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Lee

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From the Private Secretary

23 November 1987

Dear Lynn,

US/SOVIET SUMMIT: POSSIBLE VISIT BY MR. GORBACHEV

I wrote at the weekend to report that Mr. Gorbachev had agreed in principle to stop off in the United Kingdom on his way to the US/Soviet Summit in Washington. I also recorded the Prime Minister's wish that the greatest possible care should be taken with the arrangements.

I had a talk with the Prime Minister about the possible visit, and the arrangements, yesterday. You and the Ministry of Defence may find it helpful to know her thinking, even though we are precluded from starting to make arrangements until the Russians have confirmed later this week that Mr. Gorbachev will come.

The Prime Minister would like full honours accorded to Mr. Gorbachev on arrival. This means a substantial guard of honour which he would inspect and playing of the Soviet national anthem. I do not know what the precise position is on protocol, but in the Prime Minister's view we must be prepared to stretch a point. There should be an impressive red carpet.

The arrangements for talks will depend how long Mr. Gorbachev stays, whether there is a lunch, on the composition of his delegation and the Soviet side's own wishes. In principle the Prime Minister would like a session of talks with Mr. Gorbachev alone plus note-takers (while recognising that he might want Mr. Yakovlev and/or Mr. Dobrynin present). The Foreign Secretary might hold parallel talks with Mr. Shevardnadze. There might then be a lunch at which the Soviet side would include all those listed above, together with Mrs. Gorbachev and Marshal Akromeyev.

Particular thought will be needed for the arrangements for Mrs. Gorbachev. Clearly a suite should be set aside for her in the Officer's mess. If there is a kindergarten within the Brize Norton perimeter, she might visit that. Another idea which the Prime Minister has floated is to invite one or two (Russian-speaking) experts on Russian literature and philosophy to meet her, people of the calibre of Sir Isaiah

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Berlin. You will wish to consider this.

The Prime Minister would like Richard Pollack to interpret for her.

The press arrangements will also need care (and discussion with the Soviet side). Clearly there must be television and photographic coverage. The Prime Minister's inclination is against proposing a joint press conference but to aim instead for a joint press statement.

There are also of course a number of technical questions on which MoD will advise such as refuelling facilities, height of steps, closure of Brize Norton to other flights.

I hope that you will find this a help when you come to start work on a programme.

I am copying this letter to John Howe (Ministry of Defence).

Yours sincerely,
C. D. Powell

(C. D. POWELL)

A. C. Galsworthy, Esq., C.M.G.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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