President Chernenko's present state of health, as to whether the message had really been sent by him or on his behalf.

Unless the Soviet Ambassador makes it clear that the Russians intend to state publicly that he was transmitting a message from President Chernenko to the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary proposes that the press should be informed that the Ambassador's call was to discuss matters concerned with our bilateral relations (our normal formula on these occasions).

If the Prime Minister is content, we will proceed on this basis.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

Colin Budd

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
No 10 Downing Street



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

3 January, 1985

Dear President Chernenko,

Thank you for the message which Mr. Gorbachev conveyed to me on your behalf on 16 December.

I too found our own talk last February very valuable. I appreciated the opportunity of a more detailed exchange of views with Mr. Gorbachev, which I believe helped to increase our mutual understanding of one another's concerns. I am sure that Mr. Gorbachev will have reported my views to you.

I hope there will be more such exchanges at this and other levels. If we make a steady and consistent effort to increase them in all areas of interest to our two countries they could help us to achieve greater mutual trust and confidence. This is the only way in which lasting progress in the field of arms control can be achieved. We should work on the basis of mutual respect for each other's legitimate security interests and a clear acknowledgement of the differences between our two systems.

You referred to the importance you attached to the forthcoming talks in Geneva with the United States. I discussed these talks extensively with President Reagan on 22 December. He plainly shares your view of their importance, and so do I. I can assure you that President Reagan is determined to seek positive results.

/The President

The President and I discussed the implications of current research into strategic defence systems, and of the work already in hand in this area by the Soviet Union. I agreed with President Reagan that the aim of resumed negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union should be to achieve for each balanced and enhanced security, with reduced levels of offensive forces on both sides. I welcome and endorse this approach. It reflects the search by countries of the Western Alliance for greater international stability and security. I feel sure that this approach will also correspond to Soviet interests.

1985 offers genuine opportunities for tackling the most fundamental question affecting our two countries and their allies. I recognise the considerable problems that will confront all of us in our efforts to make the world a safer place, and to divert more of our resources away from military expenditure into other fields of benefit to our peoples. I believe, however, that the will now exists on all sides to begin this process.

It is in this spirit that I send my greetings and sincere good wishes to you, President Chernenko, and to the Soviet Government, in the expectation that all concerned will now make the effort to translate our hopes into concrete achievements.

Yours sincerely
Ronald Reagan

His Excellency Mr. Konstantin Ustinovich Chernenko.

15 FEB 1985

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