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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Prime Minister

London SW1A 2AH

To note.

29 November 1982

MS

A.F.C. 29/11

Dear John

Expulsion of Soviet Intelligence Officers

The Security Service have informed us that the Soviet Naval Attache, Captain A P Zotov, has engaged in activities incompatible with his status in this country. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has therefore agreed with the Security Service's recommendation that Zotov should be declared persona non grata. Sir Julian Bullard will summon the Soviet Ambassador shortly to ask for Zotov's removal from this country.

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There is, however, a strong possibility of Soviet retaliation, most probably against our own Naval Attache in Moscow. Whether they expel him or, a less likely possibility, curtail his movements,

The Defence Intelligence Staff have considered the implications and accept that we shall have to be prepared to live with them.

In order to try to minimise the Soviet reaction, Sir J Bullard will warn the Soviet Ambassador that we should take

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a very serious view of any retaliation. He will not, however, commit us to any specific course of action so as not to tie our hands.

The question of publicity is also connected with that of retaliation. The Russians dislike publicity because it hinders their other intelligence activities. Mr Pym has agreed therefore that we should publicise the expulsion, but, in the hope of moderating the Soviet reaction, we should hold back until the dust has settled. An appropriate device would be a written answer to an inspired PQ just before the Christmas recess. Given the present level of press and parliamentary interest in Soviet intelligence activities in this country, there should be no shortage of publicity once the news does break. Of course, if the Russians do expel a member of our Embassy in Moscow in retaliation, and the news therefore breaks earlier, we shall have to make an earlier announcement.

Mr Pym has considered carefully whether the change of leadership in Moscow should cause us to postpone action on this case. He has concluded, however, that it should be treated on its merits and that we should not tolerate espionage activities once they have been detected. The Soviet authorities may read our action as a sign of hostility, but we shall have to make it clear that we mean to stand up for our own interests and that we, not they, are the aggrieved party.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (MOD), John Halliday (Home Office) and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever,

(B J P Fall)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street



Soviet Union.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

30 November, 1982.

Expulsion of Soviet Intelligence Officers

Thank you for your letter of 29 November about Captain A.P. Zotov. The Prime Minister has noted that the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has agreed with the Security Service's recommendation that Zotov should be declared persona non grata and that Sir Julian Bullard will summon the Soviet Ambassador to ask for his removal from this country.

I am sending copies of this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence), John Halliday (Home Office), and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

A. J. COLES

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

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 December 1982

V. A. CHERNOV

Thank you for your letter of 30 November. The Prime Minister has noted Mr. Pym's decision that the above should be expelled.

I am copying this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), Robert Lowson (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food) and Sir Robert Armstrong.

A. J. COLES

Brian Fall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

PUSD 7/303/1 (4)

10 January 1983

ASC 871

Not seen until our return from
the Fielded on 13 January.

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Dear Sir,

V A Chernov

With reference to your letter of 1 December, the Prime Minister may wish to know that, with the agreement of the Home Secretary, action to expel Chernov will be taken on 12 January. The Executive Secretary of the IWC is out of contact at present but will be asked to call at the FCO on his return from Belgium. In addition to asking him to secure Chernov's removal, we shall inform the Soviet Embassy and express the Government's concern at Soviet abuse of the IWC. News Department will make the action public the same day.

I am copying this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), Robert Lowson (MAFF), and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever,
J.P.F.

(B J P Fall)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

TOP SECRET

