



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

6 April 1989

Dear Charles,

Gorbachev's Visit: Arrival and Departure

Thank you for your letter of 6 April.

We are very sorry indeed that the arrangements at Heathrow Airport for Mr Gorbachev's arrival fell so far short of what was required. The specific problem last night was that, despite their specific and repeated assurances that there would be no more than five in their receiving line, the Soviet side insisted on increasing their numbers to ten, plus interpreters and a proliferation of Soviet security representatives. This should not in itself have caused a problem, since it had been clearly agreed with the Soviet Ambassador in advance that he would marshal his party and make the proper introductions to the Prime Minister and Mr Gorbachev. This, as you know, he failed to do. But with hindsight, we and the British Airports Authority are very conscious that we should have made our own arrangements to deal with every contingency.

To prevent any repetition tomorrow, Sir Patrick Wright has held a meeting this evening with all those concerned here; and has agreed the following arrangements. The Prime Minister and Mr Gorbachev's party will arrive, as scheduled, at the VIP Suite from Windsor at 1445. They will remain briefly in the VIP Lounge while the rest of the suite travelling on Mr Gorbachev's aircraft embark, with the exception of the three Soviet Ministers and the Russian Ambassador and his wife. Mr Robin Baxendale, Head of the Special Facilities Unit of Heathrow Airport Limited, will escort the Soviet dignitaries mentioned above and Sir Geoffrey Howe (who will be coming from Windsor) to the foot of the aircraft steps.

/Mr Baxendale

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Mr Baxendale will then return to the VIP Suite and conduct the Prime Minister, accompanied by Mr and Mrs Gorbachev and Mr Thatcher (together with their interpreters), down the red carpet. On reaching the end of the carpet Guard, the Prime Ministerial group will turn right to the lectern and microphones for the final statements to the press. On concluding the press statements, the General Secretary and the Prime Minister will return to the red carpet and take up position facing the band for the playing of the Soviet National Anthem. They will then proceed up the carpet to bid farewell to the British and Soviet delegations. (The three Soviet Ministers have specifically asked to say farewell to the Prime Minister at this point. They have been placed next to the aircraft steps so that they can then go straight on board.) The Prime Minister and Mr Thatcher will then themselves bid farewell to Mr and Mrs Gorbachev. I enclose an explanatory diagram of the arrangements.

We are communicating these arrangements to the Soviet Embassy and will stress the paramount need for them to be respected. Representatives of the FCO (Government Hospitality Fund and Protocol Department) will be at the airport well in advance. Nevertheless the experience of last night underlines the need to alert the Soviet Ambassador or a senior member of Mr Gorbachev's party to the importance of keeping to the agreed arrangements. We should be grateful, therefore, if you would yourself speak to Zamyatin or Chernyshev, the Chief of Protocol to emphasise the importance the Prime Minister attaches to these arrangements being adhered to. It is obviously particularly important that only the three Ministers and Mr and Mrs Zamyatin (plus interpreters and essential security) wait at the foot of the aircraft steps; and that the representatives of the Soviet media (ie TV and photographers) should not be allowed to proceed in front of the Prime Ministerial party along the red carpet.

The officer in overall charge of these arrangements will be Brigadier Alan Cowan, Secretary of the Government Hospitality Fund. He will be assisted by Mr Robert Chase, Mr Clive Almond and Colonel Peter Durrant of Protocol Department.

John, Stephen Wall

(J S Wall)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

[I did:
↳ agree]



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From the Private Secretary

7 April 1989

Dear Stephen.

MR. GORBACHEV'S DEPARTURE ARRANGEMENTS

The Prime Minister was most grateful for the admirable arrangements made for Mr. Gorbachev's departure from London this afternoon. She commented that it shows what can be done when there is someone clearly in charge who is able to give precise guidance and to ensure that his instructions are followed. She hopes that this practice will be followed in future. Meanwhile she would like her gratitude conveyed to those responsible.

Yours sincerely,
Chris [unclear]

C D POWELL

Stephen Wall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

6 April 1989

From the Private Secretary

ARRIVAL OF MR. GORBACHEV

The Prime Minister thought that the arrangements made for the arrival of Mr. Gorbachev last night were utterly inadequate. Nobody appeared to know what to do. There were no arrangements for introducing Mr. Gorbachev to those assembled. No-one was apparently in charge. Mr. Gorbachev was himself reduced to asking plaintively at one stage: isn't anyone going to tell us what to do? The Prime Minister has visited a large number of countries and has commented that she has never seen such inadequate arrangements anywhere in the world. In particular she wonders why a senior member of Protocol Department was not on hand to take charge of the arrival ceremony as is the case everywhere else in the world.

The Prime Minister wishes these deficiencies to be remedied immediately and certainly in time for Mr. Gorbachev's departure tomorrow. She would like a full written account of what is to be done to ensure that the departure is dignified and well ordered by 10.00 am tomorrow 7 April please.

This minute is written in strong terms but certainly not as strong as those in which the Prime Minister has expressed herself. I suggest that it should not be circulated but the points in it should be drawn immediately and forcefully to the attention of those with responsibilities in this area. I am however sending a copy to the Permanent Under Secretary.

(C. D. POWELL)

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