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Prime Minister

CPT

MR POWELL

11 December 1984

TALKING TO GORBACHEV

It would be worth first examining what we think Gorbachev himself will want out of the visit. As I see it, he will want to establish personal contact with an important Western leader, whom the Russians will regard with a mixture of respect and curiosity, because of her personal qualities, her recent activity in East/West relations and her close relationship with President Reagan. Secondly, he will want to put over to her the Soviet view on East/West relations and arms control and from her responses help prepare the Soviet position in the January talks between Shultz and Gromyko. Thirdly, he will offer improved bilateral relations with the inducement of more trade. He will probably assume that this last is our main objective. He will be very alive to any indications of European/American differences. Much of what he says will be carefully prepared and formally presented, and he will be determined to say it, if need be regardless of the context.

2. We, for our part, have certain general aims. We want to project our confidence in our political and economic systems and in the solidarity of our alliances; our awareness of the deep gulf between our world and that of the Russians; but despite that our profound desire for stability and better relations with the Russians.

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East/West communication and understanding; also our  
knowledge of US pacific intentions. All this has to be  
conveyed without giving any impression of being over-anxious  
or of wanting to run after the Russians.

3. However much we want to break the mould and have a  
free-ranging discussion, the talks are likely to follow an  
orthodox pattern. The Russians will want it so and we too  
have our obligations: we shall have to address the general  
state of East/West relations and we shall have to address  
arms control. On the latter we should bear in mind that for  
the Russians space will be the key. They will want to stave  
off run-away American technological advances and if possible  
leave themselves in an advantageous position over Asats. In  
return for assurances on space they may be ready to  
negotiate on offensive missiles. The Americans will be  
particularly interested in our reports of this part of the  
talks.

4. I do not recommend the Prime Minister spends much time  
on trade. This has been too much the theme of the past, eg  
the Wilson visit - a high level visit oiled by credits and  
promise of contracts. It suits the Russians; it encourages  
them to think that they can divide and rule. I suggest that  
trade should be pusued later in the week by Mr Channon and  
that the Prime Minister should concentrate on the central  
international security issues.

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5. There remains the question of additional conversational themes, particularly over lunch. I think mutual perceptions of security, the impact of technological change on society; the future of the Soviet economy; and allocation of resources, to defence or elsewhere, are all themes that are good in themselves and might open up interesting avenues

6. We should not expect too much from the encounter: time will be short; courtesies and interpreters will make their inroads. There may be some interesting insights but there will be no conversions. Much of the value will lie in a mutual sizing-up and putting of faces to names.

*PC*

PERCY CRADOCK

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