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A: SOVIET

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From the Private Secretary

15 May 1990

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION

I have seen the draft programme which has emerged for the Russian visit and have a number of comments on which it would be helpful to have your views and those of Sir Rodric Braithwaite:

- we are awaiting a Soviet response to our proposal that the Prime Minister should meet senior military officers while in the Soviet Union. There are few gaps in the programme when this would be possible, but I still attach a high priority to it. One possibility would be to hold a meeting in place of the media interviews at 1730 on Friday 8 June. Alternatives might be over breakfast on the Friday or Saturday (the first being possible only if the Russians agree to it taking place before the start of the formal programme).

- I think it would be a mistake for the Prime Minister not to see dissidents or Jewish refuseniks as she has in the past. It would suggest that we now felt all was well in the Soviet Union. Again a breakfast meeting on the Friday or Saturday seems the only possibility.

- I think we must have a proper Soviet media event. Given that the programme is so tight, it might be best to arrange for an interview here in London before the Prime Minister's departure. But I think we would have to get an interviewer (or two) sent from the Soviet Union: the Soviet television representative here is altogether too respectful for a good interview.

- the Kiev programme obviously depends in good part on whether Mr. Gorbachev comes for all or part of it. But it is extremely full. If we had to drop something, I would have thought the monastery was probably the least important.

- I am also concerned at the length of time that the Prime Minister is expected to be at the opera. Unless Mr. Gorbachev was also attending, would it not be possible for the Prime Minister to be present only for the last act,

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and the reception afterwards (this was what she did in similar circumstances in Brisbane in 1988)? We could then use the time either for a Soviet media event or simply to recuperate.

I should be grateful for the Department's views and those of the Ambassador in Moscow.

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