

CONFIDENTIAL

Also copied to
Soviet Union May 79
Patolichev Visit



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

23 May 1979

Handwritten signature/initials

Prime Minister

BU 23/5

*P.O.
BU
23/5*

Dear Bryan,

Invitations to Soviet Leaders

We wrote to you on 18 May recommending that the Prime Minister should invite the Chinese Premier Hua Guofeng to visit the United Kingdom later this year. This visit would add a further major dimension to the development of our relations with China.

We have sought to persuade the Russians that our burgeoning links with China are in no way directed at the Soviet Union, and to this end we have tried to maintain a balance in our relations with the two countries. Lord Carrington believes that we should continue to follow this course and that we now need to find a way to balance the invitation to Premier Hua. A convenient way to do this would be to renew the outstanding invitations to President Brezhnev, Mr Kosygin and Mr Gromyko to visit the United Kingdom. There has been no meeting between British and Soviet Prime Ministers since February 1975 and no visit at Foreign Minister level since Dr Owen was in Moscow in October 1977. It is highly unlikely that President Brezhnev will ever take up his invitation to visit the UK, and we believe it also unlikely, though not impossible, that Mr Kosygin would wish to visit the UK this year. The same may be true of Mr Gromyko, whom Lord Carrington would expect to meet in any case at the UN General Assembly in the autumn.

In Lord Carrington's view it is important that as little time as possible should elapse between the invitation to Premier Hua becoming public knowledge, as it now has, and the renewal of the invitations to the Russians. If the Prime Minister agrees, therefore, there would be advantage in her telling Mr Patolichev this afternoon that the outstanding invitations to the three Soviet leaders are to be regarded as still open.

Yours GZV

Handwritten signature: Paul

P Lever
Private Secretary

Bryan Cartledge Esq
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

23 MAY 1979