

PRIME MINISTER

cc Mr. Ingham

MR. GORBACHEV'S VISIT

I wonder if I could put to you a number of points about the programme for Mr. Gorbachev which arise as a result of a call by the Soviet Ambassador at the Foreign Office this morning:

- (i) Mr. Gorbachev very much regrets that he cannot extend the time of the visit beyond the two hours allotted. To get to Brize Norton by 1135 he has to leave Moscow at 5 a.m. local time; and he is similarly constrained at the other end by the need to reach Andrews Air Force Base before the prime time television news in the United States. The Ambassador thinks that, if the timings were to slip 10 or 15 minutes, it could probably be made up in flight.

- (ii) The Ambassador says that Mr. Gorbachev would be content to dispense with protocol. I think there is a careful balance to be struck here, between laying on the trappings of an appropriate welcoming ceremony, which will be important visually, and saving time. If we could dispense with Mr. Gorbachev inspecting the Guard of Honour that will save time. But I think we should still have a substantial honour guard which would present arms once Mr. Gorbachev has shaken hands with you and before he climbs into the car. The question is whether we should also have a military band which plays the Soviet National Anthem at that point. It is of course quite long but my own view is that it would add to the occasion. Agree Guard of Honour salute and Soviet National Anthem but no inspection of Guard of Honour?

- (iii) Mrs. Gorbachev has apparently decided against a discussion with "intellectuals" and does not want/will not be allowed to visit Blenheim. She would however like to visit a local school. This can of course be arranged. The Soviet Ambassador has said that it is hoped that there could be no more than a small press pool for the visit. That may present problems but we shall have to do our best to comply with their wish. Content for Mrs. Gorbachev to visit a local school? (Incidentally I am told the Brize Norton school is not considered worthy of a visit, so it would probably be in a neighbouring village or small town.)
- (iv) The Soviet Ambassador has asked who would accompany Mrs. Gorbachev on this visit. One possibility would, of course, be Mr. Thatcher if he were willing. Another possibility which occurs to me is Angela Rumbold. Which would you prefer?
- (v) According to the Ambassador, Mr. Gorbachev does not wish to confront a large body of press shouting questions on his departure from the Officers' Mess. This is apparently because he does not want to pre-empt his arrival statement to the press in Washington. The Ambassador claims, however, that he would be prepared to join you in answering two or three questions from a small press pool inside the Mess. Subject to Bernard's views, I think that we shall have to go along with this in the interests of doing all we can to accommodate him. Agree?
- (vi) There is also the question how we divide the time available between talks and lunch. The Soviet Ambassador has given his personal view that it would be nice to maintain a short lunch because that would give the Prime Minister an opportunity to meet the other senior members of Mr. Gorbachev's party. With the attenuated arrival ceremony we could probably be

inside the Officers' Mess by 1145, start talks at 1150, talk for one hour and go straight into a light lunch lasting some 40 minutes. The lunch would have to be "plated" to get through in that time. Agree to this scenario? The alternative is to dispense with the lunch and have only the talks, but this might look a bit inhospitable.

- (vii) Assuming you decide to go ahead with the lunch we need to think who should be present at the "top table". I do not think we need match the Soviet visitors one for one and would suggest the following participation:

Soviet side

Mr. Gorbachev
 Mrs. Gorbachev
 Mr. Yakovlev
 Mr. Shevardnadze
 Mr. Dobrynin
 Mr. Kamentsev
 (the Deputy Prime
 who accompanied you
 down to Georgia)
 Marshal Akromeyev
 (Head of the Soviet
 Armed Forces)
 Soviet Ambassador
 Mr. Chernayev
 (Gorbachev's Private
 Secretary)

UK side

Prime Minister
 [Mr. Thatcher]
 Foreign Secretary
 Defence Secretary
 Sir Percy Cradock
 (if you feel it safe
 to have the Chairman
 of JIC)
 Sir John Fieldhouse
 Mr. Powell
 The Station Commander
 (as host)

That would leave other Foreign Office officials to host tables for accompanying Soviet officials. Agree?

(viii) Would you like us to arrange for a small girl to be at the foot of the aircraft steps to present Mrs. Gorbachev with a bouquet?

C.D.P.

Charles Powell

30 November 1987



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

30 November 1987

MR. GORBACHEV'S VISIT

You may find it helpful to have a quick reaction to some of the points which I understand the Soviet Ambassador raised about Mr. Gorbachev's programme when he called on the department earlier today:

- the Prime Minister accepts that Mr. Gorbachev cannot manage more than two hours (although I dare say it will not be a tragedy if he gets away a few moments late).
- the Prime Minister would be reluctant to dispense altogether with protocol on arrival. We could drop an inspection of the Guard of Honour. But she would still like a substantial guard to be mounted. Once Mr. and Mrs. Gorbachev have shaken hands with the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Station Commander, the Guard might present arms and the Soviet National Anthem be played. The party would then proceed straight into the cars and to the Mess.
- the Prime Minister would like a small girl to be at the aircraft steps to present Mrs. Gorbachev with a bouquet. But we can dispense with schoolchildren at the entrance to the Officers' Mess.
- despite the short time, the Prime Minister would like to preserve a lunch as well as the talks. This points to about an hour of talks, starting immediately upon arrival at the Officers' Mess, followed by a light lunch lasting some 35-40 minutes. In these circumstances, lunch would have to be "plated".
- I understand that the Soviet Ambassador remains reluctant to agree that the Prime Minister and Mr. Gorbachev should say a few words to the press as they leave the Officers' Mess, but favours allowing a small press pool into the Mess itself. Bernard Ingham's strong advice is that this would be worse from the Russian point of view. The press pool would try to get in far more questions and the event would be much more difficult to control. The department

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- should therefore go back to the Ambassador with a revised proposal to the effect that a limited press pool of say 50 should be stationed opposite the entrance to the Officers' Mess at a distance of at least 30 yards. There would be microphones on the porch for the Prime Minister and Mr. Gorbachev each to say a few words as they leave the Mess after which the cars would be called forward, with no questions taken.
- as regards Mrs. Gorbachev's programme, we must clearly go along with her wish to visit a school and I understand that there is a suitable one close to Brize Norton. The Prime Minister would like the Education Secretary to escort Mrs. Gorbachev if he is available. He should also of course be consulted about the choice of school. He would be welcome to attend the lunch. The question of press coverage for Mrs. Gorbachev's visit is going to be particularly difficult. Bernard Ingham advises that there will be enormous press interest. We shall have to ask the police to place a very effective cordon round the school and admit only a small press pool.
- for the lunch, the Prime Minister envisages a top table with separate tables for other accompanying officials. Subject to your advice those at the top table on the Soviet side would be:

Mr. Gorbachev
Mrs. Gorbachev
Mr. Yakovlev
Mr. Shevardnadze
Mr. Dobrynin
Mr. Kamentsev
Marshal Akromeyev
Soviet Ambassador
Mr. Chernayev

On the UK side, the Prime Minister would envisage, in addition to herself, Mr. Thatcher (although it is not yet certain that he will be present), the Foreign Secretary, the Defence Secretary, the Education Secretary (assuming that he is able to escort Mrs. Gorbachev to the school), Sir John Fieldhouse, the Station Commander and me. She would be grateful if senior Foreign Office officials could be available to look after the other Soviet guests at lunch.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Howe (Ministry of Defence).

(CHARLES POWELL)

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