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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

21 March 1989

Dear Kenneth,

It was very good of you to let me have the further information about Soviet attitudes before Mr Gorbachev's visit. The insights you obtain are always fascinating and I hope that you will continue to keep me informed in this way.

The visit comes at a very important time and I am confident it will be a great success.

Yours ever

Thatcher

Kenneth Warren, Esq., M.P.

SM



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

CONFIDENTIAL

17 March 1989

*My dear Margaret,*

*U8/3*

*Map* Mr Gorbachev's visit

Further to a letter which I sent to Charles Powell on the 3 March and his reply of the 7th, I am receiving, as on previous occasions, interesting inputs from the Soviets. I hope these will be of help to you.

1. I am delighted to pass on the flattering comment that you are seen as the core of influence in the West. Furthermore, the UK is seen as holding this position until Mr Bush asserts his Presidency. Messrs Kohl and Mitterand are seen primarily as levers to exercise influence in the EEC and NATO and as financial credit sources.
2. The Soviets have reviewed President Reagan's authority in relation to members of his Cabinet and Congress and feel there was more sound than substance. They are concerned that President Bush may not be able to deliver what he negotiates because he has not got the support of Congress. (They regard the John Tower Hearings as indicative of a Congress who will put raw domestic politics as a priority before bi-partisan defence or foreign policy.)
3. The Soviets are nervous about the new U.S. Administration. Mr Gorbachev wishes to secure stability in his relations with the West so that he can concentrate on domestic problems which are producing conflict with the authority of the State. The traditional Russian concern about vulnerability in defence is reappearing, composed of two segments, firstly, military opposition to force reductions and secondly, a belief that our detection and protection systems against conventional weapons are approaching points where NATO could neutralise some of their key defences. (This is certainly true of certain emerging US capabilities.)

Coupled with the desperate need Mr Gorbachev has to release more carpenters, plumbers and electricians from his Forces, there appears to be therefore a good opportunity to push him further than he offers on force reductions. However, his predilection of making dramatic announcements about force reductions (which he is forced to take anyway) and then seeking to sell them to us as something for which he expects instant reciprocity, intending to put us on the defensive, is likely in his inventory of argument.



- 2 -

4. The Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs appears to be regaining the authority it lost in the closing days of Gromyko, but Gorbachev is as keen as ever on direct political contact rather than going through the diplomatic machine. (They are anxious to find out if you feel the same way and if our new Ambassador in Moscow is 'your man' or Geoffrey's?)

5. Although promised some trade shopping list items these have not appeared. However, I draw your attention to a paragraph which I obtained, but which Mr Zamyatin omitted from a speech he delivered to the British Soviet-Parliamentary Group in the House on the 1 February. Its exclusion was either a courtesy to us, or something the Soviets may use at your meeting. The paragraph read as follows:

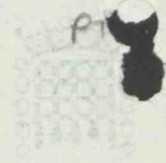
"After the Armenian disaster Britain and other countries helped so magnificently. Armenia started reconstruction. Immediately Germans, Italians and Japanese were all over the place with catalogues chasing new business".

6. The Soviets are finding it difficult to determine if there is a Western policy towards them and, if so, what it is and where they are within it.

If I receive more information I will pass it to you immediately.

*Yours sincerely,*  
*Ken*

Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP  
The Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1



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