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From the Private Secretary

Prime Minister

I think that  
you will find

6 February 1987

thing of interest.

CDP  
6/2.

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO MOSCOW

I had lunch today with Mr. Kossov of the Soviet Embassy, to discuss the Prime Minister's visit to Moscow.

Mr. Kossov said that his Ambassador had recently been in Moscow for the Central Committee Plenum and had taken the opportunity to discuss the Prime Minister's forthcoming visit with a number of highly-placed Soviet officials. As a result, he had a number of personal thoughts which he wished to convey.

Reading from manuscript notes, Mr. Kossov said that Mr. Renton's recent references, in a speech in his constituency, to the Prime Minister's visit had caused unfavourable comment in Moscow. The impression had been given that the visit was seen simply in internal political terms. Very confidentially he could tell me that there had been remonstrations from another political party in this country. The Soviet Foreign Ministry's spokesman had issued a statement setting out the Soviet attitude to the visit. I said that the Prime Minister had accepted a pressing invitation from Mr. Gorbachev to go to Moscow, to discuss a number of international issues. This had nothing to do with politics in this country.

Mr. Kossov continued (still reading from his notes) that there was considerable interest in Moscow in the political substance of the visit. He could tell me that consideration was being given to a further US/Soviet summit. This would need careful preparation. It would be better not to have a summit than to have another failure. But in the eyes of the Soviet leaders, the Prime Minister's visit assumed a particular importance in deciding whether a further summit would be worthwhile. They understood perfectly well that she was not a mediator between the Soviet Union and the United States. She had made that clear to Mr. Gorbachev at Chequers. Nonetheless she was very well informed about American policies and intentions, and could play a key role in helping the Soviet leaders reach their judgments. They would be particularly interested in the Prime Minister's views on SDI, on the whole issue of strategic defence and the ABM Treaty. The Soviet leadership continued to attach great significance

to her 1984 speech in which she had spoken of the importance of avoiding an arms race in space.

Mr. Kossov went on that the Soviet leadership wondered what political issues the Prime Minister would want to discuss. In their view, the focus should be on arms control, both nuclear and conventional, and on bilateral issues, particularly trade. They hoped that the discussion would lead to useful conclusions. Of course the Soviet Union stood by the positions which it had taken in Reykjavik and the Prime Minister would no doubt base herself on Camp David. But an effort should be made to go beyond this and identify areas where the two sides could work together or at least identify common objectives. This suggested that we should aim at some sort of political declaration to emerge from the visit.

I said that the Prime Minister would certainly expect and indeed wish to discuss arms control issues with Mr. Gorbachev. She would undoubtedly be ready to give her assessment of United States intentions. But she would also welcome a broader, almost philosophical discussion about Mr. Gorbachev's aims for the Soviet Union, and the future direction of Soviet foreign policy. On the international front, there would be a number of regional issues which she would want to raise, including the Middle East. She would certainly mention human rights. As to some sort of communiqué or final document, we were not generally in favour of such devices which tended to be ritualistic. It might be different if we were engaged in a negotiation but that would not be the case. Mr. Kossov said that the Soviet authorities were not thinking of a general statement so much as a more limited text, on the lines of those agreed between President Reagan and the Prime Minister at the Camp David meetings. I said that there were obvious difficulties in finding a sufficient degree of agreement to make such a text feasible. But I did not rule out the idea. It would be for the Prime Minister to consider in due course.

Thereafter, our conversation became more random. Mr. Kossov reverted more than once to the theme of conventional arms control, which he believed could play an important role in the discussions during the Prime Minister's visit. The Soviet Union was now (said with emphasis) ready for serious talks on this subject. He also enquired about the outcome of Sir Antony Acland's call at the State Department, about which he claimed to have read in the newspaper. He reverted time and again to SDI, and was evidently agitated about reports of an impending American decision to deploy. He did not mention nuclear tests.

Mr. Kossov had relatively little to say about the programme for the Prime Minister's visit. He volunteered at one point that both Mr. and Mrs. Gorbachev would be involved in entertainment during the visit. He thought that Mr. Gorbachev would share the Prime Minister's preference for meeting in a small and restricted group. He recalled that the Prime Minister had expressed interest in visiting Baikonur. This might be combined with one of the neighbouring large cities such as Bokhara or Tashkent. I said that the Prime

Minister had not yet made up her mind about visits outside Moscow. There were several alternative possibilities, for instance Novosibirsk and Kiev. Mr. Kossov thought the former would be of considerable interest. His personal suggestion would be to visit Georgia. Tiblisi would be very attractive at that time of year.

Mr. Kossov waxed lyrical about glasnost and the new perspectives which it was opening up in the Soviet Union, and indeed in Soviet foreign policy. He could hardly believe some of the things which he heard in discussions on Soviet television. They would have been unthinkable even two years ago. His wife recorded them for him on their (Japanese) video recorder.

Casual conversation revealed that Mrs. Kossov's father is a former Soviet Ambassador in Finland (Stepanov) who was Counsellor there in my days in the Helsinki Embassy. I said that I remembered him as the KGB representative. Mr. Kossov laughed and said that he was now Party Chairman in a part of Soviet Karelia and a Central Committee member.

Mr. Kossov said that the Soviet Ambassador would very much like to have a talk with me in a few week's time, to take planning for the visit further. I said that I would think about this. It was important not to have too many separate channels.

(C. D. POWELL)

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