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Prime Minister

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From the Private Secretary

29 December 1988

MR. GORBACHEV'S VISIT

I saw Mr. Kossov from the Soviet Embassy yesterday evening. He said that decisions about Mr. Gorbachev's travel plans were imminent. The dates being considered for the visit to the United Kingdom were 22, 23 and 24 January. The visit would be in association with one to Finland. The visit to Cuba would be dropped for the time being. Some in Moscow were arguing, because of the very difficult situation at home, it would not be appropriate for Mr. Gorbachev to travel abroad at present, but Kossov thought this view was unlikely to prevail. However it seemed likely that Mr. Gorbachev would leave Yakovlev behind to look after things in his absence. I said that the sooner we knew definitely when Mr. Gorbachev was likely to come the better.

(CHARLES POWELL)

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