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PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE

cc: fco

SERIAL No. T154A/86 10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

subject cc: master

THE PRIME MINISTER OPS.

20 August 1986

Dear Mr. Gorbachev,

I was very pleased to welcome Mr. Shevardnadze to Britain and to receive from him your letter of 10 July, together with your invitation to visit the Soviet Union. I accept with pleasure and hope that my visit might take place in the first half of next year.

I read the comments in your letter about relations between the United States and Soviet Union with great care. I have since been in touch with President Reagan. He has confirmed that, like you, he is very keen to have a second summit and that he wants it to yield results. It is hard to imagine that any successor could be as well-placed as he is to persuade Congress to ratify the arms control agreements which I hope a Summit would reach.

I dealt with many of the arms control issues mentioned in your letter in my discussions with Mr. Shevardnadze. Without repeating what I said to him, I thought I should let you know how I believe progress can be made in the months ahead.

President Reagan has told me of the response he has now sent you on the latest Soviet proposals at the Geneva talks. The response was made after close consultation with me and the proposals have my full support. They should serve as the basis for rapid progress towards the agreements at Geneva. It seems to me that the United States and the Soviet Union should continue to work towards the objective of 50 per cent

ABC

cuts in strategic weapons which you and President Reagan identified at your meeting last November, although I accept that more modest cuts as a first step towards this should not be ruled out. The complete elimination of longer range INF missiles remains a worthwhile goal we should aim at. But I would also support an interim agreement, which you and President Reagan endorsed at Geneva. Such an agreement must of course address the problem on a global basis, and must provide for appropriate constraints on shorter range missiles.

I welcome your affirmation that Britain's national defence forces are not a subject of the Geneva negotiations. As I emphasised to Mr. Shevardnadze, the United Kingdom intends to maintain its independent deterrent, and to modernise it as necessary so that it remains fully effective.

You well know the importance which the United Kingdom attaches to the abolition of chemical weapons. I hope that the Soviet Union will respond positively to our recent initiative on challenge inspection. We now have an opportunity to rid the world of these terrible weapons for good. We should seize it.

I agree with you on the importance of conventional arms control and the need to achieve balance at lower levels of armed forces. There is not much time left at Stockholm. But I hope that we can get a significant result, and also make progress in the long-running negotiations on MBFR in Vienna.

I very much welcome the practice of regular exchanges between us following your visit to this country two years ago. I look forward to renewing contact in person in Moscow, and to continuing our discussion on these vital issues.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

Mr. Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev

CGPC

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

6 August 1986

Dear Charles,

Prime Minister's Reply to Mr Gorbachev

at trap

In her letter of 15 July to Mr Shevardnadze, the Prime Minister undertook to reply to Mr Gorbachev's message of 10 July, (enclosed with your letter of 14 July). I enclose a draft reply, which has been agreed with the Ministry of Defence.

On dates for the Prime Minister's visit to Moscow, we recognise that it is not possible to be too specific at this stage though we think it wise to put down a marker indicating that a visit in the first half of next year would be welcome. It would of course be helpful to know whether the Prime Minister has any more definite ideas. We are assuming that she would not wish the visit to take place too close to the US/Soviet Summit which we expect will take place in November or December - though it might slip into early next year. We have been warned by our Embassy in Moscow that dates at the end of February and end of April should be avoided because of the risk of coinciding with major trade union and Komsomol congresses.

The timing of a visit by the Prime Minister will also have implications for that of a proposed visit to this country, at the invitation of the Foreign Affairs Committee, of a delegation of the Supreme Soviet, probably led by Gorbachev's deputy, Ligachev. No firm dates for this were agreed during Shevardnadze's visit but we understand that both the Russians and the FAC are thinking in terms of early 1987. (The latter would probably prefer the Easter recess.)

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It would clearly be advisable to space high level visits so that one by Ligachev was not too close to an outward visit by the PM. For the time being we are holding the line with the "some time during the next parliamentary session" formula. If, however, the Prime Minister were able to express a preference at this stage for a specific month or months during the first half of the year this would make it easier for us to steer Sir Anthony Kershaw and the Russians in the right direction. The Foreign Secretary is working on the assumption that his own visit to Moscow should come at a later stage. (He will in any case be seeing Shevardnadze at the UNGA in September and Mr Renton hopes to accept an invitation to visit Moscow either later this year or early in 1987 to discuss bilateral and arms control matters.)

I am copying this letter to John Howe and Michael Stark.

John Howe

R N Culshaw

(R N Culshaw)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
No 10 Downing St

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PRIME MINISTER

EAST/WEST RELATIONS

When Mr. Shevardnadze came here he handed over a message from Mr. Gorbachev. You said that you would reply in due course.

I attach a reply which has been prepared by the Foreign Office though I have amended it to make it rather tauter. It does not say anything new. Indeed I do not think we have anything new to say just at the moment except possibly to put down a marker to the effect that you would like your visit to the Soviet Union to take place in the first half of next year. My own advice would be to hold up a reply to Mr. Gorbachev until the autumn when we are closer to a US/Soviet summit and may have important new points to make which would help bring the two sides closer. You will want to bear in mind, for instance, that you will probably be seeing President Reagan in mid-November.

Agree to defer a reply until the autumn? Or

Yes

Agree to sign the attached holding reply?

Yes

C.D.P.

Can't yet
see properly
MT.

(CHARLES POWELL)

6 August 1986

VEZAMZ

'Draft Letter from Prime Minister to Mr M S Gorbachev

I was very pleased to welcome Mr Shevardnadze to Britain and to receive from him your letter of 10 July, together with your invitation to visit the Soviet Union. I accept with pleasure and hope that my visit might take place in the first half of next year.

Sir Geoffrey Howe and I found our talks with Mr Shevardnadze useful and businesslike. I hope that we can now put such exchanges between our two governments on a more regular footing. We are ready for a deeper and broader dialogue so that relations between Eastern and Western countries can be more stable and constructive.

I read ^{we} ~~your~~ ^{in your letter} comments about relations between the United States and Soviet Union with great care.

Sir Geoffrey Howe raised this subject with Mr Shultz in Washington shortly after your Foreign Minister's visit. I have since been in touch with President Reagan. ^{He has expressed that} I know that, like you, he is very keen to have a second summit and that he wants it to yield results. ~~I am glad to see there have been promising developments in that direction.~~ I earnestly hope that you will be able to do business with President Reagan. It is hard to imagine that any successor could be as well-placed as he is to persuade Congress to ratify ^{as} arms control agreements. ^{what I}

hope a summit would reach.

I dealt with many of the arms control issues mentioned in your letter in my discussions with Mr Shevardnadze. Without repeating what I said to him, I thought I should let you know how I believe progress can be made in the months ahead.

President Reagan has told me of the response he has now sent you on the latest Soviet proposals at the Geneva talks. ~~This reflects a close cooperation~~ ~~I was kept in the closest touch with his thinking~~ ~~while this response was being prepared, which enabled me~~ ~~to say at the time, and I repeat to you now, that I~~ ~~regard the President's new proposals as a major~~ ~~contribution to the search for agreements reducing~~ ~~nuclear weapons. They have my full support. The~~ ~~clear~~ ~~commitment of the United States Administration to~~ ~~reaching a mutually acceptable agreement, and the~~ ~~indication of areas where convergence is possible, should~~ ~~serve as the basis for rapid progress towards the~~ ~~agreements at Geneva which we all want to see.~~

It seems to me that the United States and the Soviet Union should continue to work towards the objective of 50% cuts in strategic weapons which you and President Reagan identified at your meeting last November, although I accept that more modest cuts as a ~~first~~ ~~step~~ ~~towards~~ ~~this~~ ~~should~~ ~~not~~ ~~be~~ ~~ruled~~ ~~out.~~ ~~The~~ ~~complete~~ ~~elimination~~ ~~of~~ ~~longer~~ ~~range~~ ~~INF~~ ~~missiles~~ ~~remains~~ ~~a~~ ~~goal~~ ~~we~~ ~~should~~ ~~aim~~ ~~at.~~ ~~But~~ ~~I~~ ~~would~~ ~~also~~ ~~support~~ ~~an~~ ~~interim~~ ~~agreement,~~ ~~which~~ ~~you~~ ~~and~~ ~~President~~ ~~Reagan~~ ~~endorsed~~ ~~at~~

Geneva. Such an agreement must of course address the problem on a global basis, and must provide for ^{appropriate} ~~equitable~~ constraints on shorter range missiles.

I welcome your affirmation that Britain's national defence forces are not a subject of the Geneva negotiations. As I emphasised to Mr Shevardnadze, the United Kingdom intends to maintain its independent deterrent, and to modernise it as necessary so that it remains fully effective.

You ^{well} know the importance which the United Kingdom attaches to the abolition of chemical weapons. I hope that the Soviet Union will respond positively to our recent initiative on challenge inspection. We now have an opportunity to rid the world of these terrible weapons for good. We should seize it.

I agree with you on the importance of conventional arms control and the need to achieve balance at lower levels of armed forces. There is not much time left at Stockholm. But I hope that we can get a significant result, ^{and also make progress in} ~~Another similarly important step would be the early conclusion of an agreement at the long-running negotiations ^{on NCFR} in Vienna.~~

May I say in conclusion ¹ ~~how very much I welcome the practice of regular exchanges between~~ dialogue we have established between us following your visit to this country two years ago. I look forward to renewing contact in person in Moscow, and to continuing

our ^{discussion} ~~dialogue~~ on these vital issues.

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