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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

4 October 1984

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Dear Richard.

Ministerial Contacts with the Soviet Union

will request if required

Thank you for letting me know in your letter of 19 September about the Soviet Ambassador's invitation to Mr Heseltine.

see R 2

As Roger Bone's letter of 16 April to John Coles made clear, it is in general for Ministers themselves to decide whether an invitation could be described as an occasion on which serious business was discussed, or which was directly concerned with important British commercial or other functions.

Soviet heavy-handedness can however give rise to presentational as well as substantive problems. In this instance, the Soviet Ambassador has also issued invitations to the Home Secretary, the Lord Privy Seal, Lord Trefgarne, Mr Lamont and the Paymaster-General, for the second half of October. Sir Geoffrey Howe would therefore be grateful if Mr Heseltine and other colleagues would allow him to suggest a batting order, and some appropriate spacing out of acceptances, bearing in mind not only the constraints mentioned in Roger Bone's letter of 16 April, but also the limited access which Sir Iain Sutherland enjoys in Moscow. An element of reciprocity in Moscow must plainly be a relevant factor.

For the rest of this year, he would suggest that only three lunch invitations of this kind be accepted. (There may well be other social events organised by the Soviet Embassy, for instance in connection with incoming visits by Soviet Ministers and dignatories and also to celebrate the October revolution on 7 November, but these can be considered separately and on their own merits). An appropriate order might be:

Mr Heseltine in October

Mr Lamont in November

The Lord Privy Seal in December

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He would be grateful if other colleagues, if they see some justification and advantage in accepting, would reply in a positive sense but referring to the possibility of looking at dates next year. In certain cases where the invitation seems inappropriate, such as that to the Home Secretary (in the light of Bitov's allegations about mistreatment in the United Kingdom) or to Lord Trefgarne (which clearly duplicates that to your Minister) a less forthcoming reply might be more suitable.

I would be grateful if David Morris and Elizabeth Hibden would take this letter as replying to theirs, both of 11 September. I am in addition copying this letter to all recipients of Roger Bone's letter of 16 April and to Charles Powell at No 10.

Yours ever,

Len Appleyard

(L V Appleyard)

Richard Mottram Esq
PS/Defence Secretary
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

SOVIET UNION: Relo PKS