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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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6th December 1988

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*To day's initiative
will have to be taken
into account. This
lecture could upset the
visit - unless very
carefully drafted. They
will think we
are afraid of it*

Prime Minister

Dear Charles,

VISIT OF MR GORBACHEV

*CDP
9/xii*

The Prime Minister may wish to be aware of Mr Hamilton's planned participation in a meeting arranged by Families for Defence in the House of Lords on 13th December.

Mr Hamilton had agreed some time ago to give a lecture entitled "The Continuing Military Threat," and Families for Defence have already issued invitations. The presence of Mr Gorbachev in London that evening obviously creates a risk that Mr Hamilton's remarks will be given a greater prominence than might otherwise have been the case. Peter Hitchens of the Daily Express is already showing interest in the event. We judge however that the political embarrassment would be greater if Mr Hamilton were now to withdraw from the event.

Accordingly, the draft of the lecture is being given very careful consideration. It welcomes President Gorbachev's initiatives but contrasts them with the maintenance of the Soviet Union's overwhelming military superiority (as shown by the NATO data initiative); and concludes that the major danger would arise if the West failed to maintain strong defences until arms control agreements have been concluded. The Foreign Office are, of course, being given the opportunity to comment on the text.

Yours sincerely,
John Colston.
(J P COLSTON)
Private Secretary

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