



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH  
28 November 1988

*File Minister*  
*This seems quite*  
*a reasonable*  
*package for a short*  
*visit. Content?*

*Dear Charles, CCF 20/11*

Gorbachev Visit: Bilateral Relations

Most of the visit will be devoted to talks on a wide range of international issues. Press attention is likely to focus on these and on the question of an invitation for The Queen. But we also need to consider what we should seek to get out of the visit in bilateral terms. Clearly the widening range of contacts between governments and peoples and the increasing closeness of our dialogue should be reflected in what we say privately and publicly. We shall also want to press hard as usual on human rights. But the Foreign Secretary is keen that we should have some progress on bilateral substance to point up in other areas too, not least to ensure that unfavourable comparisons are not drawn in this respect with, for example, Chancellor Kohl's recent visit to Moscow.

The shortness of the visit and the shortness of time for its preparation mean that we cannot expect to launch major new ideas. In any case most areas of possible practical cooperation are now covered in one way or another. But we have identified the following possibilities for new agreements, increased activity, or public highlighting:

Agreements

- (a) A renegotiated bilateral MOU on visa procedures has recently been agreed. We propose that this should be signed by the Foreign Secretary and Mr Shevardnadze during the visit. Much of it reflects existing practice, but it also streamlines the process considerably for priority applicants, and should help in particular to ensure a better and quicker service for businessmen, resident and visiting, thus defusing long-standing complaints from the British business community.
- (b) Investment Promotion and Protection: we and other Western countries have been negotiating with the Russians for some time. Agreement (on a largely UK text) seems reasonably close, and we had hoped signature might be possible during the Gorbachev visit. It would have been nice to beat others to it, the FRG having failed to achieve this for the Kohl visit. But the Russians are dragging their feet. We shall continue to press. In any case we should be able to say that agreement is very near.
- (c) Nuclear Safety: again negotiations have been continuing for some time, with the aim of learning the lessons of Chernobyl. We are anxious to avoid repeating the FRG mistake of rushing into an unsatisfactory agreement (not ensuring



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exchange of the right information on the right nuclear installations) just for the Kohl visit. But the Soviet attitude has in any case shifted towards us recently, and there may be some pressure on their side to make progress for the Gorbachev visit. It is most unlikely that such a technical and detailed agreement could be ready for actual signature during the visit, but with luck we may be able to say that agreement on the basic texts has been reached. We are putting pressure on the Russians accordingly.

Areas of cooperation

(i) Environment: the Joint Environment Protection Agreement (JEPA) was suspended after the invasion of Afghanistan, and has not been revived. It had proved a considerable burden on limited DOE resources, to no good British purpose. But Soviet concern about the destruction they have wrought on their own environment is now acute, and Mr Gorbachev is very likely to raise the issue. We are in touch with the Department of the Environment about how the Prime Minister might respond positively, but in such a way as to avoid a repeat of the previous experience and undue entanglement with vague - and possibly unhelpful - Soviet proposals for a global environmental security strategy. This could be presented as a modest step forward. The Prime Minister may also wish to raise the planned international conference on the ozone layer and seek Soviet agreement to attend.

*Not much  
here*

(ii) Agriculture: as the Prime Minister knows, we are pursuing the idea of further pilot projects in the agro-industrial area. Agriculture is a prime Soviet headache and they are particularly interested in the British experience. There is already an extensive programme of cooperation in areas of mutual interest, involving both MAFF and the private sector, but there may be scope to increase this further if new resources can be found. Greater agricultural training through the British Council is one possibility.

(iii) Culture: the British Council are looking to expand their activities in the Soviet Union and help redress the imbalance between the explosion of Soviet events in this country and the relative paucity of our own efforts there (not helped by the currency problems and continuing Soviet bureaucratic unhelpfulness and incompetence). We plan to offer for the first time scholarships for Soviet students to study in Britain under the existing FCO scheme, provided we can have a say in the selection process (this would be in addition to the top-up funds we have provided for Soviet students at Oxford sponsored by the Soros Foundation). Expansion of English language teaching may also be on the cards. It would be particularly helpful if Mr Gorbachev's visit could also be used to extract a promise that we will be allowed to establish a Cultural Centre in Moscow separate from the Embassy, and with genuinely free access for Soviet citizens. This will be



expensive, and the Russians are likely to insist on reciprocity (which could have implications for the ceiling on the official Soviet community here). But such a centre could play a considerable role in projecting Britain's image and values inside the Soviet Union, and a general blessing would be a useful step forward. Several Western countries are already in the same queue, and the number of good sites in central Moscow is limited.

(iv) Science: Scientific contacts are mushrooming but major projects are rare. It may be clear by the time of the visit whether the project to put a British JET-X instrument on a Soviet space mission known as Spectrum-X is likely to run. There is a separate private sector initiative (led by Jardines) to send a British astronaut to the MIR space station, which may also be public by the time of the visit. But the Foreign Secretary is doubtful of how far it would be appropriate to suggest government support for this.

(v) Trade: The opportunity could be taken to give a boost to the planned British-Soviet Trade Month in Moscow in April, if we have by then resolved doubts about whether this British Soviet Chamber of Commerce sponsored event is likely to be worthwhile. Two or three significant contracts could just be announced during the visit. It would also be useful to have high-level agreement, which could be announced, that a British trade centre could be built in Moscow. A private sector consortium led by Carrolls is already negotiating with the Moscow City Council for a site for this £100 million project. Care will be needed to ensure that the Russians do not link this to a reciprocal Soviet trade centre in London (although it is doubtful whether we could stop them building a centre if they wanted to).

(vi) Information: the MOU signed during the Prime Minister's visit is slowly beginning to bear fruit, the latest example being a wide-ranging cooperation agreement between the BBC and Soviet State Television and Radio. But there is a lot more to be done in gaining access for British information in the Soviet Union. Two ideas in need of a push are more British newspapers freely on sale (if the currency problem can be solved) and a British bookshop (which could be linked to a Cultural Centre in due course).

(vii) Miscellaneous:

- with luck the management training pilot package on which we have been working will be set up by the visit: a short course at the London Business School for 20 senior Soviet managers. This could helpfully be publicised, and perhaps put in the context of a continuing programme linked to our wish to help make the Soviet economy more market-orientated and able to fit into the world economy.



- the Prime Minister and Mr Gorbachev could usefully re-endorse the programme of school exchanges agreed during Mr Baker's recent visit.
- a high-level boost could be given to the proposed British week in Kiev in 1990. A major exhibition about modern British life is planned. The Prime Minister might even suggest to Mr Gorbachev that he should consider visiting it and that she might meet him there. (Gorbachev went to a major Italian trade exhibition in Moscow during de Mita's recent visit).
- If Mr Yazov comes to London and meets Mr Younger the defence dialogue will have been effectively restarted (although we may not want to make too much of this while the Russians have still not finally left Afghanistan).

Not all of these ideas will come to anything, but the Foreign Secretary believes there is the making of a respectable bilateral outcome here, which could be presented well to the press. The Prime Minister might consider including in any press conference she gives a passage on how well bilateral relations are going, giving examples drawn from the above list as appropriate. Meanwhile it would be helpful to know if he has particular views on any of the points above.

I am copying this letter to Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office), Roger Bright (DOE), Neil Thornton (DTI), Shirley Stagg (MAFF), Alex Allan (Treasury), Brian Hawtin (MOD), Peter Smith (DTI) and Tom Jeffery (DES).

*Howes*  
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