

Copied to: Mr Powell
Mr Ingham
Mr Perks

PRIME MINISTER

VISIT OF MR GORBACHEV

You may be interested to know how the programme is shaping up following the Soviet reconnaissance visit to Brize Norton this morning.

Mr Gorbachev's aeroplane will probably touch down at 11.35 am and taxi to a position immediately outside of the Brize Norton main terminal. The Soviet Ambassador will board the aircraft and bring out Mr and Mrs Gorbachev and Mr Shevardnadze to meet you at the steps. You will be accompanied by Sir Geoffrey Howe and the Station Commander, Group Captain Chris Lumb. Escort along red carpet to dais for Royal Salute and Soviet National Anthem. Mr Gorbachev then invited to inspect guard of honour provided by the Queen's Colour Squadron. Central Band of the RAF present.

There will be a press enclosure constructed in tiers to cover all of the above. No microphones. Also a photographic pool on terminal roof for alternative views.

Convoy of cars to take official party to Officers' Mess (about 400 yards).

After an opportunity for visitors to freshen up you begin tete-a-tete talks with Mr Gorbachev. This would be preceded by photocall - by strict rota - in the room itself. Foreign Ministers have separate bilateral talks in adjoining conference rooms.

NOTE: The Russians say they have only two hours and will depart at 13.35. Sir John Fretwell has asked that this be increased to at least three hours which would allow for lunch.

Depart Officers' Mess by car. A small photographic and television pool to cover.

Arrive beside aircraft. Two stand-up microphones on canopied dais in front of press enclosure for you and Mr Gorbachev to make a few comments and take 2-3 questions, if desired.

Then, a few steps along red carpet, flanked by airmen, to aircraft for farewells and boarding.

Mrs Gorbachev's Programme

Various options were put to the Russians:

- (a) visit Blenheim Palace and received by Duke of Marlborough.
(The Russians made clear they would not use helicopter);
- (b) visit kindergarten and some service wives on the base;
or
visit school just outside of the base;
- (c) expert(s) - historians, authors etc - to meet Mrs Gorbachev on the base. She would be invited to choose the subject.

Option (a) likely to be impracticable if visit is limited to two hours.

The Russians have been invited to give us their news on media facilities for Mrs Gorbachev.

Afterwards

The main airport terminal will be used as a press centre. It will contain a large briefing hall where you could give a press conference if you wanted to. The separate VIP lounge is available for individual interviews.

Comment

Much detail remains to be resolved. The Russians were unclear on many things. They are planning a further reconnaissance visit on Friday 4 December. We shall be pursuing other matters through the Soviet Embassy. But, in principle, content

- (a) with outline programme as it stands?
- (b) with press statement arrangements?

MICHAEL BATES
PRESS OFFICE

27 November 1987



Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

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I understand that the atmosphere of the reconnaissance visit was good. We shall meet the Russians wishes on the points which they raised.

27 November 1987

Dear Charles,

CAP 27/xi

Mr Gorbachev's Stop-over

You may find useful a brief account of the reconnaissance visit by Soviet officials on the Aeroflot flight which passed through Brize Norton this morning. Bessmertnykh, Deputy Foreign Minister and Krychkov, Deputy Head of the KGB, were accompanied by security, protocol and press advisers. John Fretwell and our team from RAF Brize Norton, FCO and the MOD were able to go through with them the proposed arrangements for the visit and show them what was proposed on the ground. Zamyatin, the Soviet Ambassador, was also there.

Overall the Russians gave every appearance of being satisfied with what they saw and heard. John Fretwell impressed upon them the Prime Minister's strong hope that the party would stay longer than two hours, to allow time for a full, relaxed discussion and hospitality of a kind the Prime minister wished to offer. They made no promises except to report, but did not rule out a longer stay or claim that there were major difficulties in the way of a change. I understand that the Soviet Embassy (Mr Kossov) may pursue this with you further. Clearly uncertainty over the length of the stop-over considerably complicates planning, particularly since the proposed lunch must be in doubt if the visit is not extended. Other arrangements, for example how to deal with the press at the end of the visit, also depend on this.

The Russians were unable to provide any guidance on Mrs Gorbachev's wishes and said that they were still awaiting word from Moscow. It was clearly a point of some sensitivity for them. The principals on the Soviet side were interested in the possibility of a helicopter visit to Blenheim (although Zamyatin stressed that this would be conditional on no press presence, referring to his conversation at No 10 yesterday). However the Soviet security experts suggested that, while they had no particular difficulty with a visit outside the base by road, a helicopter trip would be out of the question for security reasons.

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There were three other areas of Soviet concern. On the security front, they stressed that Mr and Mrs Gorbachev must never be without their personal (Soviet) close security protection. This may pose some problems for the short car journeys between the aircraft and the officers' mess, but we have some ideas which were discussed with the Soviet advisers and about which you will no doubt be briefed separately. Otherwise their security consciousness is high (they want five armed bodyguards altogether) but they seemed generally satisfied with our proposals.

On the press side, they had no particular proposals of their own to make, but took a little convincing that the proposed arrangement of the Prime Minister and Mr Gorbachev speaking to the pre-assembled press outside the entrance to the officers' mess, shortly before departure, would not be messy and undignified. We will need to look at this carefully.

The Soviet doctor present was concerned about the adequacy of the medical arrangements in case of emergency. We will need to provide trained medical personnel at the base, and a specially equipped ambulance and helicopter, as well as ensuring that the proper facilities are available at a readily accessible hospital of high standing.

One point which we may need to rethink is the stand-by arrangements in case of bad weather at Brize Norton. The base staff took the view that RAF Lyneham was unlikely to be open if Brize Norton were closed, and suggested that an RAF station in Scotland might be the only feasible alternative if airports in Southern England were fog-bound. This would obviously pose major, possibly insuperable problems. The experts will be looking at this again.

There is likely to be another Soviet reconnaissance visit on 4 December and further specialist visits in addition. We shall of course be staying in close touch with the Soviet Embassy meanwhile.

The Russians did not have precise details of numbers in Mr Gorbachev's party, but suggested a total of 110, excluding aircrew, of whom about 50 would be security staff. They made clear that all the VIPs and main delegation, about 25 in all would arrive on the Gorbachevs' plane at 1135, and leave with them.

I am copying this to John Howe (MOD).

Yours ever, L Parker

(L Parker)
Private Secretary

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Mr Ingham

Supt. Butler

From the Private Secretary

30 November 1987

MR GORBACHEV'S STOP-OVER

Thank you for your letter of 27 November about the reconnaissance visit to Brize Norton by British and Soviet officials to prepare for Mr Gorbachev's visit. The Prime Minister is grateful to all those concerned for the prompt way in which they have tackled the arrangements.

The Prime Minister would want us to meet Russian wishes on close protection for Mr and Mrs Gorbachev, and on stand-by medical arrangements.

As regards Mrs Gorbachev's programme, we must clearly wait to hear what the Russians themselves want. If they opt for Blenheim, we must fall in with their wish for no press presence.

I understand that it is intended to hire Daimlers for the Soviet VIP party. The cars carrying Mr and Mrs Gorbachev (at least) should be from GCS not hire cars and must have government or police drivers. We should also have available at Brize Norton for emergency use the armoured Rolls. The Prime Minister's armoured Daimler and back-up will be there too.

The problem over where the Prime Minister and Mr Gorbachev should say a few words to the press before departure is evidently difficult. But it cannot be done near the aircraft (because of noise levels) and the press cannot be admitted to the Officers' Mess (on security grounds). We must therefore find a way to arrange it on departure from the Officers' Mess. Not having taken part in the reconnaissance, I am not well placed to comment on the detail. But I would have thought it possible to construct a reasonably aesthetic press stand opposite but well away from the Mess entrance, to which the press would be admitted some ten minutes before Mr Gorbachev's departure.

The major outstanding question, apart from Mrs Gorbachev's programme, is the overall length of the stop-over and whether this will leave time for lunch. We should

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continue to press the Russians to extend the time to three hours (settling for two-and-a-half hours if necessary), and for an early decision on this point.

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

C D POWELL

Lyn Parker, Esq.
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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