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THE PRIME MINISTER

29 November 1989

Dear Mr. President:

As you will know, I met President Bush at Camp David last Friday. I wanted to pass on to you a few key points from our discussion.

The President told me how much he is looking forward to meeting you in Malta. He shares my own view that it is your courage and vision and your commitment to reform which have opened the way to the historic changes which are taking place in Europe today.

The President expects developments in Eastern Europe to figure prominently in your talks as they did in ours. We agreed that the priority must be to see genuine democracy established throughout Eastern Europe and that this should happen against a background of security and stability for all parties. This will require us to preserve existing alliances and borders, as the European Heads of Government agreed in Paris on 18 November.

I know that President Bush will also be keen to hear more about your plans for transforming the Soviet economy and will listen sympathetically to what you tell him about the difficulties which you face.

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President Bush and I also discussed a number of wider issues. He fully shares my view of the importance of the European Community remaining outward-looking particularly at a time of such rapid change in Europe. On defence issues, we both believe strongly that NATO will continue to have a central role to play in keeping the peace in Europe. We agreed on the importance of the negotiations on reductions in conventional forces in Europe and in strategic nuclear weapons, and hoped that both sets of negotiations will lead to agreements next year. The President continues to attach high priority to an agreement on chemical weapons, but remains very conscious of the difficulties of verification.

I found the President concerned about Afghanistan and Central America. In particular, it was very evident how strongly the President feels about the continuing supply of weapons to Nicaragua. Indeed, compared to the democratic revival in other countries traditionally closely allied to the Soviet Union, Afghanistan, Cuba and Nicaragua serve as unfortunate reminders of the days before the advent of new political thinking.

The President and I also exchanged views on China. We agreed that it was important to avoid creating a climate in which the isolation of China affected other important areas of the international agenda such as Cambodia where Chinese influence is a vital ingredient. As East/West relations steadily improve, it will be important for both sides not to allow China to think this will affect her adversely.

The President and I also exchanged views briefly on the Middle East, Cyprus, Southern Africa and the Indian Sub-Continent. Western views on these areas are already well known to you. President Bush wondered whether, on Middle Eastern issues, the Soviet Union might be able to help more with its particular friends in the Arab world. We were both very concerned, as I am sure you are, at developments in Lebanon.

Overall I found the President optimistic and very positive towards the opportunities now opening up. The timing of your

meeting could hardly be more opportune. I am sure that it will be a success for you both - and thus for us all.

I am sorry that the visit to London of the parliamentary delegation led by Mr. Medvedev has had to be postponed, but I can well understand that pressure of parliamentary business made this necessary. I hope that new dates can be found early in the New Year. I shall look forward to meeting Mr. Medvedev.

I send you my warm, personal good wishes for your meeting with President Bush.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely

Nargis Shahba

His Excellency Mr. M. S. Gorbachev