

MEETING IN MOSCOW 23/9/89 - SOME IMPRESSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS  
 (to be taken in conjunction with full report by CDP)

- Note of cordiality struck from outset: G opens with compliment - "not just for compliments' sake" - to PM on her clear wish to maintain and develop the dialogue/cooperation. The concomitant 'rider' ("though sometimes the commitment seems to waver", paraphrased) was said somewhat 'sotto voce' and expressed in a brief, unbarbed way. That was the nearest approximation to any reference to 'tit for tat' throughout the day from G himself. No evidence that he wished to resurrect the matter with the PM. When - in closing minutes of Kremlin talks - PM chose to touch on the subject, she did so only allusively ("we acted only when/because there was absolutely no alternative") - and G, who clearly took the allusion, seemed entirely content just to nod agreement. He was similarly content to accept without discussion the PM's suggestion that certain bilateral problems should be left to the Foreign Ministers and officials to resolve - on a "reasonable/reciprocal/enduring basis". The specific concepts of 'expulsions'/'espionage'/'ceilings' were not articulated in the discussion.
- Worth noting that the phrase "occasional flashes of passion", figuring in media reports of the Kremlin talks, was without foundation. If a graph of overall mood/atmosphere were to be drawn for the PM's talks with G since April 1987, the curve would/should reflect the September 1989 meeting as virtually devoid of emotional antipathies, notable for the maintenance and increase of a perceptible warmth in mutual attitudes, and with significantly fewer - and milder - jibes by G. His use of words and intonation in Russian seemed deliberately lighter in effect throughout this meeting, and this seemed in keeping with a genuine wish to build the personal relationship/bilateral stability - rather than the all-too-familiar Soviet style of blandishments. Neither interlocutor became heated or had to raise the voice. On a couple of occasions G broke in before his interpreter had finished translating. But - unlike some previous occasions - this reflected further enthusiastic thoughts, rather than cumulative 'niggles', on a particular theme. Such jibes as G allowed himself - eg "we shall (after building down to mutual minimum deterrence levels)...leave Mrs Thatcher to devote her life to justifying nuclear weapons", and "but if we can revise our military philosophy, surely you can - after all, you've sorted out your political system!" - were said in the tone and formulation of good-natured teasing, with a smile and a not infrequent wink.
- G was remarkably relaxed, both as compared to previous meetings (though of course for the most part he has always seemed relaxed in the past), and as contrasted with his moods (often angry/impatient) in the televised sessions of the Party Plenum earlier in the week. During his talks with the PM there were moments when he strummed with his fingers on the table, in clearly light-hearted mood, during interpretation into English - even when describing internal political/economic problems. He has not done this at previous meetings with the PM - though it is worth noting that this was the first time they were seated on opposite sides of a long table for their talks. But G was not observed finger-strumming at other 'long-table' talks with earlier UK visitors (eg Lord Whitelaw in May, 1986, or Sir Geoffrey Howe in February 1988) by the present writer... A new mannerism, for whatever reason. It was also noticeable that G did not use his glasses, despite the fact that his file - which he opened only after about an hour of the conversation (1100-1330), when the PM broached arms control - contained close-set, light-coloured typing (with much yellow 'highlighting'). He did not seem seriously interested in his typed briefing matter - which he opened at random, not at the beginning of a section, and closed again not long after. This was a measure of the

natural flow and the content of ideas within the exchanges, which maintained a steadily spontaneous character throughout the meeting.

- The only time G seemed interested in his brief, or show any negative emotion, was when he opened a further document that had been folded from an earlier section of his file - at about the time when the PM was quoting excerpts from the Washington telegram on Bush's receipt of G's letter and other thoughts from Bush to G. It is not clear what the document was, but his interpreter tried to look at it too - and was sharply discouraged from doing so:- "No, no - nothing to do with what we're discussing...". (Obviously not interpreted!). For a moment G looked mildly annoyed, but clearly not in the context of his discussion across the table.
- These were the first talks between G and the PM at which a considerable amount of the discussion - at G's request - took place totally 'off the record', with no notes to be taken. The tone and the mood of the discussion during that period reflected a remarkably relaxed mutual attitude and an apparently genuine readiness to confide/trust.
- The PM was able to control the topics of conversation to a much greater extent than at previous meetings. G seemed aware from the start of the desirability of covering a good number of themes. He was also less prolix/garrulous - certainly than in the two 1987 meetings. Indeed, he made a point of saying to the PM - after an hour on Soviet internal problems - "we shall talk about what you want to talk about" (he was palpably delighted when she suggested the next topic be arms control, and readily laughed when she said she could see that was what his notes were all about). At the end of the Kremlin talks this time - as in 1987 - G promptly agreed to the PM's summing up of what ground they had covered (for notifying the press). He deflected the PM's comment at the end that no doubt he had things to attend to before lunch, by saying - "My only concern is to entertain you to lunch in half-an-hour's time".
- Among noticeable, sometimes 'new', topics broached by G were:- his apprehension that internally conservatives and left-wingers might gang up with discontented elements in the population at large (v. his efforts); the importance of Slav solidarity within the USSR (Abalkin was later, at lunch, to say that what was important was the individual-to-individual relationship, not the nation-to-nation one, for the future); draft legislation on emigration is with the Deputies, among at least 50 other proposed Sup.Sov.bills - "but we've lived without it for 70 years, so we can wait a bit longer"; it might well prove necessary, as a means of helping the economy recover, to combine some old 'command-administrative' methods with the new initiative-oriented (etc) policies already launched - "I don't preclude that"; clear willingness to discuss aircraft and listen to our perception of problem of their definition, in the CFE context; fairly confident and spontaneous prognosis by G of two arms agreements in 1990 (see verbatim report); this time, internal opposition preoccupies G more than external lack of cooperation (as cf. London April '89 talks) - but still alleges Bush indecisive/also that G hears more about/from Bush than Bush means him to (thus phrased); G has his own 'Greens' to reckon with.
- A number of expected themes did not come up, because of time-constraints rather than evasiveness: eg regional conflicts, leading role of the Party (though nervousness within the Party at present was discussed), etc. But see verbatim notes.
- No especially noteworthy points on his use of language this time, though 'chaos', 'painful', 'wild money', 'thrown into a panic' had a place, and a familiar ring, in what he said. He has a penchant for the dictum of Heraclitus: in these talks, as at his Reykjavik press-conference, he quotes "the Greek philosopher who reminds us that everything is flowing, everything is changing", when saying NATO should be prepared (like the SU) to rethink its military policy. Throughout, however, G's language was in keeping with a patent wish to create a relaxed, friendly atmosphere.

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PERSONAL

5 October 1989.

Dear Charles ~

Further to my letter of 28 September, I write to enclose the promised notes on the private talks of 23 September. Once again, since confidentiality enjoined that I type them myself, there are inevitable blemishes in the typing - and, with the academic year just commencing, an unavoidable delay has supervened - for which I apologise. I do hope no inconvenience is caused thereby.

As the feeling was that observations might usefully supplement the verbatim record, I have confined myself to the former. I trust that is acceptable to you, and that no problems arise.

I am sad to think that you will be moving out of this context. But 'there is a tide in the affairs of men...' - and, once again, I can only thank you for your kindness in initiating and supporting me in the role I have so much enjoyed. It has been a privilege and delight to work with you. Janette, my wife, joins me in wishing you and Carla every happiness and success in whatever awaits you.

Please give my regards to the Prime Minister and Denis Thatcher.  
Many thanks once again, and every good wish,

*Richard Pollock*  
Richard

Richard Pollock

Enclosure

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9 October 1989

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*From the Private Secretary*

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH MR. GORBACHEV

I enclose some notes which Professor Richard Pollock has sent me about the Prime Minister's meeting with President Gorbachev. They are a useful supplement to my record. Where there are differences or additions, you will want to recall that I am taking down Uspensky's translation, while Richard is jotting his own translation of Gorbachev's comments.

CHARLES POWELL

Richard Gozney, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

*h*