



There is obviously a danger that the Russians will retaliate. The best way to prevent this will be to make it clear to them that if they do, we shall respond in kind. The result could be a series of counter-retaliations which could hamper British activity in Moscow, [redacted]

And if it led to the expulsion of British journalists from Moscow, we should no doubt face criticism from the media for mishandling the affair. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary nevertheless believes that it is essential, in the interests of deterring retaliation by the Russians, to take this line, and to carry out the threat if necessary.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence), Tony Rawsthorne (Home Office) and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Your ever,

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

Robert Bone

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

SECRET

FIG

SJ



7

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

25 March, 1983

Expulsion of Three Soviet Intelligence Officers

Thank you for your letter of 24 March. The Prime Minister has noted that the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has agreed that three Soviet intelligence officers should be expelled and that, if the Russians retaliate, we should respond in kind.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence), Tony Rawsthorne (Home Office) and Sir Robert Armstrong.

A. J. COLES

R. B. Bone, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

SECRET