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TIME MINISTER

POSSIBLE VISIT FROM MR. GORBACHEV

The Soviet Embassy got in touch with me early this morning and read a message to the effect that Mr. Gorbachev accepted in principle your invitation to stop over in the UK on his way over to the Summit in Washington. However, a formal decision would not be taken until after the meeting between Mr. Shultz and Mr. Shevardnadze in Geneva on Monday 23 and Tuesday 24 November (presumably in case there are any hitches which delay a Summit). It was important that there should be no leak in advance about the proposed visit. We could discuss a joint announcement once the formal decision had been taken. The Soviet Ambassador would very much like to call on you briefly later in the week to confirm formally Mr. Gorbachev's acceptance of your invitation. I said that I was sure you do your best to fit him in.

This is good news. It will be important to take great care with the arrangements and get everything exactly right. I will consult you about the details as soon as possible.

C. D. POWELL

21 November 1987

SLHAPS