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*From the Private Secretary*

8 June 1988

SUBJECT CC MASTER

US/SOVIET SUMMIT: MESSAGE FROM MR GORBACHEV

The Prime Minister received Ambassador Grinevsky and the Soviet Ambassador in London this evening to take delivery of a personal message from Mr Gorbachev about the recent US/Soviet Summit. The text of the message is enclosed.

Ambassador Grinevsky said the message was intended as a reply to that sent by the Prime Minister to Mr Gorbachev before the Summit. He had also been asked to convey Mr Gorbachev's personal gratitude for the Prime Minister's second message following the Summit. He had been very pleased to receive that.

Ambassador Grinevsky went on to make a number of comments about the Summit, few of which added significantly to the message or to the accounts which we have already received. He put particular stress on the change which was taking place in the whole nature of Soviet/American relations. He gave the impression that a START Agreement was within reach and could, in the Soviet view, be completed before the end of President Reagan's term of office. Mr Gorbachev would be interested to know the Prime Minister's assessment of American intentions: were they ready to sign a START Agreement this year? The Prime Minister said that she thought that President Reagan would be ready to sign an agreement provided he was satisfied that it was a good one. In a further exchange about the situation in the Middle East, Ambassador Grinevsky said that the Americans had raised the need to control the spread of ballistic missile technology in the area. It had been agreed that there would be discussions between Soviet and American experts in September.

The Prime Minister picked up the reference towards the end of Mr Gorbachev's message confirming his intention to take up the invitation to visit the United Kingdom. Ambassador Grinevsky said that Mr Gorbachev would be very flexible about timing. He would welcome an early view from the Prime Minister about the new American Administration. Particularly during the inter-regnum at the turn of the year, it would be important to avoid an impression of a vacuum in East/West relations. That would be one possible time for a visit,

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although it might equally be later. It was agreed that I would let the Soviet Ambassador have details of times which the Prime Minister could and could not manage so that he could then give Mr Gorbachev some indication of possible dates. The Ambassador will then come to see the Prime Minister in early July to report on the outcome of the Party Conference and convey any further thoughts about the visit (although I suspect that it may be the early Autumn before we get any clear steer on dates).

We are telling the press that the Prime Minister has received a substantive message about the Summit from Mr Gorbachev covering all the main issues raised there in some detail. We shall also say that the message confirmed Mr Gorbachev's interest in paying a visit to the United Kingdom and that dates will be discussed once the Soviet Party Conference is over.

I am copying this letter and enclosure to Brian Hawtin (Ministry of Defence) and Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

C. D. POWELL

Lyn Parker, Esq.  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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