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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

6 April 1989

Jean Charles,

President Gorbachev's Visit: Romania

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 3 April to the Deputy Private Secretary to the Prince of Wales. The Prime Minister might like to have the following background.

President Ceausescu's policies are a matter of deep concern. Freedom of expression is being suppressed; and President Ceausescu's ill-conceived "systematisation" project threatens widespread human rights violations and irreparable damage to Romania's cultural heritage. Ceausescu seems largely impervious to criticism.

We are doing all we can to put pressure on the Romanians. We have invoked the new CSCE human rights mechanism against them; got the EC to suspend negotiations on an economic cooperation agreement; given dissidents our protection through contacts and publicity; spoken very firmly to the Romanian Foreign Minister when the Foreign Secretary had a meeting with him in Vienna a month ago; and cancelled various bilateral events such as Mr Waldegrave's prospective visit. We have not recalled our Ambassador since he is a useful thorn in the Romanians' side. We are considering a number of other measures, though we have little direct leverage.

We know that the Russians are also concerned about events in Romania and about Romania's dispute with Hungary, which shows no sign of being resolved. Gorbachev has certainly made his views known. But he seems loth to exert what leverage he has, perhaps because this would run counter to his "hands-off" policy towards Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union did however decline to support Romania at the recent session of the UN Human Rights Commission.

We would not of course wish to give the impression that we regard the Russians as having responsibility - and hence special rights - in respect of Eastern Europe.

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The Foreign Secretary has not seen this letter in draft.

Yours ever,

Richard Gozney

(R H T Gozney)
Private Secretary

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10 DOWNING STREET
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From the Private Secretary

3 April 1989

Thank you for your letter of 23 March about the situation in Romania, which I saw on my return from Africa. I have consulted the Prime Minister who will certainly try to find an opportunity to raise the matter with Mr. Gorbachev over lunch or dinner.

✓ I am sending a copy of this letter together with a copy of yours to Stephen Wall in the Foreign Office with a request for a short note.

(C. D. POWELL)

David Wright, Esq.,
Deputy Private Secretary to
H.R.H. The Prince of Wales.

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