

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

The Secretary of State for Energy had a short discussion this afternoon with the Prime Minister in which he suggested that he might travel to Moscow to consult with the Deputy Prime Minister about the causes of the Chernobyl disaster. Mr. Walker recalled his discussion in Moscow recently with the Deputy Prime Minister who impressed him considerably. He therefore wondered whether he might not follow up those contacts by seeking, through the Soviet Ambassador, a meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister in order to be briefed on the details of the Chernobyl accident. It was very much in the interests of the USSR that the West knew more about what had happened. If they refused to cooperate with our requests the Soviets would be wrong-footed. The Prime Minister said that she was against Mr. Walker's proposal for the following reasons:

- (i) discussion would inevitably be technical rather than political;
- (ii) the Russians probably had not yet discovered what had gone wrong at Chernobyl;
- (iii) the Russians were now cooperating to some extent with the IAEA and nothing should be done which cut across that cooperation;
- (iv) it would be difficult to use publicly the arguments that the UK had a particular interest, because of the nature of our magnox reactors, in discovering what went wrong, without at the same time alarming the British public.

N.L.W.

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