



10 DOWNING STREET

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From the Private Secretary

19 December 1988

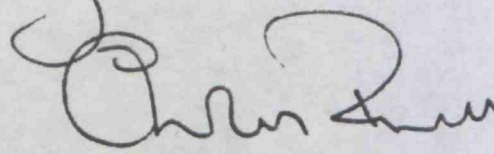
See Steiner,

VISIT OF MR. GORBACHEV

Mr. Kossov of the Soviet Embassy telephoned me in confidence today to enquire whether the Prime Minister was likely to be abroad in the second half of January. He did not have any formal instructions to pursue the question of dates for Mr. Gorbachev's visit then, but had been asked to establish whether the Prime Minister was likely to be available in that period. With things as they were in Moscow, it might well be that we would not get a formal proposal to reinstate the visit until on or after 1 January.

I said that the Prime Minister would not be abroad during January, although not all dates in the second half of the month were necessarily convenient either for her or for The Queen. The sooner we knew what Mr. Gorbachev had in mind the better. Although a great deal of work had been done on the original programme, we should still need a reasonable amount of time to gear it up again. Ideally we would like to know before Christmas, or at least by 31 December, if Mr. Gorbachev was likely to suggest dates in January. Mr. Kossov said that he would do his best.

I have informed Sir William Heseltine of this.

Yours sincerely,

 C. D. POWELL

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 Foreign and Commonwealth Office