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From the Private Secretary

13 February 1989

MR. GORBACHEV'S VISIT

Mr. Kossov raised one or two points about Gorbachev's visit with me today.

He handed over the enclosed note about Gorbachev's interview with the Times and the Prime Minister's interview with Izvestia.

He said that Gorbachev had not yet decided whether to make a speech while in the United Kingdom. He might not decide until early March. But the probability was against it.

Kossov continued that people in Moscow were alarmed to hear that the lunch with The Queen would be at Windsor Castle rather than Buckingham Palace as had been planned in December. This was seen in some quarters as a down-grading of the visit. I said that this was absurd. The Queen frequently received State Visitors at Windsor Castle rather than Buckingham Palace and President Reagan had certainly been there. Kossov said that people in Russia knew about Buckingham Palace but would not know about Windsor Castle. I said that surely people in Russia expected Queens to live in castles with turrets, canons and moats and consequently to be much more impressed by the sight of Mr. Gorbachev being received in a real castle than in a modest palace. I really urged him not to make an issue of this. It would be regarded in this country as laughable. Kossov said that he could see the point but the difficulty was convincing people in Moscow. I suggested that he might to devote his considerable diplomatic talents to convincing them. It would be a great mistake to raise this issue.

(C. D. POWELL)

Richard Gozney, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

With great attention and with favourable attitude we consider The Times application for the interview, which, as far as we understand, is supported by the Prime Minister. M.Gorbachev agrees to such an interview to The Times to be given approximately a week before his visit to London. He knows that the Prime Minister positively considered the Izvestia's proposal for an interview. M.Gorbachev would consider it sufficient to have these two political addresses of the leaders of our countries in such influential newspapers in the USSR and the Great Britain to create a favourable atmosphere for the visit and talks with the Prime Minister in London.