

A

PRIME MINISTER

GORBACHEV VISIT: MEETING WITH OUTSIDE EXPERTS

You are to have a session on Friday evening with outside experts, as part of the preparations for the Gorbachev visit. The experts and their expertise are:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Archie Brown | - internal workings of the <u>Kremlin</u> , <u>structure of power</u> |
| Malcolm Mackintosh | - historical; <u>general Soviet strategy</u> |
| Michael Kaser | - <u>Soviet economy and five-year plan</u> |
| Alec Nove | - <u>Soviet agriculture</u> |
| Lawrence Freedman | - <u>defence</u> |
| Norman Wooding | - <u>trade</u> |

You might ask each of them to speak for a maxim of five minutes on what they think you can most usefully try to get out of the meeting. Some points are:

(1) Gorbachev himself. You have read the biography and will recall President Koivisto's account of him ("a man who would get on in any political system"). Invite Archie Brown to give his assessment of where Gorbachev fits into the structure. What are his relations with his other politburo colleagues? How far will it be productive for you to explore with Gorbachev how the Soviet system works? A day in the life of Gorbachev? What sort of questions on the Soviet system can you most usefully put to him? How do the Soviet leadership obtain feedback from their people on the effects of their policies?

(2) Gorbachev's perceptions of the West and his expectations of you. This might be a subject for Malcolm Mackintosh. What is Gorbachev looking for from this visit? What questions will best elicit his world view? Is it as narrow and stereotyped as the recent JIC paper on the perceptions of Soviet leaders suggested? ('Predatory' West) How does he read Western objectives vis-a-vis Eastern Europe?

(3) What are the key questions to put to Gorbachev on the Soviet economy? This is an area for Michael Kaser. How do Soviet leaders plan to raise productivity? How does the Soviet Union reconcile the growing need for mobility of labour with apparently strict control of the movement of population? How does central planning cope with the complexity of a modern consumer economy?

(4) You might next turn to agriculture which is Gorbachev's particular responsibility and ask Alec Nove which are the areas where Gorbachev might be probed. Given the persistent failure of Soviet agriculture to come up to scratch, how far is responsibility for it a fatal weakness in Gorbachev's position, in his presumed competition with Romanov? What are the prospects for Soviet harvests? How do Soviet agricultural planners see the way ahead?

(5) On defence, Lawrence Freedman could be asked to identify questions to put to Gorbachev in the defence and arms control area. A particular point of interest will be to see how far Gorbachev simply disgorges the normal Soviet shibboleths, which would indicate that the whole strategic area is in the hands of Gromyko, Ustinov and the generals: or whether he appears to have some direct influence/ideas. Given that Gorbachev appears to chair a Committee dealing with allocation of resources, it might be useful to tackle him on the problem of the scale of resources going to defence and their impact on other priorities.

CONFIDENTIAL

3

(6) Finally, Norman Wooding could be asked to speak on trade prospects. Which particular big contracts are in the air? Which of them might Gorbachev be planning to hold to the UK as carrots?

CDP

10 December 1984