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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

8 February 1984

Visit of the President of Serbia

Thank you for your letter of 7 February. I am afraid that it will not be possible for the Prime Minister to receive the President of Serbia during his visit to Britain. Her diary for the week concerned is extremely crowded and we still have the possibility of a visit by President Mitterrand.

E. J. DOLAN

Roger Bone, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Rp



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

7 February 1984

John [unclear]

Visit of the President of Serbia

Mr Nikola Ljubicic, the President of Serbia (one of the constituent Republics of Yugoslavia) will be visiting Britain at the invitation of the FCO from 4 - 10 March. He has asked our Ambassador in Belgrade if he could call on the Prime Minister.

Mr Ljubicic ranks highly in terms of Yugoslav protocol and political influence and has had a distinguished career. He was Minister of Defence from 1967 - 82 and met the Prime Minister during her visit to Yugoslavia in September 1980. Mr Ljubicic visited Britain in 1975. In his present position Mr Ljubicic is one of the most important political figures in Serbia and has made an impressive showing. He is also the most likely candidate for promotion to the Serbia seat on the nine-man Federal Presidency next May, and seems certain to continue to hold a front-rank role in Yugoslav national politics for some years.

There are suggestions that Ljubicic may be one of those in the Yugoslav leadership who harbour doubts about the policy of strengthening links with the West. It might therefore be helpful if he were to hear directly from the Prime Minister about British support for the policies the Yugoslav Prime Minister, Mrs Planinc, is trying to pursue, although the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary would not wish to press the Prime Minister to find time for him if she is heavily committed on the days concerned.

[Handwritten signature]

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary