



SUBJECT CC MASTER

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

5 April 1989

*From the Private Secretary*PRESIDENT GORBACHEV'S VISIT

The Prime Minister had a short talk with Mr. Gorbachev immediately after his arrival at Heathrow, which they continued in the car on the way to the Soviet Embassy and on arrival there. Mr. Gorbachev was in a cheerful mood and evidently pleased to see the Prime Minister again.

Soviet Elections

The Prime Minister and Mr. Gorbachev talked about the consequences of the recent elections in the Soviet Union. Mr. Gorbachev observed that many different interpretations were being put on the results but he was broadly satisfied. He pointed particularly to the high turnout. The Prime Minister said firmly that she judged the results to be positive.

Namibia

The Prime Minister introduced the subject of Namibia, giving an account of her visit there on 1 April and the subsequent problems. SWAPO's incursion over the border from Angola was a challenge to the authority of the United Nations. Mr. Gorbachev said that everyone should work for implementation of the Agreement on Namibia's independence. He had seen the statement which the Prime Minister had made in Windhoek and thoroughly approved of it. He repeated that the most important task was to get the Agreement implemented.

Afghanistan

Mr. Gorbachev said that he hoped for Britain's help over Afghanistan to match the help which we were seeking from the Soviet Union in other areas of the world. The Prime Minister said that Mr. Gorbachev had fulfilled scrupulously his promise to withdraw Soviet troops from Afghanistan. Now the Afghan people had to be left to sort out their own problems. No one else could choose a government for them. Mr. Gorbachev said that it was not a question of choosing their government but of helping the different parties in Afghanistan to achieve reconciliation. The Prime Minister said that the Afghans had their own way of doing things and should be left to get on with it.



Cuba

Mr. Gorbachev gave an account of his visit to Cuba, speaking appreciatively of Castro, whom he described as a great intellectual. The Prime Minister said that she was not such a fan of Castro's, nor of Cuban activities in Africa. They had troops in a large number of countries in Africa and Latin America and were responsible for subversion in Central America. Mr. Gorbachev said that the Cubans were pulling out of Angola and Ethiopia. Any way, surely the United Kingdom was present in quite a large number of countries. The Prime Minister said that was different: we had historical ties and were not promoting subversion. It was quite clear that perestroika had not yet reached Cuba. Mr. Gorbachev suggested that he and the Prime Minister should discuss Central America the following morning.

The Prime Minister commented subsequently that Mr. Gorbachev was evidently bewitched by Castro.

Mozambique

The Prime Minister gave an account of her visit to Southern Africa, concentrating in particular on Mozambique and her meeting at Nyanga with President Chissano and President Mugabe. It had been a unique event with the three of them watching British forces training Mozambican soldiers armed with Kalashnikovs. Mr. Gorbachev saw the funny side of this and went on to ask who was behind RENAMO. The Prime Minister said this was not clear, though they seemed to get some support from groups in South Africa and possibly Portugal. They were a very cruel organisation. Mr. Gorbachev asked whether President Mugabe was prepared to help achieve reconciliation in Mozambique. The Prime Minister said she had the impression he was reluctant. She was not sure why. Meanwhile, President Chissano was pressing for more training for his troops which we were ready to provide.

This account is based on the Prime Minister's recollection of the conversation in the car. When we arrived at the Soviet Embassy there was a short and convivial gathering including Mr. Shevardnadze, Mr. Yakovlev and Mr. Kamentsev. It turned into a sort of 1984 Chequers Old Boys' Reunion, with reminiscences about that meeting and the Prime Minister's visit to Moscow. Toasts were drunk to the success of Mr. and Mrs. Gorbachev's visit. The Prime Minister then announced firmly that the Gorbachevs must be tired - which was certainly not apparent - and left the Soviet Embassy at about 0020.

I am copying this letter to Brian Hawtin (Ministry of Defence) and to Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office). I should be grateful if it could have a restricted distribution only.

(C. D. POWELL)

J. S. Wall, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.