



CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES

8 Wilfred Street, London SW1E 6 PL. Tel: 01-828 1176

R5712  
Re Minister  
Further material  
refer to your  
talks with Mr.  
Gorbachev.

December 1, 1988

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The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP, PC  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

Dear Prime Minister,

Members of the Soviet and East European Study Group of the Centre for Policy Studies have drafted, at Lord Thomas's suggestion, a number of tentative recommendations you may wish to look at before your forthcoming discussions with President Gorbachev. I have the honour of enclosing them with this letter.

Members of the Group who contributed to the recommendations :

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| Lord Thomas ✓                            | Dr. Staszek Gomulka        |
| Rev. Michael Bourdeaux ✓                 | London School of Economics |
| Keston College                           | Professor Elie Kedourie    |
| Mrs. Nathalie Brooke                     | London School of Economics |
| CPS                                      | Dr. Dominic Lieven         |
| Christopher Cviic Esq.                   | London School of Economics |
| Royal Institute of International Affairs | Dr. Antony Polonsky        |
| C.N. Donnelly Esq.                       | London School of Economics |
| Sandhurst                                | James Sherr Esq.           |
| Dr. Isain Elliot ✓                       | Oxford University          |
| Radio Liberty                            | Dr. George Urban           |
|  | CPS                        |

Wishing you success in your deliberations,

Yours sincerely  
*George Urban*

George Urban  
(Convener of the Study Group)

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Suggestions by members of the Soviet and  
East European Study Group

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### 1. Conventional Arms

We have an overwhelming interest in the reduction of conventional arms. The British Government has warned Gorbachev that trust will not be forthcoming so long as the Soviet Union maintains an offensive military posture.

The ingenuity of Gorbachev - and of the Soviet military system - is now mobilised to alter this posture as much as possible in appearance and as little as possible in substance. For all the talk of a new military doctrine, arms control in the Soviet Union remains a tool of military strategy, rather than an alternative to it. We should inform Gorbachev that he will not manipulate us into legitimising a leaner, more potent - and more economical - force structure for the Warsaw Pact, or into preserving today's relative superiorities at lower force levels.

We believe that Gorbachev has the astuteness and courage to consider meaningful revisions to Soviet military posture if he has no alternative. But not even Gorbachev will do so otherwise. Economic pressures within the system now afford us a unique opportunity to cause the Soviet leadership to make tangible concessions.

### 2. Eastern Europe

The British Government's differentiated approach to the Central and East European countries is the right one and should be further developed. The success of the Prime Minister's visits to Hungary and Poland speaks for itself. We should aim for a managed "Finlandisation".

Gorbachev might now be tactfully reminded that the socialist "empire" in Eastern Europe is out of date and that a quiet retirement of the "Brezhnev doctrine" would make an especially effective contribution to better East-West relations and enhance arms' control.

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We might, moreover, urge him to announce the USSR's intention gradually to withdraw Soviet troops from Central and Eastern Europe, beginning probably with Hungary, as this withdrawal would be least likely to jeopardize Soviet security interests and most likely to evince the seriousness of the Soviet resolve to promote the construction of a "common European home".

Our non-recognition of the incorporation of the Baltic States should be upheld and endorsed whenever opportune.

[So that  
American  
troops  
leave  
Western  
Europe -  
and never come back]

### 3. The Helsinki round

We regard it as entirely right that no human rights' conference should take place in the Soviet capital until many more of the USSR's existing commitments under Basket Three of the Final Act are met than have been met so far. These should include, in addition to the release of political prisoners and "refuseniks" and the cessation of jamming (which we are already pressing for), the freer flow of people, respect for the rights of minority nations and nationalities and the right of believers to practice their religion alone or in community with others, as stipulated under Principle VII of the Final Act. Even in the current improved atmosphere, visa refusals for British subjects are not infrequent.

Should a conference in Moscow eventually take place, we regard it as essential that any final communique emerging from it should not lend itself to be described as "The Moscow Declaration on Human Rights". We can do no less in the light of the Soviet record in Afghanistan.

### 4. Western credits

While we may have good reasons of our own for extending credits to the Soviet Union and underwriting certain joint ventures, we should avoid extending any that might increase the military potential of the USSR and lend the Soviet system an attractiveness it has not been able to acquire through its own exertions and from its own resources. According to one informed estimate, Western credits currently on offer are large enough to cover virtually all Soviet hard currency requirements to maintain a global empire.

The Soviet Union should be made to choose between her international ambitions and her national interests. It would be contrary to everything we wish to encourage if our economic assistance were to defer that choice.

Should the Gorbachev reforms fail to work, the long-term accumulation of Soviet debts may force the Soviet Union into a position similar to the crises now gripping Poland and Hungary. This may not be in the Western interest. A cautious Western credit policy would, therefore, serve the long-term chances of Soviet liberalization better than a hasty and open-handed credit policy.

5. The USSR and the Third World

Another essential desideratum concerns Soviet retrenchment. The removal from the new Party Programme of "peaceful coexistence" - defined as an intensified form of the international class-struggle - is welcome as far as it goes, but we need tangible evidence that Soviet withdrawal from costly, frontal confrontation is not simply the prelude to more novel, indirect forms of "struggle" against Western interests in the Third World and against Third World interests themselves. Under the banner of "anti-imperialist struggle", the USSR has repeatedly intruded into areas where it has no vital or legitimate interests. Whilst indications of withdrawal from Afghanistan are encouraging, we cannot fail to be troubled by the continuing investment in the destabilisation of Pakistan.

We can have normal, constructive relations with a Soviet Union that regards itself as "a country like any other"; but relations cannot improve so long as the Soviet Union continues to see itself as history's agent.

6. Nuclear safety

We question the safety of Soviet nuclear power plants, especially those with graphite-moderated reactors. The Soviet Union's ambitious nuclear energy programme may turn out to be (as some of the Soviet Popular Fronts fear and have openly expressed) a greater threat to the rest of Europe than Soviet military power. The Kremlin's open and effective cooperation in nuclear and ecological questions is an indispensable precondition of trust between the Western and Eastern parts of Europe.

7. The Gorbachev factor and the West

The Western acclaim of Gorbachev and his reforms appears to have left him and some of his colleagues with the impression that our military preparedness and the cohesion of NATO might soon be undermined, because democratic public opinion would find it hard to understand how a policy of "helping Gorbachev" and maintaining a military alliance directed against the Soviet Union can be sustained simultaneously. Gorbachev may be usefully informed that Soviet hopes based on this seeming contradiction underestimate the maturity of at least British and American public opinion and are unlikely to be fulfilled.