

MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND GENERAL SECRETARY GORBACHEV  
IN THE KREMLIN ON MONDAY 30 MARCH

Mr. Gorbachev welcomed the Prime Minister to Moscow. There were many reasons to consider her visit important. There had not been a visit by a British Prime Minister for 12 years, and longer still since the last visit of a Conservative Prime Minister. Of course contacts had been improving and he and the Prime Minister had maintained their dialogue following their meeting at Chequers in December 1984. Nonetheless, a visit at this level was an important event. Moreover the visit coincided with a period in international developments which could be described as a turning point. Indeed one could say that the world was at a crossroads. In both East and West people were beginning to understand that they must work together to make the world a better place. However, if he could speak frankly - and knowing the Prime Minister, he was sure that he could - there were a number of people who wanted to maintain the present tense situation in East-West relations. They were not a majority, but nonetheless they exerted considerable influence. Each Government must choose the course which it wished to follow in international affairs. But a particular responsibility lay upon the great powers, especially the nuclear powers like Britain and the Soviet Union. Both countries were Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council, both great powers. This underlined the importance of their talks. Moreover Britain and the Soviet Union were partners of very longstanding. They had exchanged Ambassadors as long ago as the 16th century. That should count for something. To conclude, he thought that he and the Prime Minister had a special responsibility to make the most of her visit to the Soviet Union. They should embark on their discussions in that spirit.

The Prime Minister said that she recognised the importance of the visit and the responsibility which rested upon her and upon Mr. Gorbachev. It would be easier to solve some of the problems facing them if they could talk not only about what each side wanted to do but the reasons why. Only then would they find a way through. Each recognised the other's right to security and to choose their own system of Government. Each recognised the need to build trust and confidence between their countries. Only on that basis would

it be possible to achieve the substantial reductions in weapons which both wanted to see. Their talks should deal not only with arms control although it was important to clear up some misunderstandings in that area. They needed to reflect upon regional conflicts and on human rights. She was very grateful for Mr. Gorbachev's invitation. She hoped that they could conduct their discussions freely and firmly but also in a friendly way, with the aim of trying to find a way ahead.

Mr. Gorbachev welcomed the Prime Minister's introduction and the list of subjects for discussion which she had proposed. He agreed that pride of place must be given to the right to equal security (sic). He would like to start with the general subject of how to preserve security while strengthening confidence, and then go on to discuss nuclear arms control.

#### East/West Relations

Mr. Gorbachev said that he wished to start by making some very frank comments. When the Soviet leaders had studied the Prime Minister's speech of 21 March in Torquay, they had the feeling that they were feeling the breeze from the 1940s and 1950s. There were echoes of the Fulton speech and Truman doctrine. They had invited the Prime Minister to come to discuss problems and deepen mutual understanding. But then they found that the Soviet Union was represented as a force for evil, which could only be dealt with from a position of strength. They had even considered whether they might have to cancel the visit.

The Prime Minister said that this was a bit steep. No-one was stronger than the Soviet Union which had superiority in virtually every category of weapon. <sup>Of course it</sup> ~~was~~ the duty of Governments to provide strong defences for their people. Mr. Gorbachev would not have invited her to the Soviet Union if Britain has been weak. That would have been no basis for mutual respect. There had not been a word about the Soviet Union being a force in evil in her speech. There was one point which she might have made although actually had not: there was no evidence that she knew of that the Soviet Union had given up the Brezhev doctrine or the goal of securing the world

domination of Communism. This was the basic reason why people in the West feared the Soviet Union. We were ready to fight the battle of ideas. This was the right way to fight but instead we saw Soviet subversion in South Yemen, in Ethiopia, in Mozambique, in Angola, and in Nicaragua. We saw Vietnam being supported by the Soviet Union in its conquest of Cambodia. We saw Afghanistan being occupied by Soviet troops. We naturally drew the conclusion that the goal of the worldwide spread of Communism was still being pursued. This was a crucial consideration for the West. We recognised that Mr. Gorbachev was committed to internal reforms in the Soviet Union. But we had to ask ourselves whether this would lead to changes in external policies. If not, we should have to take this factor into account. This was one reason why it was so important to talk. The Soviet Union no doubt saw these matters differently from us. Mr. Gorbachev might well not appreciate how Soviet policies looked to us.

The Prime Minister added that each country had an equal right to security and to defend its own system. They also had to consider the risk that regional conflicts might develop and draw them in. There was a possibility that several other countries would acquire nuclear weapons over the next 20 years. Not all of them would act as responsibly as the present nuclear powers.

The Prime Minister continued that she had read Mr. Gorbachev's speech to the Central Committee Plenum very carefully and several times. She had found it fascinating. She understood the problems of managing change. It had taken her many years to bring about change in the United Kingdom, even though the problems had been small by comparison. She hoped very much that what Mr. Gorbachev had described in his speech would come about, and that it would lead him not only to make changes within the Soviet Union but to adapt the Soviet Union's external policies as well. She added that she had not expected to reach this <sup>heated</sup> point in the discussion so quickly.

Mr. Gorbachev said that he welcomed 'acceleration' (much laughter) and was much pleased that both of them were speaking frankly. What the Prime Minister had thus said convinced him that he had been right in assessing her speech of 21 March. Many of the elements of her thinking were taken from the 1940s and 1950s. Surely both countries had learned something from the past 40 years. It was no good looking

for the answers to new problems in the past, even though the past could sometimes be valuable as a lesson for the future. He was convinced that new thinking was needed for new problems. The Prime Minister had asked whether the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet leadership retained or renounced the goal of seeing socialism prevail and Communism imposed throughout the world. That had never been their goal. It was only an extrapolation of socialist theory. This saw history of society as a sequence of steps beginning with slavery and passing through feudalism and bourgeois capitalism to socialism. It was no more than a scientific concept. In the same way that the Prime Minister regarded capitalism as the pinnacle of human achievement, communism saw socialism in this way. They were concepts and nothing more. Both systems had an equal right to their concepts. But this was theory not policy. He would now explain Soviet policies very candidly. The most important feature of them was that they were based on recognition of realities, both internally and in external relations. The capitalist world was a reality and he accepted that. The socialist world was also a reality. If anyone pretended not to notice that, they were making a miscalculation.

The Prime Minister said that she was perfectly capable of recognising reality. Unfortunately some realities did not change. Her thinking was not confined to the 1940s and 1950s. It took account of the occupation of Afghanistan much more recently and other similar events. Mr. Gorbachev said that it was important to look ahead to the 1990s. There was a tendency in the West to see the Soviet Union's hand in every problem. The Prime Minister had mentioned Nicaragua and Afghanistan. The Soviet Union had not been responsible for the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua. It had been brought about by unbearable living conditions in that country. The United States had turned Central America into a backward backyard. Of course the Soviet Union sympathised with the aspirations of the Sandinistas, but it was up to them to decide for themselves what direction to take. It might be more to the point to talk of Britain's support for the racist regime in South Africa. But he wanted to go back to his emphasis on the need to accept reality. The Soviet Union knew how important the Middle East was for the West. They knew what South Africa meant for the United Kingdom. They were far from wishing to deprive the West of the raw materials which it needed or of its commercial ties. The Soviet Union was a responsible nation. But while individual capitalists understood the need for people to have full social and

economic rights, capitalism in aggregate form failed to appreciate this. Third world countries were being pushed to the verge of what was tolerable. The situation was fraught with the danger of an explosion. Latin America, for instance, could scarcely pay the interest on its debts. This could not go on indefinitely. But whenever the pressures reached boiling point, the West saw the hand of Moscow.

Mr. Gorbachev repeated that the Soviet Union proceeded on the basis of realities. They wanted to live in peace, to have a constructive dialogue with the West. They had no ambition to undermine the West's <sup>economic</sup> ties. But they wanted the West to accept that socialism was a reality. It was no good seeing the October Revolution as an aberration and the Soviet Union as an error of history. There was serious work to be done to improve East/West and North/South relations. They should think about that rather than expose each other's failings. There had to be a balance of interest, in economic relations, in security, indeed in every aspect of relations. Each country must be prepared to take account of the interests of others.

The Prime Minister, in reply, picked up a number of Mr. Gorbachev's points. In Nicaragua, the Somoza regime had been terrible. The Sandinistas had won support on the understanding that they would introduce a plural society. But their actions had belied this. For instance they had recently introduced a new constitution, but immediately suspended key articles of it. Nonetheless, we did not believe in a military solution in Nicaragua. The countries of Central America must sort things out for themselves. But it was ridiculous to draw parallels with South Africa. Britain put no arms into Nicaragua and had sent no arms into South Africa for over 10 years. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, was pouring arms into Nicaragua. We took the view that the South African regime based on apartheid could not last. It must go. But we refused to impose comprehensive economic sanctions against South Africa, because they would only add mass starvation to the other problems facing their country. In practice other Commonwealth countries had not been ready to impose sanctions either. The Front Line States recognised that they depended upon South Africa for their economic survival. We rejected violence and supported a peaceful solution in

South Africa. Latin America was a very different problem. They were countries which were naturally rich and had been ruined by their inability to maintain democratic political systems.

Mr. Gorbachev had spoken critically of the West's involvement in South Africa. She would remind him that it had been the West which had fed the hungry in black Africa while the Soviet Union supplied only arms. Among the countries whose people we had fed had been those hostile to the West such as Ethiopia and Mozambique. Despite their different ideologies, we had done our best for them. Angola was in a terrible mess yet all it received from the Soviet Union was weapons. And it was the Soviet Union which was arming Libya and Syria.

The Prime Minister continued that she did not think that Mr. Gorbachev really understood capitalism. Capitalism was an economic not a political system. In a sense every state was a capitalist state. The difference lay in whether it was private capital or state capital that went to investment. Experience showed that countries with private enterprise systems were more likely to be free and open societies, although she was not claiming that all free enterprise societies enjoyed political freedom. The real distinction was not between capitalism and socialism but between societies with central control backed by coercion and societies in which there was a dispersal of political and economic power within a framework set by central government. She could go on for hours about the virtues of democracy. The point which struck her most from their discussions so far was how differently they interpreted the same events and situations. Nonetheless, she was glad that Mr. Gorbachev had repudiated the doctrine of the necessary triumph of socialism in the world. Mr. Gorbachev expostulated that this had never been Communist doctrine. It was attributed to the Soviet Union but unjustly. If one was looking for doctrines, how about the Truman doctrine? The Prime Minister said that she could produce plenty of quotations to show that the spread of Communism throughout the world had been a consistent aim of Soviet leaders, even if it no longer corresponded with the new thinking in the Soviet Union.

Mr. Gorbachev said that he wanted to understand the Prime Minister's views and equally to be understood by her. They had agreed in their talk at Chequers that it was up to each country to choose its own

political system. The Soviet Union wanted the system which it had. Britain wanted its own system. Both were convinced that theirs was best. He was quite certain that he could not make a Communist out of the Prime Minister. Equally she should not expect to make a capitalist out of him. The Prime Minister said that she was just trying to find out how much of a Communist Mr. Gorbachev really was. Mr. Gorbachev said that his point was different. If he and the Prime Minister each recognised the other's right to his or her own convictions, then they should also recognise the rights of people in Africa, Asia and Latin America to choose their own systems. Instead, every time there was any change of government or a revolution anywhere in the Third World, Moscow was immediately blamed for it. The reality was that these changes were the consequences of objective processes which were taking place. The Soviet Union had no control over them. One could take the example of Africa. Some countries chose the capitalist way, some the democratic way, some the socialist way. Let God be with all of them. Of course the Soviet Union sympathised with those who were closest to it. The West did just the same. There was nothing unacceptable in that. But the basic point which he was trying to get across, and which lay at the root of their misunderstanding, was that the Soviet Union had no desire to undermine the influence of the Western countries or their trading and economic links with the Third World or their sources of raw materials. They had no devious plans and plots of that sort. Turbulence in the Third World had its own causes, basically poverty and deprivation. Those who enjoyed a comfortable life didn't start revolutions. He wanted to see an improvement of relations, including world economic relations. The Soviet Union was trying to move in that direction and to start thinking and acting in this way. But just look what happened. As soon as the Soviet Union wanted to join the GATT and other international economic organisations, everything possible was done to prevent them from doing so. The reason seemed to be a fear that they would take the side of developing countries in these organisations. But the Soviet Union would persist in trying to build relations based on a balance of interests, taking into account also the interests of developing countries themselves.

Mr. Gorbachev continued that he wanted to pick up two further points made by the Prime Minister. He was not at all content with her suggestion that only the West gave aid while the Soviet Union sold arms. That was just not the case. He knew the reality as well as the Prime Minister. Discussions should not be reduced to this trite level. As for freedom, he would prefer to discuss that when they came to humanitarian subjects, as they would in due course.



The Prime Minister said that she was not yet ready to forsake this subject. She quite agreed that countries in the Third World should have the right to choose their own system and that was what had happened in practice. The problem arose when they chose a Communist system. After that all further choice ceased. Ethiopia was a prime example. Mr Gorbachev said that it was news to him that Ethiopia had a Communist system. The Prime Minister said that she would not quibble about terms. The fact was, once there was total state control of society there was no longer any opportunity to change the system of government. Socialism was built in the constitution and no other system permitted. There was plenty of evidence that democratic systems produced more personal liberty and greater prosperity. The two were closely linked. Countries which once opted for extreme socialist systems found that they could no longer escape from them. Moreover one had to remember the different records of the Soviet Union and the West in practice. The United States had intervened in Grenada, but had rapidly withdrawn and conducted free elections. The Soviet Union was still in Afghanistan after eight years. Lastly Mr Gorbachev had mentioned Soviet difficulties in gaining admission to the GATT. This was not surprising. The GATT was based on the economics of a free society where there was a proper price mechanism. It was difficult to incorporate systems which did not meet these criteria.

Mr Gorbachev said that the Prime Minister had spoken quite a lot about freedom. Now he wanted to say something on the subject. He had a fairly good picture of western democracy and its place in the world. He appreciated the contribution of bourgeois democracy to historic development. But the Prime Minister did not seem to recognise any useful contribution from the socialist democracies. The fact was that she and her party were too closely linked to the interests of the haves in British society. They occupied the commanding heights. He had no wish to over-simplify. But over the centuries, bourgeois democracy had developed a mechanism which operated as exquisitely as ballet for fooling people about who really controlled the levers of power in democratic societies. But it did not deceive the Soviet Union. They understood the reality. Still, it was up to the British people what system

they chose. The point he wished to make was that, in Soviet society, it would be quite impossible to allow the same disparities in incomes as in the United Kingdom. Even in areas where, under the new measures being taken, some sort of individual economic activity was permitted, above all in the service sector, the Soviet authorities were careful to check that no-one received unjustifiably high incomes. The Prime Minister claimed that capitalism provided higher living standards. But no-one in the Soviet Union would ever tolerate the equivalent of 3½ million unemployed. The Soviet Union was making changes in the economic structure of its society. These should achieve results in 5 to 7 years. But their people would never accept change which led to the emergence of unemployment. There was growing democratisation of economic life. The trade unions and the working class were exercising a substantial measure of control over industrial firms. New legislation was being prepared which would increase the rights of the trade unions dramatically, giving them the right to elect management by secret ballot. He doubted whether capitalists would be very enthusiastic about that.

The Prime Minister said that of course they would not. Managers should be chosen on performance not because they were popular with the workers. Mr Gorbachev said that the Prime Minister spoke for the ruling class in democracy of haves. The Prime Minister said that she was no more a member of a ruling class than Mr Gorbachev was. But the capitalist system had shown that it could distribute far greater benefits to ordinary every day people than socialism could. Democracy was not choosing factory managers by ballot, it was electing a government on the basis of its declared policies and limiting the role of government to what only government could do.

Mr Gorbachev said that he and the Prime Minister would need several meetings to do justice to the subject of democracy. He was a lawyer. He had studied Roman democracy and British democracy. He had written his thesis on the democratic process. His argument with the Prime Minister on this subject would be endless because, at bottom, they believed in different values. For instance the Prime Minister was ready to disband trade unions. If he tried

that in the Soviet Union he would soon be out of office. Or take the situation in Northern Ireland. He failed to see why it was impossible to give Northern Ireland autonomy. The Prime Minister said that Mr Gorbachev might know something about democracy but evidently very little about Northern Ireland. The people of Northern Ireland had voted to remain part of the United Kingdom by a substantial majority. But Mr Gorbachev had no need to feel so defensive about the Soviet system. She agreed that it had achieved important benefits for the Russian people. The West had no desire to undermine the Soviet system although we would of course like to see people granted the same personal liberties as in western democracies. For instance anyone in the West who wished to emigrate was at liberty to do so. Mr Gorbachev said that this example hardly exhausted the whole spectrum of individual liberties. There was the right to work, the right to be properly represented in the bodies affecting one's daily life, the right to equality in housing and education, the right not to be discriminated against on grounds of race. While everyone in the United Kingdom might have <sup>the right</sup> to vote, no-one could say that the working class was properly represented in Parliament.

The Prime Minister said that she was appalled by some of the things which Mr Gorbachev was saying. They reflected a complete lack of understanding of western society. Nonetheless, it was no doubt helpful to clear the air by this sort of discussion. For her part, she was fascinated by what Mr Gorbachev was trying to do in the Soviet Union. But much remained to be done, for instance to implement the rights given by the Helsinki Final Act.

Mr Gorbachev said that he too was glad that there had been a frank exchange on these subjects. It was a starting point for constructive relations. He and the Prime Minister had very different views but should not fight a duel or shoot each other for that reason. They should each accept the right of their respective countries to equal security, the right to develop their own societies freely and as they thought best. They should each adopt a respectful attitude towards the other. He was always ready to argue about ideas. After all that prevented such exchanges from becoming a stagnant pond. Nonetheless they had to learn to live together.

Arms control

The Prime Minister said that the key question was 'how to manage change and do so peacefully. Mr Gorbachev said that the Soviet Union was ready to participate on a realistic basis in the management of the process of change in the world. The Soviet Union was not going to start a war. They wanted to achieve measures on arms control and reduce military spending. They had made a number of proposals on this subject but so far had not received an adequate reply. Soviet initiatives were constantly put under the microscope and subjected to mis-representation. The Prime Minister spoke of achieving a balance of interests and excluding military force from diplomacy. Yet there were many signals that the West's aim was to frustrate Soviet initiatives. He had just received information from the talks in Vienna on conventional arms reductions that a western figure had said that if the Soviet Union wanted to disarm, it could do so unilaterally. It was no wonder the Soviet Union had doubts whether the West was ready to participate seriously in discussions of arms control. For more than two years, the reaction to his proposals had always been the same. As soon as there was any sign of movement by the Soviet Union, all sorts of doubts were immediately raised in London and Paris and elsewhere and the result was deadlock: a lot of talk and no movement. The West was always talking of Soviet superiority. But the Soviet Union knew the real situation. He had given President Reagan the data in Reykjavik and would be happy to give it to the Prime Minister too. The problem was to find a way out of the impasse.

The Prime Minister said it was necessary to approach these matters in a realistic spirit. There was no point in talking of the elimination of nuclear weapons. That might be a dream for the future. But for the time being, the existence of a nuclear deterrent was essential to prevent both nuclear and conventional war. Equally, there was far too many nuclear weapons and certainly far more than were needed. She accepted the goal of substantial reductions in them. The most promising area for progress was in intermediate nuclear weapons. The problem here need never have arisen if the Soviet Union had heeded the West's pleas and withdrawn the SS20s many years ago. It was only their failure to do so that had led to the decision to deploy Cruise and Pershing. We had been

pleased that Mr Gorbachev had broken the unnecessary link between an INF agreement and progress on other arms control issues. Our strong preference was for a global zero-zero option. That would give more confidence and trust and would be easier to verify. Nonetheless, if a global zero was not attainable, we could accept a zero option in Europe, provided that the agreement included constraints on shorter range missiles. These could reach large parts of western Europe. That had been NATO's position since 1981: there should be constraints on the Soviet SS22 and SS23 missiles providing for equal ceilings with a right for the West to match Soviet levels.

Mr Gorbachev said that the Prime Minister seemed to have failed to notice that the Soviet Union had made a major concession to Britain and to France by withdrawing its requirement that the British and French nuclear forces should be frozen at existing levels. They had also made a concession on intermediate missiles in Asia to help find a way out of the impasse. But the West's approach was always to focus on the arithmetic. There was not even a hint of effort by the West to find a way forward. Western actions were aimed at making an agreement more difficult. The Prime Minister and President Reagan were happy to pocket Soviet concessions and look for more. What was equal about this approach? He was constantly being bombarded with announcements about Soviet superiority and about imbalance. It was also being said that this was a good moment to exert pressure on the Soviet leadership. It was claimed that the Soviet Union needed to reduce its military budget to finance the development of the civilian economy, that it was desperate for detente, that it was involved in major social change and it was therefore a good time to put the heat on Mr Gorbachev. This was a dangerous illusion. These days no country could allow itself to be outwitted in the field of arms. The only possible basis for progress was equality. The West could take Soviet proposals and examine them under the telescope or a microscope. The result would always be the same. The Soviet proposals envisaged balance and equality throughout. This was true whether it was nuclear, chemical or conventional weapons. All Soviet proposals were meticulously worked out to meet the criterion of equality. It was hard to understand the West's reaction to the Soviet Union's INF proposal. How could the West now reject the zero option which it had first proposed some years ago, hoping

that the Soviet Union would never accept it. Dr Kissinger and others were arguing that acceptance of the zero option would be a crushing failure. He had read their various articles. The only people for whom it would be a failure would be militaristic circles who were determined to frustrate an agreement by all means. It was people such as these who had first proposed a staged approach leaving each country with some intermediate weapons. Then they made verification proposals which were deliberately cast so as to be unacceptable to the Soviet Union. The next step was to focus on shorter range systems, in order to complicate and entangle the negotiations. If one was getting into a discussion about these systems, one had to take account of NATO's dual-capable aircraft. NATO had far more of these than the Warsaw Pact, which had concentrated on ground based missiles. If you took all nuclear weapons and charges, there was a rough equality of 10,000 warheads on each side. But the West was now insisting, as a condition for an INF agreement that the Soviet Union should get rid of shorter range missiles which had been installed in response to the threat presented by the Pershings. Well, the Soviet Union was ready to remove them. There were only very few such missiles, about 65. Their military value was limited.

Mr Gorbachev said he would summarise the Soviet position. They were ready to eliminate medium range missiles, to freeze shorter range systems and to work out a follow on agreement on short range missiles. That was what they had proposed to the United States even though this was now being denied. Indeed many stories had been cooked up about what happened at Reykjavik. The truth was that never before had the world come so close to taking the first steps to reductions in nuclear weapons. Yet as soon as that prospect emerged, the West headed by Mrs Thatcher fell into panic. Was it the policy of the Tory Government to prevent disarmament? Did the British Government feel comfortable sitting on the nuclear powder keg into which it had turned the UK? He appreciated the Prime Minister's political leadership and qualities and wanted to reach the understanding with her on these matters and to try to take account of her ideas. But she was making such a tight knot of these problems that it was hard to disentangle it.

The Prime Minister said that Mr Gorbachev had delivered quite a speech. She would try to deal with all his points. If he seriously thought that the West wanted to make it more difficult for him to bring about change in the Soviet Union, he was making a totally false assessment. Mr Gorbachev interrupted that he had minutes of a National Security Council meeting which made it clear that American policy was to frustrate the economic policies of the Soviet Union. This was a fact, so the Prime Minister was not telling the whole truth. The Prime Minister said that she consistently took the line that the West should do nothing to hinder Mr Gorbachev's plans because greater prosperity and happiness in the Soviet Union would also be better for the West. Turning to the British and French independent deterrents, she wanted to remind Mr Gorbachev that the British deterrent amounted to only 2½ per cent of Soviet warheads and the French only slightly more. In considering our deterrent he had to take account of Britain's history. In the last war, we had been left to fight on our own. We had to be able to guarantee our defences in this situation, which meant that we needed a nuclear deterrent of last resort. Even so, when we updated our Polaris system with Trident it would still be proportionally smaller in relation to the Soviet nuclear arsenal than Polaris had been in 1970. This would be true if the Soviet Union made a 50 per cent reduction in its nuclear warheads. She was hard put to consider Soviet agreement not to include the British deterrent in INF negotiations as much of a concession. So far as she was concerned, preservation of our independent deterrent came within the principle of equal right to security.

Turning to the prospects for an INF agreement the Prime Minister said that her preference would have been for an interim arrangement allowing each side to retain a lower number of medium range missiles. But we had to address ourselves to the proposals which were on the table and to what could be achieved in the remainder of this year, leaving time for ratification of an agreement during President Reagan's term of office. It is absurd to suggest that the West was blocking such an agreement. The West had not created the problem. We had begged the Soviet Union to remove the SS20s years ago.

Mr Gorbachev commented that the Prime Minister's prayers were now being answered. The Prime Minister said that we supported the United States draft treaty. It was particularly important for us that there should be constraints on shorter range systems and that these should be expressed as equal global limits. Mr Gorbachev had referred to NATO's dual capable aircraft. But this was not comparing like with like. Present negotiations were concerned with ground-based missiles. As far as the West was concerned, follow-on negotiations on short-range missiles would have to take account of the conventional imbalance. Western Europe lived under the threat of conventional war in a way which neither the Soviet Union nor the United States did. There was no remotely feasible prospect that either of them would be invaded. But Europe was very vulnerable to conventional war and needed the deterrence provided by nuclear weapons, including short range weapons, to prevent this.

The Prime Minister added that chemical weapons were also relevant in this context. We had destroyed ours in the 1950s while the Soviet Union had continued to develop a huge stockpile and was now further modernising its chemical weapons. The West had no similar capability. In her view it would be better if chemical weapons could be banned totally, even though there were problems in verifying an agreement.

The Prime Minister continued that we also supported a 50 per cent reduction in strategic nuclear weapons. That would not undermine deterrence. Negotiations would inevitably be complex. But success in them would go a long way to meet people's anxieties about the quantity of nuclear weapons. Nonetheless, as she had said earlier, it would always be necessary to keep some nuclear weapons and to preserve deterrence.

Mr Gorbachev said he was disappointed with the Prime Minister's presentation of her views. Reducing nuclear weapons seemed to take second place in her mind to the need to preserve the nuclear deterrent. In fact she had made herself a proponent of nuclear weapons. This could cause complications when it came to negotiations.



Suppose there was an INF agreement and a START agreement but the United Kingdom continued to modernise its deterrent with Trident. That would increase Britain's nuclear weapons in proportion to those of the Soviet Union, which would be hard to accept. At the same time the Prime Minister should surely consider the impact on world opinion. How would it seem for Britain to be seen to increase its nuclear weapons while other countries were reducing theirs? He had also found the British position on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty disappointing. Britain had a chance to play a major political role but had evaded a solution. Every time an agreement seemed close, the Prime Minister started applying linkages and pre-conditions. The Soviet Union wanted to have co-operation with Britain but it was very difficult in this field.

The Prime Minister said that Mr Gorbachev appeared not to understand what she was saying. We accepted the proposals for an INF agreement based on a zero option for Europe, with constraints on shorter range systems, expressed as a freeze with the United States' right to match. There must also be follow-on negotiations on short range systems. We had already destroyed all our chemical weapons and had put forward proposals to facilitate a complete ban on such weapons. We stood by these proposals. Mr Gorbachev interjected that the Soviet Union was ready to co-operate on this. The Prime Minister continued that the British position was thus clear. We supported reductions in nuclear weapons. Unfortunately the history of Europe in the past century had shown that conventional weapons did not stop war, while nuclear weapons had deterred it. One could simply not ignore that fact. Nuclear weapons were a unique deterrent to war. Mr Gorbachev said that he wished that the Prime Minister would argue the case for disarmament with as much passion as she argued for the retention of nuclear weapons. She put all her authority and prestige behind such weapons. The priority had to be to stop the arms race and reduce levels of nuclear weapons. The Prime Minister said that she wanted something deeper, a guarantee of the preservation of peace. She would prefer peace based on a few nuclear weapons to the danger of war with no nuclear weapons. Mr Gorbachev said sarcastically that surely he and the Prime Minister could agree to destroy one nuclear weapon each. The Prime Minister said that Mr Gorbachev was not taking

the matter sufficiently seriously. It was quite clear to her that the Soviet Union's objective was to bring about the de-nuclearisation of Europe, leaving the Soviet Union with a preponderance of conventional and chemical weapons and the capacity to threaten Europe. She wanted to make clear that Britain would always be defended adequately. She was not trying to stand in the way of reductions in nuclear weapons, only to see that they were pursued on a realistic basis. It was the same with a comprehensive test ban. It could only be achieved stage by stage. There was about a year and a half left to achieve agreement on reductions in nuclear weapons while President Reagan was in office. The world would be very grateful for even a limited agreement. There was no point in setting unrealistic goals like the elimination of all nuclear weapons. It was quite clear that some of the proposals put forward at Reykjavik had been quite unrealistic. Once a proper analysis had been done of the consequences of eliminating all ICBMs, the United States had realised that it was not a practical option. It would have cost three times as much to replace them with Cruise. But to come back to her main argument, she wanted to say again that she fully supported the elimination of INF in Europe on the terms which she had set out, stood by the United Kingdom proposals on chemical weapons and supported 50 per cent reduction in strategic nuclear weapons. Mr Gorbachev could not accuse her of being an obstacle to reductions in nuclear weapons. Such reductions could be achieved and she would work for them.

Mr. Gorbachev said that if the Prime Minister studied all his speeches and those of other Soviet leaders, she would find that all her concerns had been covered. The Soviet Union was ready for a reduction of military forces regionally and globally. They had made proposals on all these elements, constructed in such a way that the West should not feel that it was being put in an unequal position. The Soviet Union had a series of well thought out policies. They were also interested in better East/West relations and stability. But it would be a mistake to believe that they were more interested than the West was. The Prime Minister had been passionate on the subject of Britain's need for security. There was no way any individual country could find security on its own these days. The only security was universal security. He would like to see the Prime Minister shift her powers of analysis from supporting nuclear weapons to examining how the world could live without them. He agreed that it was necessary to take a first step with an INF agreement. He wanted consultation with the Prime Minister and wanted their dialogue to be useful to her, to him and to the cause of peace. It should be extended and deepened and become more friendly and more confidential, even though that would take time.

At this point discussions were suspended for an hour. It was agreed that the press should be told that the talks were proving extremely interesting and valuable.

#### Restructuring

The second session opened in a jovial mood with Mr Gorbachev saying that he had transferred the meeting to the Red Room in the Kremlin in the hope that this might improve the Prime Minister's views. Mr. Gorbachev went on that a very interesting point had been reached in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union. There was broad support for his new policies among the intelligentsia and the working-class, although those who were perfectly comfortable without restructuring were more of a problem. The reforms under way were very far reaching. For instance self-financing was being introduced into the economy and quality control greatly strengthened. This was not a painless process. But a wide debate was going on within Soviet society on the new measures. The working class were keen to end the situation where they received wages for inferior products and supported the drive for improved quality. New legislation on state enterprises was now being discussed. Indeed so many new proposals had come forward that special groups were being created to analyse them. The key question

was the degree and the scope of the rights of individual enterprises. Transferring rights to others meant taking them away from someone else, in practice from the State Planning Commission, the Ministries and the State Bank. The next plenary meeting of the Central Committee would consider a whole complex of issues relating to the role of these central bodies, with a view to restructuring the system of economic management. The whole system would be completely reformed, with a change from administrative methods to economic methods in the management of the economy. A proper balance between central and local management had to be established. There had to be a balance, too, between production for the market and planning in the economy. The Prime Minister had mentioned the tempo of change. He found that he was being criticised from the left for being too slow, from the right for going too fast and from outside the Soviet Union for not going far enough. The West seemed disappointed that the change was taking place only within the Soviet system rather than to the system as a whole. Nonetheless there could be no mistaking the pace of change. For instance enterprises were being given the right to enter foreign markets to earn currency. Commissions of outside experts had been established to examine the quality of the products of different sectors of industry and ensure that it corresponded to the highest world level. This had caused quite a row. The reconstruction of certain enterprises had been stopped because the quality standards which they had set were insufficiently high. A particular priority had been to combat the import disease. This meant that most investment was being channelled into the machine building and the chemical industry, sometimes at the expense of other industries. The second priority was the further development of science, both academic science and applied science. Twenty-one major scientific complexes had been created, headed by world-renowned scientists.

Mr. Gorbachev continued that achievements to date had come from better discipline and organisation, but the roots of the problem had scarcely been touched. Restructuring had to go deep into society. This sometimes led to a clash of interests. As he had pointed out it was necessary to choose between short term and longer term interests. Some people would undoubtedly be affected, but they must restructure themselves. The task now was to concentrate on implementing what had already been mapped out rather than continue to come up with new ideas. The process of implementing a new policy was not simple. People had to be given time to adapt and to produce results. There

had already been some promising developments. For instance there had been a boom in informatics and computer technology. Soviet scientists had already constructed a computer capable of storing 1 billion bytes of information and by the end of the current five year plan this figure would be 10 billion. They had also solved the problem of personal computers and were now developing micro-processors for factories. He was convinced that they were successfully eliminating the technology gap in this area. They had exploited the latent patriotism of Soviet scientists and got their pledge to catch up with the West. The fact was that Soviet society had a vast potential for development, even though in recent years it had been moribund. The main leverage for achieving results was democratization. Lenin used to say that an illiterate stands outside politics. Now there was the paradox that Soviet society was one of the most educated in the world but lagged behind in the process of democracy. The conclusions which the Prime Minister should draw from restructuring were that the West should forget any notion of putting the Soviet Union on the ashheap of history and should abandon its evil empire rhetoric. The truth was that the Soviet Union was a multi-faceted society, advanced in some ways and backward in others. The Prime Minister should come back in two or three years to look at progress.

The Prime Minister asked whether there were problems in applying science to industry. Mr. Gorbachev said that had been a weak point. The route from research to production had been too long. Soviet socialism had been too democratic by allowing factories to produce unwanted goods. He thought that restructuring would produce significant results within two or three years, if there was the stamina to persist with reform.

#### Arms control

Mr. Gorbachev said that, during his earlier discussion of arms control with the Prime Minister, he had not commented on the point about 50% reductions in strategic weapons. The Soviet Union's starting point was its commitment to a nuclear-free world. In that spirit they had been prepared at Reykjavik to agree to the elimination of all nuclear weapons. The Americans had initially seemed to accept this but had subsequently modified it to elimination of all ICBMs. The Soviet side had agreed that a start should be made

with a 50% reduction linked to agreement not to withdraw from the ABM Treaty and had suggested that, rather than get lost in endless sub-limits, the reductions should be across the board in each leg of the strategic triad. This had been accepted by Mr. Shultz. The Americans had also accepted the concept of an INF agreement with a zero option in Europe. He had then, as a final element, introduced the need to strengthen the ABM regime, by restructuring the SDI programme to research. But President Reagan had balked at this proposal. The President had pleaded with him not to make this a sticking point and had offered him concessions in other areas such as the restructuring of relations. But the Soviet Union had already made unprecedented concessions and could go no further. The Americans, on the other hand, had come with empty pockets, but with baskets to fill with Soviet concessions. It was indeed the case that the Soviet Union had made an INF agreement part of a package approach at Reykjavik for tactical purposes, to increase the pressure on SDI. This had been quite justified. The Soviet Union had made all the concessions and was entitled to expect some movement in return. Mr. Gorbachev continued that he was worried by the SDI. Nonetheless, the Soviet Union would have a response to it although he would not say what it would be. Moreover, they would never break the linkage between constraints on SDI and START reductions. There must be agreement on strict limits on SDI and a reaffirmation of the ABM Treaty or there would be no reductions in strategic nuclear weapons.

If the United States would not see sense on SDI the Soviet Union would not make their lives any easier. They had certain things in mind to reduce the value of SDI. The Americans would find that they would simply exhausting themselves in trying to develop a strategic defence system. Anyway there would never be a complete defence against ballistic missiles. Nonetheless there would be a very serious situation if the United State did go ahead, and Western Europe would feel the consequences. A few contracts for SDI work would be little consolation. The same amount of money invested in the civilian economy would produce three times as many jobs as investing in SDI. The Soviet Union found it hard to understand the position adopted by certain Western European leaders on the SDI, arguing that it was only a research project and that interpretation of the ABM Treaty was a matter for the United States and the Soviet

Union alone. This could only be described as an excessively tactful position.

The Prime Minister said that she would like to try to distill the points on which there was agreement. It was agreed that the French and British deterrents should be excluded from negotiations on reductions in nuclear weapons for the time being. It was agreed that negotiations on an INF agreement should be pursued as a separate issue on the basis of a zero option in Europe with constraints on shorter range systems, although continuing differences on whether these systems should simply be frozen or whether the West should have a right to match. Mr. Gorbachev interjected that there should be a freeze followed by further negotiations. He had already said that the Soviet Union would withdraw their shorter range systems from East Germany and Czechoslovakia. He was prepared to say that these systems should be destroyed in front of television cameras and that there should be immediate follow-on negotiations on other short-range systems. But there was a more serious problem in the West's position. It seemed to be their intention to increase the number of missiles under the guise of making reductions, for instance by converting Pershing IIs into Pershing Is. Such manoeuvres lent a very suspicious character to the whole negotiation. If the West was going to behave in this way, one could start playing the funeral march for the whole arms control process. He would demand that NATO dual capable aircraft should be included in the negotiation. The Prime Minister said that Mr. Gorbachev was being unnecessarily contentious. The Soviet Union had far more aircraft in this category. Negotiations should be conducted on the previously agreed basis. She had discussed these matters with President Mitterrand and Chancellor Kohl and they were both strongly agreed on the need for follow-on negotiations on short-range systems. Mr. Gorbachev said that the Soviet Union was prepared to solve this problem. The Prime Minister continued that the third area of agreement was on the need for a speedy conclusion of an agreement to ban chemical weapons. We welcomed indications that the Soviet Union could accept our proposal on challenge inspection. But there were a number of other problems to be solved. Mr. Gorbachev said that the Soviet Union had taken a firm decision to eliminate chemical weapons and have even built a plant to handle their destruction.

The Prime Minister said that she would like to turn next to the SDI. She did not believe there would ever be a completely effective system of strategic defence. But equally it was impossible to prevent research. Mr. Gorbachev said that the latter point was not logical. If it was impossible to prevent research, then there was no point in trying to reach agreement on chemical and biological weapons. The Prime Minister replied that, on the contrary, it was Mr. Gorbachev who was not logical. Chemical weapons existed and had been deployed. The aim was to reduce or to eliminate them. The SDI did not exist and no-one yet knew if it was feasible. There was still a very long way to go. In her view it was perfectly sensible to conduct research to <sup>the</sup> point of establishing whether a system was feasible. But deployment would be a matter for negotiation. She quite understood the Soviet Union's wish for some predictability in this area. There should be a fixed period during which it should be clear that there would be no deployment. It should also be possible to devise a means of setting out the proposed activities of both sides and linking this with an understanding not to deploy SDI for a fixed period. She did not know whether President Reagan would agree to such a proposal. But it should help to meet Soviet concerns and make it possible for the Soviet Union to de-couple START negotiations from a question of limits on the SDI. Mr. Gorbachev said that it was an interesting, practical proposal. But there could only be reductions in strategic offensive weapons if there were guarantees against an arms race in space. Since countries already defended their own air space, perhaps they should begin to defend outer space above their territories. The Prime Minister said that she was disappointed with Mr. Gorbachev's response but hoped that he would consider the suggestion she had made carefully.

The Prime Minister continued that negotiations were also needed to reduce the Soviet Union's preponderance in conventional weapons. Mr. Gorbachev said that the Prime Minister was always talking about Soviet preponderance, but the figures produced by the International Institute for Strategic Studies showed that there was parity or near parity in conventional weapons. The Warsaw Pact had put forward proposals for negotiations on reductions in conventional weapons a year ago and there had still been no response from NATO. He had also made the important clarification that the balance of



conventional forces was not uniform. There were areas where the Warsaw Pact had superiority and others where NATO was ahead. This was why he had said that those who had more should reduce rather than those who had less should build up their forces. The Prime Minister said that the IISS figures were seriously flawed and anyway took no account of the relative distance separating the United States and Soviet heartland from Europe. She wished that she could bring Mr. Gorbachev to understand how Western Europe felt threatened by the might of Soviet conventional forces. This was why we could not contemplate de-nuclearisation of Europe. After all, the Soviet Union's record hardly inspired confidence. Soviet troops had gone into Hungary in 1956, into Czechoslovakia in 1968 and into Afghanistan in 1979. No wonder Western Europe feared an attack. That's your expletive deleted Russian bear for you, interjected Mr. Gorbachev. The Prime Minister continued that she was only explaining reality: Western Europe felt insecure. The aim of conventional arms negotiations must be to establish a balance.

Mr. Gorbachev said that the Prime Minister seemed to have forgotten British intervention in the Falklands and French intervention in Chad. The Prime Minister pointed out that the Falklands had been British and had been invaded. Mr. Gorbachev said that the Prime Minister always found a pretext for what she did. The Prime Minister said that that was not a very wise remark. She recalled that Britain had fought alone for two years at the beginning of the Second World War. Mr. Gorbachev said the Prime Minister was always taking examples from the past. If Britain had been willing to work with the Soviet Union earlier, perhaps the Second World War would not have happened. As it was, the Conservative Party had always harboured the dream of using Germany against the Soviet Union. The Prime Minister's thinking seemed to have stopped in the 1940s and 50s. The Prime Minister said that the invasion of Afghanistan had not happened in the 1940s and 50s, nor Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia. These were examples of how the Soviet Union behaved today. The way in which the Soviet Union treated its own citizens was also not calculated to inspire confidence in the West, even though there had been some improvements which we had welcomed. We needed to build up trust and confidence if there was to be progress on arms control. Mr. Gorbachev said that confidence would only be born out of negotiation and discussion. It would never come

from unrealistic expectations that the Soviet Union would capitulate. The Prime Minister said that the Stockholm Conference had achieved some success in creating greater confidence and that process should be taken forward. Nonetheless major problems remained in the way of negotiations on conventional force reductions. We have never been able to get adequate data from the Soviet Union about their forces. The aim of negotiations must be to establish a balance, not to make equal numerical reductions. It was a mistake to take an all or nothing approach. It was better to proceed step by step. Even some progress would help to establish greater confidence.

Mr. Gorbachev said it was not the Soviet Union's intention to go to war, least of all in Europe. He was disappointed by the Prime Minister's remarks. Europe should play a bigger and more active role in the search for peace. The Prime Minister should not think that the Soviet Union wanted to divide Europe from the United States. Instability in the Western Alliance would be bad for the Soviet Union. Nonetheless they could not fail to notice that NATO military exercises were based on offensive concepts and envisaged the use of nuclear weapons. The Prime Minister said that that was not a very telling point. The Warsaw Pact conducted military exercises as well. NATO had made quite clear that it was a defensive organisation which would only use its weapons in response to an attack. Mr. Gorbachev said that NATO had failed to say that it would never use nuclear weapons first. Perhaps both Alliances should reaffirm that they adhered to defensive concepts. The Prime Minister said that she did not follow the logic of separating nuclear weapons from others. The important thing was that NATO had said that it would not use any of its weapons except in response to attack.

#### Afghanistan

Mr. Gorbachev said that the Prime Minister constantly painted too gloomy a picture of Soviet policy, while whitewashing her own. He might mention Britain's support for the bombing of Libya or its arming of the Afghan resistance. He had been astonished to see a statement recently by the leader of an Afghan terrorist group saying that as soon as all Soviet troops were out they would destroy all collaborators with the present regime. This has been said in the

presence of a British Minister who had endorsed it. It was evident that the United States did not want a settlement in Afghanistan which would allow it to become a neutral and non-aligned state. The Soviet Union wanted to withdraw from Afghanistan. The Prime Minister said it was a great pity that the Soviet Union had ever invaded the country. It had cost their reputation dearly with the non-aligned and Muslim countries. The fact was that Afghanistan was an occupied country. When Britain had been faced with the need to bring the situation in Rhodesia to an end, we had held free elections and agreed to abide by the results. That should be an example to the Soviet Union how to deal with Afghanistan. We certainly supported the creation of a neutral, non-aligned Afghanistan. Indeed Lord Carrington had presented proposals for this as long ago as 1980. Mr. Gorbachev said that the Soviet Union was in favour of such an option. The Prime Minister said the only question was how to bring it about. We recognised all the difficulties. But it could not be achieved until the Soviet occupation was ended and elections were held. She recognised all the difficulties but urged the Soviet Union to take the plunge. Mr. Gorbachev said that the Prime Minister had mentioned the blow to Soviet prestige in the Third World. But now many developing countries were asking the Soviet Union to reach a settlement which took account of the interests of the developing world.

Human Rights

Mr Gorbachev repeated that the Prime Minister seemed to see everything connected with the Soviet Union as black. The Prime Minister said that she was in fact more optimistic about the Soviet Union than she had ever been. She believed that the developments which Mr Gorbachev had set in train were good not just for the Soviet Union but for greater trust and confidence with other countries. She understood the difficulties in bringing about change but hoped that Mr Gorbachev would persist and in particular would release more prisoners of conscience and dissidents. Mr Gorbachev said that surely the Prime Minister had not been brainwashed into thinking that half the Soviet Union was sitting in prison. The Prime Minister said that there were still a number of people held for their beliefs, as well as many more who would like permission to leave the Soviet Union. There was also the question of the treatment of Jews. She knew that the Chief Rabbi would like to discuss this problem with Mr Gorbachev or one of his colleagues. After all the Soviet Union had played a supreme part in fighting Hitler, had liberated Auschwitz, had been the home of many leading Jews, and had been one of the first to recognise the State of Israel. It was a pity that this could not be translated into better treatment of the Jewish community in the Soviet Union and into permission for Jews who wished to leave the country to do so.

Mr Gorbachev said that the Soviet Union regarded all humanitarian problems very attentively. They would continue to deal with them with even more care and attention. But there were sometimes other interests which had to be taken into account. He did not like it when others used the excuse of humanitarian problems to interfere in the Soviet Union's internal affairs. There were all too many well-planned and well-financed operations in this field which were mounted as provocations against the Soviet Union. There were broadcasts telling Jews that they were oppressed, designed to cause friction. People had been caught red-handed. The Soviet Union would not allow others to interfere and would not accept anyone telling them what to do so. All his comments could be substantiated. The Prime Minister said that her point was that the Soviet Union had entered into specific agreements in Helsinki. All she was asking was that they should be observed.

Conclusion

Mr Gorbachev said that it was time to draw their discussion to a conclusion. On the last point they had discussed he would repeat that the Soviet Union was already considering with the utmost care the question of exit visas and reunification of families and would continue to do so. In the majority of cases a positive decision was reached with only few exceptions where there were good reasons. More generally the Soviet Union was prepared to develop a dialogue covering such matters as exchanges on culture and information.

The Prime Minister said that she wanted to repeat that she was very hopeful about the situation in the Soviet Union and the prospects for greater trust and confidence. She believed it was perfectly reasonable to put points about human rights to Mr Gorbachev. She was not doing so in the spirit of trying to put down the Soviet Union. The simple fact was that the way the Soviet Union treated its own people was a crucial factor in how the West viewed its relations with them and the prospects for reaching agreements. She hoped that she and Mr Gorbachev could convey a positive impression from their talks. They both wanted to see the Soviet Union and Western Europe draw closer. Mr Gorbachev agreed that they should draw closer while remaining different. It was no short-coming to be different, indeed it might be an advantage. The Soviet Union was prepared to adopt a broad outlook which took account of the growing inter-dependence between the countries. The sooner the European countries cast aside their fears of the Soviet Union, the better. The Soviet Union would do what it could to eliminate fears of confrontation.

The Prime Minister said that she would like to be able to give a constructive interpretation of their meeting. She would say that Mr Gorbachev had given her a fascinating account of his hopes and plans for the Soviet Union. They had also considered prospects for arms control and reached agreement on a number of points, notably the importance of concluding an INF agreement, including constraints on shorter range systems. They had confirmed their wish to see an agreement banning chemical weapons, on which the United Kingdom had put forward specific proposals for challenge inspection. They were also agreed in wanting to see early talks on reductions in conventional forces. Mr Gorbachev had assured her that individual cases concerning exit visas and family reunification would continue to be considered carefully, with positive results where possible.

Mr Gorbachev said that he supported the general lines of the Prime Minister's proposed statement. He suggested that they should say that their talks had lasted for several hours and had conducted an exchange of views of a very broad and frank nature. They had agreed on the goal of developing their relations, co-operation and dialogue to help find solutions to the central problems facing mankind. They had stated their views and outlook on arms control in a very explicit fashion. They both supported the principle that all countries should have an equal right to security. They had stated their support for reductions in nuclear and conventional weapons. There had been a similarity of views on an INF agreement, and the two governments would continue their co-operation on agreement banning chemical weapons. They had both spoken in favour of finding political solutions to regional disputes. As regards humanitarian issues, they had discussed the development of the Helsinki process and had supported broader co-operation in Europe covering political, economic, trade and cultural relations. They had also discussed humanitarian issues in this same context. Their discussions had contributed to better relations and to establishing a basis for greater confidence between them.

CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT  
cc Master



FILE  
C. HMA  
PC  
MOD  
RTA

10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

30 March 1987

Dear Tony,

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETINGS WITH MR. GORBACHEV

The Prime Minister had some seven hours of formal talks with Mr. Gorbachev in the Kremlin in the course of today with an hour's break in the middle. I enclose a record. Mr. Chernayev was the only person present on the Soviet side.

The talks were frank with no quarter asked or given. The Duke of Wellington would have recognised it as hard pounding. The mood varied considerably throughout, with some thunderstorms and occasional squalls but also some longer bright periods. My note records the subjects in the order in which they were discussed. You will find that this means that the same subject crops up more than once at different points in the record.

At dinner, Mr. Gorbachev raised a number of points on the American bombing of Libya, on Syrian involvement in the Hindawi affair which he regarded as not proven, the Falklands and the KAL affair (which he described as a put up job by the Americans).

I should be grateful if this record could be given only a carefully selected and limited distribution. I am copying it to John Howe (Ministry of Defence) and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours sincerely,

(C.D. POWELL)

A.C. Galsworthy, Esq., C.M.G.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

CONFIDENTIAL