

Mr Hemans, Soviet Dept

Invitation to The Queen to visit the Soviet Union

The following records the Secretary of State's account of his conversation with the Prime Minister on this subject this afternoon. It will not be minuted by Mr Powell. On the Secretary of State's instruction, this minute is being given only a limited circulation. It is personal to those to whom it is addressed. No 10 do not want any follow-up action at all at this stage.

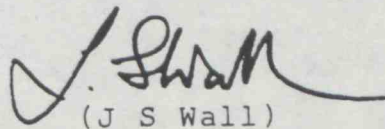
The Secretary of State told the Prime Minister that we were not operating on the assumption that Anglo/Soviet relations were irreversibly on an upward trend. We had envisaged a general warming, eg visits by Prince Edward as Patron of the National Youth Theatre in 1989 and by the Princess Royal for British Week in Kiev in 1990. By then, we should know whether the idea of a State Visit in 1992 or 1993 would be advisable.

If Mr Gorbachev did issue an invitation to The Queen to visit the Soviet Union, the Prime Minister would be asked about it at her press conference. She might speak on the following lines:

"The Queen thanked President Gorbachev for his invitation for which She was most grateful. She told him that Her programme was decided upon a long time in advance but that She hoped it would be possible in due course for Her to visit the Soviet Union."

We would not need to say whether this constituted acceptance in principle or not. It might be necessary to make clear that The Queen would of course look to advice from Her Ministers as to when a visit to the Soviet Union should be made. There were already half a dozen outstanding invitations from other Heads of State.

The Prime Minister indicated her assent to the kind of formulation proposed by the Secretary of State. I expect to revert to this subject with Mr Powell in due course.


(J S Wall)

23 November 1988