

CONFIDENTIAL

FM FCO

TO IMMEDIATE UKDEL RHODES

TELNO 20

OF 021900Z DECEMBER 88

DIST: PS / PRIME MINISTER  
PS / S.O.S.

FOLLOWING FOR PS/PRIME MINISTER AND PS/SECRETARY OF STATE  
PRESIDENT GORBACHEV'S VISIT: CHANGE OF PROGRAMME

1. KOSSOV OF THE SOVIET EMBASSY HAS JUST TELEPHONED HEAD OF SOVIET DEPARTMENT TO SAY THAT MR GORBACHEV HAS INSTRUCTED THEM TO SAY THAT WITH MUCH REGRET HE MUST ASK THE PRIME MINISTER TO AGREE TO DROP THE PROPOSED SHORT ROUND OF TALKS ON THE MORNING OF 14 DECEMBER. HE WAS VERY GRATEFUL TO THE PRIME MINISTER FOR HAVING AGREED TO MOVE THOSE TALKS FROM DOWNING STREET TO KENSINGTON PALACE GARDENS. HE NOW FINDS, HOWEVER, THAT PRESSURE OF WORK WILL REQUIRE HIM TO DEVOTE THE PROPOSED TIME TO OTHER MATTERS. KOSSOV SAID THAT THE EMBASSY DID NOT KNOW WHAT THESE OTHER MATTERS WERE BUT ASSUMED THAT IT MEANT WORKING ON INCOMING TELEGRAMS ON OTHER BUSINESS INCLUDING SOVIET DOMESTIC POLICY. MR GORBACHEV HAD ASKED THE EMBASSY TO SAY THAT HE HOPED THAT NEVERTHELESS THE TIME ALLOCATED FOR TALKS, THE WORKING LUNCH, THE DINNER AT NO 10, AND THE POSSIBILITIES OFFERED DURING THE BUCKINGHAM PALACE LUNCH AND EVEN IN THE CAR ON THE WAY TO THE AIRPORT WOULD PROVE SUFFICIENT. IT WAS HIS INTENTION TO USE THE TIME TO MAXIMUM EFFECT.

2. HEMANS UNDERTOOK TO CONVEY THIS TO THE PRIME MINISTER IMMEDIATELY BUT SAID THAT HE WAS SURE THAT WHILST SHE WOULD BE SORRY NOT TO HAVE THIS EXTRA OPPORTUNITY, THAT SHE WOULD UNDERSTAND THE REASONS FOR HIS DECISION.

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