

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

MR. GORBACHEV'S VISIT: INTERVIEWS

The Russians have backed out of Mr. Gorbachev's interview with the Times on the grounds that he is now giving a speech at Guildhall and does not wish to repeat himself. We have tried to argue that there was a clear agreement you would give an interview to Izvestia if he would do the Times but to no avail. Personally, I can see Mr. Gorbachev's point. Moreover, the Russians are furious with the Times for a most distasteful cartoon a week or so ago which depicted Lenin wearing a Nazi uniform. The Times will inevitably be disappointed but they are partly to blame.

Agree to go ahead with the Izvestia interview all the same? (Incidentally, the Russians tell me that your Ogonyok interview has just come out and is regarded in Moscow as a very good read!)

Yes

C.D.T.

CHARLES POWELL

18 March 1989