



Prime Minister 2

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Lord Carrington has
decided not to retaliate
for the expulsion of John Gordon
from Moscow.

27 August 1981

[Handwritten signature]

Dear Michael

Wm
28/8

Expulsion of the British Cultural Attache in Moscow

Clive Whitmore's letter of 4 August reported the Prime Minister's approval of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's decision to declare Mr V N Lazin, a Second Secretary at the Soviet Embassy, persona non grata for espionage.

As you will have seen from Moscow telegram nos 518, 519 and 523, the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister summoned the British Charge d'Affaires on 18 August to give the Soviet reaction to our decision on Lazin. The Russians rejected the charges against Lazin, complained about the British press treatment of the case, and demanded the withdrawal of Mr John Gordon, our Cultural Attache in Moscow. Mr Gordon was alleged to have been involved in unacceptable activities and to have interfered in Soviet internal affairs.

A Soviet retaliation of this kind was more or less inevitable. For example, in the very different circumstances of 1971, the Russians retaliated for our expulsion of the 105 Soviet officials in London by demanding the withdrawal of 18 British diplomats and other personnel in Moscow. Their choice of Gordon was clearly carefully considered. Although he is senior to Lazin (a First, rather than Second Secretary), Gordon was on leave at the time of the Soviet decision. Furthermore, action against the political or commercial sections of our Embassy in Moscow would have been more damaging. It is also possible that in selecting our Cultural Attache, who naturally has extensive contacts with individual Russians, they have sought to identify someone against whom it would be possible to make the sort of charge of interference in internal affairs which was levelled in the British press against Lazin.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary believes that our wider interest is not to allow Lazin's expulsion and its aftermath to escalate so that it becomes a serious obstacle to the measured policy towards the Soviet Union which we have pursued over the past year. In this light, he has considered whether to take retaliatory action for the expulsion of Gordon. He has concluded that this would be likely only to perpetuate a cycle of retaliation and counter-retaliation in which British interests could be harmed more seriously than the Russians'. In particular, they have a far larger stock of British


/specialists



specialists than we have Russian speakers and a visa war at the present time, when we have a number of important postings either in the pipeline or in prospect over the next few months, would be seriously damaging to us.

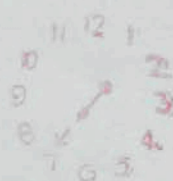
Lord Carrington has, therefore, instructed the British Charge d'Affaires in Moscow to make a strongly worded statement to the Soviet Foreign Ministry about the expulsion of Mr Gordon, and to affirm our expectation that the Russians will cause no difficulty over an early replacement for him. It is made clear that if they do create such difficulties over the new Cultural Attache or other visa applications, we shall consider what further steps may be necessary. In deciding to act in this way, Lord Carrington has felt that the end result would not be an unsatisfactory one; if we secure a successful replacement for Mr Gordon and other postings go smoothly, our Embassy in Moscow will remain at full strength whereas the Russians will be one down in London following the expulsion of Lazin and the permanent reduction of the Soviet diplomatic ceiling as a result.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Mrs. [unclear]

(B J P Fall)
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street

27 AUG 1987



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JS

Serial
Uran

1 September 1981

EXPULSION OF THE BRITISH CULTURAL ATTACHE IN MOSCOW

Thank you for your letter of 27 August to Michael Alexander. The Prime Minister has noted the action taken by Lord Carrington.

WR

B.J.P. Fall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Sf

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JS
cc Ho
CS

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

4 August 1981

INVOLVEMENT OF A SOVIET DIPLOMAT IN
INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES

This is just to record that I showed your first letter of 4 August about the involvement of Mr. V.N. Lazin in intelligence activities to the Prime Minister earlier today and that she thoroughly approved of Lord Carrington's decision to declare Lazin persona non grata.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

C. A. WHITMORE

B.J.P. Fall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

CS



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

4 August 1981

Mr. Jeffrey...

To see + return pl.

*file
4viii*

Don't know

Involvement of a Soviet Diplomat in
Intelligence Activities

Further to my letter earlier today, it has been decided that the press line on the Lazin case should be modified slightly. I accordingly attach a revised version. The only significant difference is that the number of Soviet diplomats in the UK will now be included in the points for defensive use, rather than the overall ceiling of Soviet officials permitted to reside in the UK on a long term basis. The former figure is available from the diplomatic list; we have never made public the latter.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office) and to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

(B J P Fall)
Private Secretary

** as far as I know*

Clive Whitmore Esq
10 Downing Street

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[UNCLASSIFIED ONCE ANNOUNCEMENT HAS BEEN MADE]

ON THE RECORD ANNOUNCEMENT BY NEWS DEPARTMENT

The Soviet Chargé d'Affaires was summoned to the FCO earlier today and told that a Second Secretary in the Soviet Embassy in London, V N Lazin, was persona non grata in the United Kingdom and should leave the country within seven days.

4 August 1981

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[RESTRICTED ONCE ANNOUNCEMENT HAS BEEN MADE]

DEFENSIVE

1. V N Lazin was declared persona non grata for activities incompatible with his status as a diplomat. We cannot comment further on the facts of the case.
2. The Chargé d'Affaires was received at senior official level. [Unattributable to trusted contacts - by the Acting PUS].
3. As a result of this action, the total number of diplomatic staff at the Soviet Embassy will be reduced by one, to 46, in accordance with the policy announced in 1971.
4. This is the first time such action has been taken since 1971.
5. There has not yet been any Soviet response. We hope they will not react in a way which might prejudice the development of our relations.



*Agreed
MT & Ag.*

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

4 August 1981

Dear Aive.

Involvement of a Soviet Diplomat in
Intelligence Activities

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary thought that the Prime Minister should know immediately that a Soviet diplomat, Mr V N Lazin, was arrested last night in the course of a clandestine meeting with a Portuguese national. Lazin has been released, but Lord Carrington has decided that he should be declared persona non grata. The Acting Permanent Under Secretary will therefore summon the Soviet Charge d'Affaires today to tell him this. We will add that the ceiling on the number of Soviet officials permitted to reside in the UK on a long term basis will be reduced by one in accordance with the conditions put to the Soviet Embassy following the expulsion in 1971 of the 105 Soviet diplomats and other employees.

News Department will make a short on-the-record statement after Sir E Youde has seen the Soviet Charge d' Affaires. I attach a copy, together with a list of points for defensive use. You will see that it mentions Lazin by name. The intention is to avoid any further publicity. We will also be telling a number of overseas posts of the action taken.

Lazin is the senior member of the Scientific and Technical Intelligence Section of the KGB in London. He has developed his relationship with the Portuguese national over several months and sought to obtain technical and scientific information in the UK from him and to use him as an agent with the possibility of eventually placing him in a NATO post. Meetings between the Soviet official and the Portuguese were on a completely clandestine basis.

Passage deleted and retained under Section 3(4).

Wayland, 12 October 2012

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office) and to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Miss [unclear]

(B J P Fall)
Private Secretary

Clive Whitmore Esq
10 Downing Street

TOP SECRET

[UNCLASSIFIED ONCE ANNOUNCEMENT HAS BEEN MADE]

ON THE RECORD ANNOUNCEMENT BY NEWS DEPARTMENT

The Soviet Chargé d'Affaires was summoned to the FCO earlier today and told that a Second Secretary in the Soviet Embassy in London, V N Lazin, was persona non grata in the United Kingdom and should leave the country within seven days.

4 August 1981

TOP SECRET

[RESTRICTED ONCE ANNOUNCEMENT HAS BEEN MADE]

DEFENSIVE

1. V N Lazin was declared persona non grata for activities incompatible with his status as a diplomat. We cannot comment further on the facts of the case.
2. The Chargé d'Affaires was received at senior official level. [Unattributable to trusted contacts - by the Acting PUS].
3. As a result of this action, the ceiling for diplomatic staff at the Soviet Embassy will be reduced by one in accordance with the policy announced in 1971.
4. This is the first time such action has been taken since 1971.
5. There has not yet been any Soviet response. We hope they will not react in a way which might prejudice the development of our relations.
6. The permitted level of Soviet officials resident in the UK on a long-term basis is now 245. We do not disclose the sub-ceilings by categories.

GR 260
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Soviet Union

FM MOSCOW 181415Z AUG 81
TO IMMEDIATE F C O
TELEGRAM NUMBER 523 OF 18 AUGUST

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MY TELS NOS 518/520 : LAZIN/GORDON

1. IN RESPONDING TO ZEMSKOV'S DEMAND FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF GORDON, I MADE USE OF A SLIGHTLY MODIFIED FORM OF THE LANGUAGE WHICH SIR E YOUDE WOULD HAVE USED TO KELIN HAD HE THREATENED RECIPROCITY. I WAS CONCERNED, HOWEVER, NOT TO COMMIT YOU TO ANY SPECIFIC RESPONSE BUT RATHER TO KEEP THE RUSSIANS ON EDGE AND DO A LITTLE FLESH-CREEPING.

(See attached)

2. YOU WILL NOW BE CONSIDERING WHETHER AND IF SO HOW TO RESPOND TO THE EXPULSION OF GORDON. IT OCCURS TO US THAT THE CHOICE OF GORDON (REPRESENTING A RAISING OF THE LEVEL OF RECIPROCITY FROM SECOND TO FIRST SECRETARY; THOUGH NO OTHER ATTEMPT TO BALANCE OUR CUT IN THE SOVIET CEILING), MAY HAVE BEEN DUE TO A CONVICTION (OR AT LEAST SUSPICION) ON THE PART OF THE RUSSIANS THAT THEY WERE MATCHING LIKE WITH LIKE. THE CULTURAL ATTACHE NORMALLY HAS A WIDER RANGE OF SOVIET CONTACTS THAN THE REST OF US AND THE RUSSIANS HAVE SUSPECTED FOR YEARS THAT THE CULTURAL JOB MAY HAVE INTELLIGENCE ASPECTS IN OUR EYES AS IT OF COURSE DOES IN THEIRS WHERE THEIR OWN PEOPLE ARE CONCERNED.

3. IT WOULD BE TEMPTING AND EVEN NATURAL TO RETALIATE AGAINST THE EXPULSION OF AN INNOCENT PERSON, ESPECIALLY WHEN LAZIN WAS CAUGHT RED-HANDED. I HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT THE CONSEQUENCES OF RETALIATION WILL BE CONSIDERED VERY CAREFULLY, SINCE A SERIES OF TIT-FOR-TAT EXPULSIONS COULD SERIOUSLY WEAKEN OUR REPRESENTATION HERE OVER THE COMING MONTHS.

BROOKE TURNER
LIMITED
HD / EESD
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PS
PS / LPS
PS / MR HURD
PS / PUS
SIR. A. ACLAND
MR FERGUSON

PS / M 10 Downing St

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GR 450

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DESKBY 181200Z

FM MOSCOW 181031Z AUG 81

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 519 OF 18 AUGUST

See

M I P T : SOVIET STATEMENT

1. FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF ZEMSKOV'S ORAL STATEMENT.
2. IT WAS STATED IN THE AIDE-MEMOIRE OF THE BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE OF 4 AUGUST 1981 THAT THE SECOND SECRETARY OF THE EMBASSY OF THE USSR IN GREAT BRITAIN, V N LAZIN, HAD ABUSED HIS DIPLOMATIC STATUS, AND THE DEMAND WAS MADE THAT HE SHOULD LEAVE GREAT BRITAIN.
3. THIS ASSERTION OF THE BRITISH SIDE HAS NO FOUNDATION AND IS AN INVENTION. ACCORDING TO ALL THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US, V N LAZIN COMMITTED NO ACTS WHICH WOULD RUN COUNTER TO HIS STATUS AS A DIPLOMAT. HE BECAME THE OBJECT OF A PROVOCATIVE ACTION DEMONSTRATED BY THE FACT THAT HE WAS HELD WITHOUT ANY FOUNDATION AND IN CONTRAVENTION OF THE VIENNA CONVENTION ON DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND DESPITE PROTESTS AND PRODUCTION OF HIS DIPLOMATIC CARD AFFIRMING WHO HE WAS, WAS SUBJECTED TO PHYSICAL FORCE AND TRANSFERRED TO A POLICE STATION WHERE HE WAS SUBJECTED TO A SEARCH.
4. AT THE SAME TIME ATTENTION IS DRAWN TO THE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN IN THE PRESS EVIDENTLY INSPIRED BY THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES AND FOUNDED ON FICTITIOUS ALLEGATIONS ABOUT THE PARTICIPATION OF THE SOVIET DIPLOMAT IN INTERNAL POLITICAL EVENTS IN BRITAIN.
5. THE BRITISH SIDE HAS TAKEN A SERIOUS RESPONSIBILITY UPON ITSELF IN UNDERTAKING THIS ACTION IN CONNECTION WITH A SOVIET DIPLOMAT. THE MFA OF THE USSR PROTESTS AGAINST SUCH ACTIONS OF THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES WHICH CAN ANSWER THE INTERESTS ONLY OF THOSE FORCES ACTING AGAINST THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND GREAT BRITAIN.

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/ 6. THE ATTENTION

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6. THE ATTENTION OF THE BRITISH SIDE IS DRAWN TO THE FACT THAT CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN THE SOVIET UNION ABUSE THEIR STATUS AS DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES. FOR SOME TIME THE UNACCEPTABLE ACTIVITY HAS BEEN NOTICED OF THE FIRST SECRETARY OF THE EMBASSY, JOHN GORDON, WHICH RUNS COUNTER TO THE EXISTING NORMS OF BEHAVIOUF OF FOREIGN DIPLOMATS AND THE PROVISIONS OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED VIENNA CONVENTION AND GOES AS FAR AS DIRECT INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE COUNTRY WHERE HE IS STATIONED. IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR JOHN GORDON TO QUIT THE BORDERS OF THE SOVIET UNION WITHIN A WEEK.

7. IT IS EXPECTED THAT MEMBERS OF THE EMBASSY OF GREAT BRITAIN WILL IN THE FUTURE NOT ACT IN SUCH A WAY AS TO CONFLICT WITH THEIR DIPLOMATIC STATUS AND AFFECT FOR THE WORSE THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANGLO-SOVIET RELATIONS.

BROOKE TURNER

LIMITED

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HEAD/FUSD
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HEAD/NEWS D
HEAD/P & C D
HEAD/CRD
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PS/MR HURD
PS/PUS
SIR A ACLAND
MR FERGUSSON

PS/N.10 Brown 11

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FM MOSCOW 181030Z AUG 81

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 518 OF 18 AUGUST

No 10

1. DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ZEMSKOV ASKED ME TO CALL THIS MORNING TO RECEIVE AN ORAL STATEMENT (TEXT IN MIFT) IN REPLY TO THE REPRESENTATIONS MADE TO THE SOVIET CHARGE D'AFFAIRES ON 4 AUGUST. IN ESSENCE THIS REJECTED OUR CASE AGAINST LAZIN, COMPLAINED THAT AN ANTI-SOVIET PRESS CAMPAIGN HAD BEEN MOUNTED AND DECLARED THAT THE CULTURAL ATTACHE HAD BEEN ENGAGED IN ACTIVITIES INCOMPATIBLE WITH HIS DIPLOMATIC STATUS AND WAS REQUIRED TO LEAVE THE SOVIET UNION WITHIN A WEEK.

2. I SAID I REGRETTED THAT THE SOVIET SIDE HAD FELT BOUND TO MAKE THIS STATEMENT. WHEN THE SOVIET CHARGE HAD BEEN HANDED THE AIDE MEMOIRE IT MADE CLEAR THE BRITISH WISH TO CONTINUE A CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE BASED ON MUTUAL TRUST AND THAT SUCH TRUST HAD ALSO TO APPLY TO OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. THE 3 AUGUST INCIDENT HAD BEEN A SERIOUS ONE AND THERE WAS NO DOUBT IN HMG'S MIND THAT LAZIN HAD BEEN ENGAGED IN ACTIVITIES INCOMPATIBLE WITH HIS DIPLOMATIC STATUS. IT FOLLOWED THAT IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT WE SHOULD HAVE DONE WHAT WE PROMISED TO DO IN 1971. FROM THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE I COULD NOT ACCEPT THE STATEMENT THAT THE BRITISH SIDE HAD INVENTED THE INCIDENT. THE EVIDENCE AGAINST LAZIN WAS CONCLUSIVE. THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF A PROVOCATION. AS SOON AS HIS DIPLOMATIC STATUS WAS ESTABLISHED HE WAS ALLOWED TO LEAVE POLICE CUSTODY. I ALSO REJECTED THE ALLEGATION THAT THERE HAD BEEN A PRESS CAMPAIGN. A FREE PRESS WOULD INEVITABLY PICK UP THE STORY. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAD DONE ITS BEST TO DAMP IT DOWN IN ORDER TO MINIMISE THE EFFECT ON ANGLO/SOVIET RELATIONS WHICH YOUR VISIT HAD DEMONSTRATED WE WISHED TO DEVELOP.

3. I TALK ZEMSKOV I REGRETTED EVEN MORE THE ALLEGATION AGAINST GORDON. I SUPERVISED HIS SECTION AND WAS UNAWARE OF ANY ACTION BY HIM THAT WAS IN ANY WAY INCONSISTENT WITH HIS STATUS. ON THE CONTRARY HE HAD SOUGHT TO IMPROVE ANGLO/SOVIET CULTURAL RELATIONS AT A DIFFICULT TIME. EXPULSION WOULD CREATE AN UNFORTUNATE IMPRESSION IN THE UK AND PROVE A BLOW TO THOSE CULTURAL RELATIONS WHICH WE HAD UNDERSTOOD IT WAS ALSO THE SOVIET WISH TO DEVELOP. I KNEW THE AMBASSADOR WOULD WANT ME TO ADD THAT ALL THE OTHER PERSONNEL OF THE EMBASSY KNEW THE NORMS OF DIPLOMATIC BEHAVIOUR AND WERE CAREFUL TO OBSERVE THEM. I WOULD REPORT WHAT ZEMSKOV HAD SAID. IT COULD ONLY BE REGARDED AS A THOROUGHLY UNFORTUNATE BLOW TO RELATIONS.

4. ZEMSKOV REPLIED THAT HE REGRETTED I HAD REPEATED THE UNFOUNDED ACCUSATIONS AGAINST LAZIN. IF I THOUGHT GORDON WAS

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WORKING TO DEVELOP ANGLO/SOVIET RELATIONS HE WONDERED HOW MUCH I VALUED THOSE RELATIONS. HE HAD NOTHING TO ADD. I SAID I WOULD COMMUNICATE HIS FURTHER REMARKS AND THERE WOULD BE A RESPONSE TO THE SOVIET DECISION IN DUE COURSE. IT HAD BEEN OUR HOPE THAT THIS REGRETTABLE EPISODE COULD HAVE BEEN HANDLED WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE NEW OPENING IN ANGLO/SOVIET RELATIONS WHICH HAD RECENTLY OCCURRED AND WHICH WE HOPED MIGHT BE CARRIED FURTHER BY GROMYKO AND YOURSELF IN NEW YORK. I COULD NOT SAY WHAT YOUR REACTION WOULD BE BUT I COULD NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT HMG MIGHT WISH FURTHER TO CONSIDER THE WHOLE PICTURE OF SOVIET DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION IN LONDON. ZEMSKOV SAID HE WAS SURPRISED I HAD THREATENED OPENLY IN THIS CASE. THAT WAS NO WAY TO SPEAK TO THE SOVIET UNION. I SAID MY REMARK WAS NOT A THREAT BUT SIMPLY A STATEMENT THAT I COULD NOT EXCLUDE A POSSIBILITY. FOR THE REASONS I HAD GIVEN THE SOVIET STATEMENT COULD ONLY MAKE A BAD IMPRESSION ON THE BRITISH SIDE. WE WOULD HAVE TO SEE WHAT THEIR REACTION WOULD BE.

BROOKE TURNER

LIMITED

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HEAD/POD
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HEAD/P & C D
HEAD/CRD
PS
PS/LPS
PS/MR HURD
PS/PUS
SIR A ACLAND
MR FERGUSSON

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