

Dec PS/No 10

COP 22/11

22 DEC 1988

2) Secretary of State

FROM: S N P Hemans, Soviet Dept

DATE: 21 December 1988

cc: PS/Mr Waldegrave
PS/PUS
Sir J Fretwell
Mr Ratford
Mr Burns, News Dept
Mr Gore-Booth, Planners
Mr MacLeod, Protocol Dept

Private Secretary

DATES FOR THE GORBACHEV VISIT

1. The Soviet Ambassador today gave lunch to a small group from Soviet and Protocol Departments involved in the arrangements for Mr Gorbachev's visit.
2. Mr Zamyatin said that he was not able to pinpoint the timing of the new visit. When, at the Soviet National Day in November, he had joked with me about a lot of work having to be done in December, he had done so on the basis of a firm steer from Mr Gorbachev's private office. He had no such steer this time. Nevertheless he thought that attention was beginning to focus on the period immediately after 20 January.
3. Naturally I asked when we might hear something more definite. Again he gave no firm reply although his Counsellor, Karasin, enquired carefully what days I would be working between now and early January.
4. Separately First Secretary Kossov was dropping hints that the visit on this occasion would be linked to one to Finland and not to a resuscitated visit to Cuba. If this is so the Finns (and on Monday and Tuesday I was in Helsinki talking inter alia to the Political Director and his Deputy and to my opposite number) are either very good actors indeed or are equally unaware as yet of what may be about to befall them. They were saying firmly that they think the Gorbachev visit is slipping back and might well now not happen until later in 1989.
5. Zamyatin and his team expect the visit to take much the same form in terms of programme items as had been planned for December although obviously timing would no longer have to suit transatlantic flying. I also pointed out but got no

/reply

CONFIDENTIAL

reply that in December the prohibition on speeches was presumably derived from a desire to give prominence to the UN speech. This need no longer apply.

6. For what it is worth you may care to pass this to Mr Powell at No 10.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'S N P Hemans', written in a cursive style.

S N P Hemans
Soviet Department

CONFIDENTIAL