

PRIME MINISTER

cc. Mr. Ingham

VISIT OF MR. GORBACHEV

I was telephoned this evening by Miss Hella Pick of the Guardian who said that she had just been told by the Soviet Ambassador that Mr. Gorbachev was likely to visit the United Kingdom very soon, possibly before the end of the year, and that he was discussing dates in December and January with us. She was planning to run this story in tomorrow's Guardian.

I said that I was surprised to hear this. We were expecting to hear soon from Mr. Gorbachev about dates for a possible visit but had no inkling yet when they would be and the Soviet Ambassador had not in fact put any proposals to us.

The Soviet Ambassador says that he has not spoken directly to Miss Pick. But in reply to an enquiry to the Embassy, he authorised his press counsellor to say that dates for a visit to the UK were 'on a priority list' for Gorbachev.

C. D. POWELL

25 October 1988

SL3BES