



cc: Trade ✓
 Industry ✓
 HO ✓
 LCO ✓
 HMT ✓
 LPO ✓
 MOD ✓
 LPS ✓
 CDL ✓ CO ✓
 5 July 1982

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

UK/SOVIET JOINT COMMISSION

The Prime Minister has seen Nicholas McInnes' letter of 18 June and John Macgregor's letter of 28 June and has noted that departments are agreed that we should propose to the Russians that the next session of the Anglo/Soviet Joint Commission should be held in late September, with the Minister of Trade leading the British delegation.

I am copying this letter to Nicholas McInnes (Department of Trade), Jonathan Spencer (Department of Industry), the Private Secretaries to the other members of OD and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

A. J. COLES

Francis Richards, Esq.,
 Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

28 June 1982

Prime Minister
To note x.

[Handwritten initials]

A.J.C. 29. 6

cc: A J Coles Esq, No 10 ✓
J Spencer Esq, DOI
D Wright Esq, Cabinet Office
PSS to other OD members

UK/SOVIET JOINT COMMISSION

Thank you for your letter of 18 June to Charles Humfrey (who has been replaced by Stephen Lamport).

FCO Ministers agree that we should propose to the Russians that the next session of the Anglo/Soviet Joint Commission should be held in late September, with your Minister leading the British delegation. This would be consistent with our overall policy towards the Soviet Union.

We should be in good company. Some of our partners (Belgium/Luxembourg, Denmark, the Netherlands) have already gone ahead with their Mixed Commissions with the Soviet Union. The Germans have held their preparatory meeting and expect to hold the Commission itself in mid-October. The French have also held their 'Petite Commission', and will have the 'Grande Commission' in late 1982. Both the French and German events are held at more senior Ministerial levels than our own. There have been US/Soviet exchanges at the Haig/Gromyko level and there is the possibility of a summit meeting later this year. However, as you say, we should obviously have to reconsider the position if political circumstances were to change.

Our officials should remain in touch on the instructions to be sent to HM Embassy in Moscow. On presentation, we agree that the meeting should be prepared without publicity and should be treated as a routine event within the established Anglo/Soviet inter-governmental framework.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

J M Macgregor
Private Secretary to
Malcolm Rifkind MP

N McInnes Esq
PS/Minister of Trade
Department of Trade
1 Victoria Street
London SW1

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

From the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

27 April 1982

N. B. P. R.

MR 27/4

Dear Peter,

UK/SOVIET JOINT COMMISSION

1. We had a word this morning about your Private Secretary's letter of 22 April on which the Prime Minister's views are set out in Mr Coles' letter of 23 April.

2. I agree that there is some advantage in postponing the Joint Commission until the autumn. We should by then at least have a clearer idea of our major European partners' plans for their mixed commissions. But as I made clear this morning, the FCO preferred option would have been to go ahead with the Joint Commission in May on the basis set out in Fuller's letter of 9 March, ie by bringing down the level of Chairman on our side from Ministerial to senior official. I believe it would have been possible to have managed the political problems.

3. We agreed this morning, however, on postponement and how to handle it presentationally. It will be important, both with the Russians and our own businessmen, to stick to your proposed line that postponement has been made necessary by Ministerial changes and re-allocation of responsibilities in the Department of Trade. There may well be a few companies (John Brown for instance) who will feel that we are not adequately supporting their efforts to sell to the Soviet Union, and unless we can advance an apparently soundly based technical case, I fear we will be engaged in interminable arguments with both Russians and businessmen, about the political reasons for changing our minds now, in April, having gone ahead with the Review Meeting in March.

4. I am sending copies of this letter to recipients of McInnes' letter of 22 April.

*Yours ever,
Malcolm*

Malcolm Rifkind

Peter Rees Esq QC MP
Minister for Trade
Department of Trade
1 Victoria Street
LONDON SW1H 0ET

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27 APR 1982

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Soviet Union

23 April 1982

UK/USSR Joint Commission

Your letter of 22 April refers. The Prime Minister agrees that the Joint Commission should be postponed until the autumn.

JC

N. McInnes, Esq.,
Department of Trade.

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Defense
LPS

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From the
Minister for Trade 's office

Charles Humphrey Esq
Private Secretary to
The Rt Hon Douglas Hurd CBE MP
Minister of State
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
London SW1A 2AL

18 June 1982

Await F/C.O. reply.

A.J.C. 21/6

Dear Charles,

UK/SOVIET JOINT COMMISSION

I wrote to you on 22 April about Mr Rees' proposal, which was subsequently agreed, to postpone the next meeting of this Joint Commission under his co-Chairmanship until the autumn. This was accepted by the Russians and they have not tried to make political capital out of it. However, if British firms are not be put at a disadvantage, the working relationship at government level on trade matters will need to be continued.

In view of the number of events building up in the autumn and the calls on Ministers' time, we will soon have to decide what to do about the Joint Commission even though any likely date is 4 or 5 months away. My Minister feels that we should now seek to agree dates for the Joint Commission meeting under his leadership on the UK side. This would be consistent with the Government's policy of continuing to seek mutually beneficial trade with the Soviet Union, although bearing in mind the need to be cautious over financial relations and prudent over credit as agreed at the Versailles Summit. It would also be in line with other Western European countries, some of which have delayed formal trade meetings but have generally maintained the level of their contacts. If there are any particularly unacceptable actions by the Soviet Union in the meanwhile we can always cancel or postpone.

My Minister would find it convenient from the point of view of his diary to visit Moscow in the last week of September. Unless colleagues see any particular difficulties, we would like soon to indicate privately to the Russians that a meeting at that time would be practical for us, subject to final confirmation nearer the

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time. This Department would then go ahead with planning the event but without giving it any publicity (although complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed as both the Russians and selected British business interests will be aware of the situation). We will keep in contact with the FCO over the presentational aspects of the event and on any intervening political problems.

Copies of this go to John Coles (No 10), Jonathan Spencer (DOI), to the Private Secretaries of other OD members and to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

Nick McInnes

N McINNES
Private Secretary to the
Minister for Trade (PETER REES)

21. July 1982

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28 June 1982

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