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*Prime Minister
You may be
interested in*

P J Fowler Esq
NAD
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Your reference *see this very
positive American
press*
Our reference
Date 6 April 1987

*coverage
CDP
1/4.*

Dear Peter,

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO MOSCOW

1. The US media covered the visit extensively and several newspapers sent their London correspondents to Moscow for the occasion. During the visit the coverage was mainly factual reporting, without a lot of comment. The following themes were given particular prominence:

- a) the exceptionally warm and public welcome given to the Prime Minister;
- b) an extraordinarily frank atmosphere between the two leaders, and the length of their talks. Direct and firm talk on both sides;
- c) the Prime Minister's proposal that timetables for SDI research should be exchanged, supported by a commitment not to withdraw from the ABM Treaty for a fixed period;
- d) limited concrete results on arms control;
- e) the Prime Minister's meeting with Sakharov, noted widely as being inconceivable a year ago.

2. Following the Prime Minister's statement to the Commons, there is now beginning to be some comment, most of it very positive. The New York Times said that the talks exhibited "a remarkable relationship: combative yet admiring, argumentative but respectful". The Prime Minister returned home with three messages: first, that there was hope for a meeting between Reagan and Gorbachev and an agreement on medium range missiles by the end of this year; second, that Gorbachev was serious about internal change; and third, that Gorbachev could be trusted. The Times described the Prime Minister's broadcast on Soviet television as "a bravura 50 minute performance ... in which she laced into her three male inquisitors". In the long view "the most important effect of the visit may be that it helped stretch the boundaries

.../...

of Glasnost". The television broadcast "raises the possibility that Mr Gorbachev may have planned all along to use his outspoken visitor to help him define the ground rules for a new kind of public discourse".

3. The Los Angeles Times, in a first leader, saw the visit as "a remarkable diplomatic event" though it noted that the visit had "apparently failed to narrow differences over the most important item on the agenda: the question of how to deal with short range nuclear missiles in Europe". In a separate article the paper said that "the style and content of her talks with Gorbachev and the itinerary she fashioned may make Thatcher's approach a model for any western leader's future dealings with Moscow ... Instead of smoothing over differences Mrs Thatcher made it plain that she, and other western leaders, have basic differences with Soviet policy and then explained why ... No other western visitors in recent years have had that kind of impact".

4. There have been very positive reactions from some smaller newspapers. The Salt Lake Tribune said that the Prime Minister deserved high marks for her performance in Moscow. "Mrs Thatcher is acting as more than a representative of the UK: she is a de facto Ambassador of the EC and, in fact, the whole western alliance. As such, her visit takes on more importance and she has represented the west in a frank and forthright manner, as is her wont".

5. The San Jose Mercury thought that the Prime Minister had "struck exactly the right chord" and that "Americans have the right to be just a little envious of her performance".

Yours ever
R F Cornish
R F Cornish

cc: Michael Horne Esq
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Chanceries: Moscow,
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