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PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
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AND TO INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, PARIS, OTTAWA, UKDEL NATO

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO USSR: MESSAGE TO CHANCELLOR KOHL

1. Following is text of message from the Prime Minister to Chancellor Kohl after her visit to the Soviet Union. Grateful if you would arrange for it to be delivered.

Begins:

~~Dear Helmut~~

I wanted you to have my personal impressions of my talk last Friday with President Gorbachev. Douglas Hurd gave Hans Dietrich Genscher some of the details on the telephone on Sunday and further briefing is being given to your officials.

Even as the problems mount, Gorbachev remains confident, ebullient - perhaps just a little less than usual - and apparently in command of events. He talks of putting the infrastructure of a market economy into place in short order, and contemplates a new constitutional relationship between the centre and the Republics.

We spent most of our time discussing the security of

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Europe and Germany's membership of NATO. Gorbachev's thinking on this continues to evolve. There are inconsistencies and contradictions. But even though he still expressed some misgivings at the speed of the moves towards unification, he nevertheless agreed with my position that this was for the German people to decide. He was also very careful not to say, at any point during our talks or our joint press conference, that a united Germany should not (underlined) be a member of NATO. He talked a great deal of the need to respect the Soviet Union's security interests and to move towards a European security organization which would transcend both NATO and the Warsaw Pact. But I think he realises this is not a practical proposition for the foreseeable future. We discussed his proposal for a joint NATO/Warsaw Pact declaration. I think this offers possibilities. There is no need for us to strive officiously to keep the Warsaw Pact alive. But equally, I believe we could devise a declaration between the member states of the two alliances which would not imply equality but would help the Russians to accept, as I believe they will, a united Germany in NATO.

We discussed nuclear weapons in the light of the US-Soviet summit, and I made clear our view on the continued need for nuclear deterrence. We did not go into detail on the Conventional Forces negotiations, although in our talks we touched on these and on the need to strengthen the CSCE process.

On Lithuania, President Gorbachev pronounced himself heartily sick of the problem, and I got the impression that it does not rank high among his priorities. I pressed him to bridge the gap that remains between his position and that of the Lithuanians, and to start talks with them as soon as

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possible. He was insistent that any moves towards independence must be within the framework of the Soviet constitution. The media are reporting that he has now agreed to talks. If so this would be very encouraging. He realises, however, that the economy has to be his main immediate task, although I am not sure that even now he really understands how a market economy functions.

I had a robust session with Marshal Yazov and the Soviet Chiefs of Staff. My impression is that they are quite realistic, both on the subject of Germany in NATO (which I told them was not in question) and on nuclear weapons, but somewhat overwhelmed by the practical problems of withdrawing from Eastern Europe and their shrinking forces.

I also went both to the Ukraine and Armenia, and the strength of nationalist feeling is tangible in both. Clearly Gorbachev has no early respite in sight. // I look forward to seeing you in Dublin, which will be an historic occasion with Mr de Maiziere present for the two meals.
Ends.

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