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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

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The Minister  
20/9/89

John Charles

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Soviet Union: Monitoring Human Rights

The Prime Minister may be interested to know that we are planning to send a small team of officials and outside experts to the Soviet Union in the autumn to examine the human rights situation. This will be an extension of the six-monthly bilateral talks on human rights which we already have with the Russians.

The team will be aiming not just to meet officials but to get out to see how the Soviet system actually works in practice in various human rights fields (such as law, journalism, psychiatry, religion etc) and to assess the degree to which reform is really having an impact on the freedom of the individual. The evidence gathered during the trip will be particularly useful as a contribution to our eventual decision whether or not to attend the proposed human rights conference in Moscow in 1991.

The visit will take place in the week beginning 9 October. The team going out to the USSR will be headed by David Ratford (the Under-Secretary in charge of relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe), and will include two MPs, Sir Bernard Braine and Mr Peter Archer, and five outside experts covering the relevant fields.

Yours ever

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Private Secretary

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