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PRIME MINISTER

CSCE : MOSCOW CONFERENCE

We have hitherto had good Western support in holding out against a commitment to hold a human rights conference in Moscow, as part of the outcome of the current CSCE Review Conference. But in recent weeks, both the French and the Americans have weakened in their opposition to this, while the Russians have explicitly made agreement to a conference in Moscow a pre-condition to all human rights follow-up. The background is set out in the attached, rather muddled, letter.

In effect the Foreign Secretary now recommends that we should abandon outright opposition to a Human Rights Conference in Moscow, and go for agreement on the strictest possible pre-conditions for one (the conditions originally proposed by the Americans and set out at the foot of page 1 of the attached letter). Unfortunately it is far from clear that the Americans are still ready to stick out for these (and the meaning of some of them is obscure: for instance, do political prisoners include prisoners of conscience?). The French seem ready to agree at any price. We risk a rout.

It is a pity that the Western position has been allowed to slip so badly. Clearly we cannot single-handedly block the outcome of the Review Conference. But I think we could make greater efforts than are suggested in the FCO letter to bind other Western governments to a tough set of pre-conditions for a meeting in Moscow. I think you should consider sending a message to the President, and there should be a vigorous lobbying effort with other Western governments. Agree?

C.D.P.

(C. D. POWELL)

13 October 1988

with a visit to Poland
in view.Yes - especially
not

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FILE

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PC

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

16 October 1988

Dear Lynn,

CSCE: MOSCOW CONFERENCE

Thank you for your letter about the position reached at the CSCE meeting in Vienna, in particular as regards the proposal to hold a Human Rights Conference in Moscow.

I have now had a chance to discuss this with the Prime Minister. She takes a very dim view of the way in which the majority of our Allies seem ready to go along with the Soviet proposal. She thinks that this would be to let down all those who have been campaigning in the Soviet Union for human rights. She also feels that it would give the wrong signal on the eve of her visit to Poland. She would like to see us mount a very firm lobbying campaign with our Allies - as I understand the Foreign Secretary has been doing this weekend - to ensure that the proposal for a meeting in Moscow is agreed only with the firmest possible preconditions. These ought to be at least as specific as those originally set by the Americans as recorded in your letter, and it should be clear that political prisoners include prisoners of conscience. As part of this campaign she would like to send a very early message to President Reagan and possibly to other heads of government. I should be grateful for a draft.

Yours sincerely,

(C.D. POWELL)

Lyn Parker, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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cc/pc
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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

13 October 1988

*Dear Charles*CSCE: Moscow Conference

Over the year since Lyn Parker's letter of 1 October 1987, the West has been successful in securing our main negotiating objectives in the CSCE. An agreement is now within sight which will set out much stronger commitments than hitherto on freedom of religion, freedom of movement, protection of national minorities, redress of grievances, freedom of information, human contacts etc. Most significantly, it would establish a mechanism for regular bilateral and multilateral discussion of human rights and contacts. This not only gives the West a clearer droit de regard over abuses in Eastern Europe, but serves to balance the (no doubt lengthy) military security talks which will follow the Vienna CSCE Meeting.

Until a few weeks ago, the Soviet Union had soft-pedalled on its proposal for a humanitarian conference in Moscow, but the issue we foresaw a year ago now looks like coming to a crunch. The Soviet Government are now threatening to veto all human rights follow-up and the proposed London Information Forum in 1989 unless their proposal for a Moscow conference is agreed.

Those closest to our position on the Moscow conference up to now have been France, Portugal, Canada and the United States. A year ago the Americans set out what amounted to a set of conditions which would have to be met if a Moscow conference was to be agreed. These were:

- release and rehabilitation of all political and religious prisoners;
- abolition of various articles of the Penal Code;
- increase in emigration and regularisation of emigration procedures;
- further progress in dejamming of radio broadcasts;
- resolution of all outstanding US/Soviet family reunification cases.

/The



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The Americans seem now to have reached the view that, provided all political prisoners and all bilateral cases (about 30) are resolved, they would regard their conditions as being met. As is clear from the enclosed message to the Foreign Secretary from George Shultz, and from the conversations which the Foreign Secretary had with him in New York, the Americans look like concluding that there is nothing more to be gained by holding out for more stringent pre-conditions. They believe that the downside risk of agreeing to the Moscow conference will be matched by positive gains for the West (a) through the likely enactment of legislation in the Soviet Union consolidating human rights' progress; and (b) by the public attention which will be focussed on Soviet human rights' performance at a Conference on a par with the success which President Reagan achieved during his visit to Moscow.

Virtually all of our other allies now clearly share the American view. M Mitterand, for example, has declared publicly within the past few days that France would not stand in the way of a Moscow conference. The Foreign Secretary has, therefore, concluded that no British interest would be served in trying alone to hold out for more than the Americans. But we should aim to hold the Americans to their original pre-conditions and to get it agreed that the main Western Allies at least would be ready to withdraw from the Conference if, between now and the conference date, the Russians failed to match up to their agreed obligations.

In original letter
Have they given up
with original conditions or not?
A very muddled letter.

Yours ever

Bosker

RP (J S Wall)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

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SECRET

Dear Geoffrey:

During our discussions with NATO colleagues in New York, the Soviet proposal for a Moscow human rights meeting kept coming up again and again. It is clear that this issue is one on which the Alliance remains divided, and yet it may soon be the last major issue to be tackled at the Vienna CSCE conference.

We have looked once more at our position on this proposal and have decided it is time to move towards a final "yes" or a final "no." We are not committed to either outcome; our goal at present is to structure the decision properly.

We must avoid a situation where British, American, or general Western intransigence could be blamed for delay of the Vienna meeting or where the Soviets might appear justified in wreaking vengeance on our human rights proposals.

We believe that the best course is for all of us to set out clearly for the Soviets the steps which might earn them their conference. We see this move on our part as a necessary prelude to either a "yes" or a "no" outcome. The Soviets have already improved their performance with regard to the areas the U.S. has consistently raised: prisoners, emigration, jamming, bilateral cases, and institutionalization. If they are willing to make the further efforts we might require, we'll have payment in advance for a meeting in Moscow. If they are not, the failure of their proposal will unequivocally rest on their unwillingness to treat their people better.

I have asked Warren Zimmerman, our ambassador to the Vienna CSCE meeting, to coordinate with your ambassador, his French and German colleagues, and other Allies as appropriate in order to develop a common set of considerations which, after approval by capitals, can be presented to the Soviets. We certainly hope you can support this effort.

Sincerely,

/s/

George

SECRET

Sov UNION: human rights pt 2

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file

JDBRIF

to PAB

P.C.



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

28 March, 1988.

Dear Lynn,

CSCE: INFORMATION FORUM

Thank you for your letter of 24 March about the proposal to hold a CSCE Information Forum in London in 1989.

The Prime Minister agrees that we should offer to hold the Forum in London at the Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre from 17 April to 23 May 1989. But she would not at this stage wish to commit herself to deliver the opening speech on 18 April (although we have noted the possibility in her forward diary). She would want to know more about likely developments in the CSCE process over the next twelve months, and particularly the fate of the proposal for a human rights conference in Moscow (I think I noticed a telegram the other day reporting Shevardnadze as saying that the Russians would not press this). She would also want to know more about what we hope to see achieved at such a Forum.

Yours sincerely,
C.D. Powell

C.D. Powell

Lyn Parker, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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