



*File 1/10
" Mr Ingham
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18 March 1989

From the Private Secretary

MR. GORBACHEV'S INTERVIEW WITH THE TIMES

Mr. Kossov of the Soviet Embassy telephoned me this morning on the subject of Mr. Gorbachev's interview with the Times.

Mr. Gorbachev said that he had put to Moscow the points which I made to him but had not been able to persuade them to re-instate the interview with the Times. Mr. Gorbachev's understanding was as follows. He and the Prime Minister had agreed to underline the major importance of his visit to the United Kingdom by each giving an interview to a major newspaper with a large circulation. Subsequently, and at the Prime Minister's urging, he had agreed to give an important public speech in London. In his mind this obviated the need for a separate interview which would risk encroachment on the areas which he wished to deal with in his speech. He would be very ready when he was in the United Kingdom to give short snatches of interviews both to the press and television, either with the Prime Minister or alone. But that was entirely different from the sort of in-depth interview envisaged for the Times. Whether the Prime Minister went ahead with her interview with Izvestia was of course entirely a matter for her. It would offer a major platform for her to put across her views to a large audience in the Soviet Union, in addition to the recent interview with Ogonyok, which had just been published and was regarded as an excellent read. But if it was no longer convenient for the Prime Minister to see Izvestia that would be understood. Kossov added that he had received this response direct from Chernayev (in Gorbachev's Office) and it was endorsed by Falin.

I said that the Prime Minister would be disappointed. Pacta sunt servanda and there had been a clear agreement that both she and Mr. Gorbachev would give interviews. Equally, she very much appreciated Mr. Gorbachev's decision to make a major speech in London. I would consult her during the weekend and confirm whether or not she was still prepared to go ahead with the Izvestia interview on Wednesday.

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You may like to pass this on to Sir Rodric Braithwaite in Moscow. My own view is that we have reached the end of the road and the right course is to go ahead with the Izvestia interview regardless.

CHARLES POWELL

The Resident Clerk,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.