

No. 191

*Sir R. Braithwaite (Moscow) to FCO*¹

No. 667 Telegraphic [WRL 020/1]

Confidential

MOSCOW, 11 April 1990, 7.04 a.m.

Part one of two.²

From Private Secretary.

Secretary of State's Meeting with President Gorbachev

Summary

1. An hour and a half with Gorbachev devoted mainly to Germany, Lithuania and bilateral relations. Gorbachev in expansive mood. He did not strike the Secretary of State as a man under pressure, though Lithuania was obviously the dominant issue on his mind.³ Although he sought to give reassurance, there was a hint of steel as well.

2. On Germany, Gorbachev said the subject would not be treated in isolation. He doubted whether the Supreme Soviet would agree to Germany being part of NATO. Instead of Germany in NATO, he wanted some broad and unspecified pan-European security structure. He said he was under pressure from the military and others to slow things down in Vienna so that the Soviet Union did not bear the brunt of the sacrifices.

3. On Lithuania, Gorbachev repeated much of the message we had already had from Shevardnadze (Moscow telno 663).⁴ He sought to portray the Lithuanians as extremists and himself as a man who was working within the constitution for a peaceful settlement. He came through as genuinely wanting to play it long and peacefully but equally determined not to let the Lithuanians get away with what he described as extremism and anarchy. He said he was under pressure to impose president's rule. While he did not refer to the use of force, he did not explicitly rule it out. Warm remarks on Anglo/Soviet relations and greetings to the Prime Minister.

Detail

4. The Secretary of State had an hour and a half with Gorbachev this afternoon. Gorbachev was in expansive mood and at the end of the meeting commented that it had been a long time since he had spoken so freely with a Western visitor. Gorbachev had come from what he claimed was a 4-hour meeting with a thousand members of the Young Communist League. He had obviously handled hundreds of questions and the adrenalin was still flowing. The entire conversation was peppered with jokes and heavy-handed humour at the expense of Zamyatin, who looked uncomfortable.

¹ Repeated for information Immediate to UKDEL NATO, other NATO Posts, East Berlin, BM Berlin, Warsaw, UKDEL Vienna.

² Second part not printed.

³ See No. 188, note 3.

⁴ Of 11 April (ESB 027/6). Not printed.

German Unification, 1989–1990

5. Gorbachev said that relations with the UK had improved in a way which made it possible to seek and find opportunities for further progress. The Soviet Ambassador in London was busy enough but the British Ambassador was even more active. Such was the trust and confidence between the two Governments that he and the Foreign Secretary need not waste time on diplomatic ploys and procedures. Without such mutual trust and personal contacts, it was impossible to see eye-to-eye. Our relations had been conducted in a well considered manner, even if explanations were necessary from time to time. He thought that changes in Europe and the wider world were by and large developing in a rational rather than an anarchic way even if problems like the German one forced us to stop and think from time to time.

6. Gorbachev said he was grateful for the letter the Prime Minister had sent him after the Anglo/German summit.⁵ She had done as she had undertaken to do when they had spoken on the telephone. After reading the letter and listening to statements by the Prime Minister and Mr Hurd, he thought that the British and Soviet positions were very close indeed.

7. The Secretary of State said that we would not find ourselves in 100% agreement. We should look at the problem from the point of view of the stability of Europe as a whole. It would be better to have this big power, Germany, in NATO than loose, untied and perhaps with US troops having gone home. It would be better to have Germany within the Alliance, albeit an Alliance with less weapons, lower troop numbers and a more political role. NATO provided a good anchor and framework for a united Germany, but we recognised the importance of doing nothing to prejudice Soviet interests and dignity. We also needed to work for a good settlement on Soviet troops in East Germany.

8. Gorbachev said President Bush had tried to persuade him of the same case, saying that a united Germany in NATO would make very little difference from the present arrangements. Gorbachev responded that in that case a united Germany might as well be in the Warsaw Pact—an answer which had perplexed Bush. This matter must be resolved in a way which prevented misunderstanding and the erosion of the capital which had been built up by our joint efforts. He wanted to create even more valuable capital for the future and the issue of security arrangements was part of that. If we were talking about a common dialogue about a new Europe stretching from the Atlantic to the Urals that was one way of dealing with the German issue. Of course, there would have to be a transition before new security arrangements came into force but we could accelerate the pace and synchronise it with finding a solution to the problem of the two Germanies. It was clear that we approached unification from different positions. If no new perspective was established and the West was looking at the problem from only one perspective, i.e. that a united Germany should be in NATO, that would be a very serious matter. It was very unlikely that the Supreme Soviet would agree to such an approach. Already, he was beginning to get signals from political, military and diplomatic circles to the effect that the Soviet Union should not rush the Vienna process. If a united Germany was going to be incorporated into NATO, why accelerate the process of reducing Soviet armed forces? That could upset the balance of security, which would be unacceptable to the Soviet Union. Those who were allies in great events should behave responsibly and avoid generating concern within Soviet society. Some people were not taking a responsible approach. For its

⁵ No. 188.

part, the Soviet Union would be constructive and responsible. These were very difficult issues but not insurmountable ones if handled with care and caution.

9. The Secretary of State said that our countries were engaged together in three major efforts: the 2 + 4, the CFE and the CSCE, including the proposed Summit at the end of the year. Gorbachev agreed with this description, which he called correct and constructive. The Secretary of State continued that the Americans and British would not go to a CFE summit unless and until there was agreement at Vienna. He noted President Gorbachev's concern that unification should be linked with progress on other areas: what he had called synchronisation. Gorbachev said that it seemed to him that the United States, the Soviet Union's partner and even friend, had its own concerns to pursue. They were worried about the creation of a wider, more cohesive Europe involving the Soviet Union and were apprehensive about the development of a European power. We should not allow the Americans to be on the sidelines. Their interests must be taken into account. The US might therefore want to slow down these developments. We should do all we could to eliminate these American concerns (this was said with apparent seriousness but may have been partly tongue in cheek). Shevardnadze was just back from Washington (where he had had the red carpet treatment). There were two very difficult outstanding issues with the US, namely ALCMs and SLCMs. Unless these two problems were resolved satisfactorily, the whole treaty would be invalid. The floodgates would open wide to circumvention and the question would arise as to why anyone should do away with their heavy missiles. Now that a date for the Summit had been set, Gorbachev thought that would provide an impetus towards finding a solution. He thought European developments would impinge on all this. Some of the Young Communist League delegates to whom he had spoken had urged him to push the Americans harder to stop nuclear testing altogether. That would indeed have a positive impact but of course there was more of a problem with the British and French on that score than with the Americans. (Shevardnadze interjected that perhaps all tests should be conducted in Nevada from now on.)

No. 192

Minute from Mr Weston to Mr Wall

[WRL 020/1]

Secret

FCO, 11 April 1990

Meeting of the One plus Three in Brussels on 10 April

1. Accompanied by Mr Synnott and Mr Powell I attended a meeting of the Political Directors of the Berlin Four in Brussels yesterday. The United States was represented by Zoellick and Seitz. Discussion, which centred on Two plus Four issues, is being fully reported by telegram in the usual way.

2. We compared notes on our respective recent contacts with the Russians, including my own visit to Moscow in late March, the Baker/Shevardnadze meeting and Kastrup's latest six hours of discussion with the Soviet Foreign Ministry the previous day. Our general sense was that the Soviet compass needle on German matters is still veering uncertainly, but that there is some evidence of evolution in their thinking. Kastrup, for example, reported that Bondarenko had told him on 9



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