

CONFIDENTIAL

cpc



1) Mr Powell <sup>CDP</sup>  
2) Prime Minister

CF: Await FCS.

QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

25 June 1984

Content to await FCS reply?

sub 25/6

Yes

not

2 Scowry,

SOVIET PRISONERS OF THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE

In the event the admission of Mr Rykov and Mr Khlan, the two Soviet soldiers, went off very smoothly, and I am very grateful for the efforts that your Department made, both here and in Islamabad, to achieve this. Press reaction seems to have been generally favourable.

We now need to consider what our attitude should be to further representations on behalf of Soviet soldiers wishing to come here. We have already been approached by Mr George Miller, who works for Count Tolstoy's Soviet Prisoners in Afghanistan Rescue Committee, on behalf of two further Soviet prisoners. I attach a brief note of the details that have been given to us about them. There was also a report in "The Times" last Monday that another two had written to the Prime Minister.

I have no wish to us to be regarded as the primary country of resettlement for Soviet prisoners in Afghanistan. There are several groups throughout the world (eg Vietnamese refugees in Hong Kong and British overseas citizens in India) for whom we could be said to have a more direct responsibility. Further, it should not be assumed that the admission of a substantial number of Russians, some of whom are or were drug addicts, would be popular with the British people. For your part you will, I imagine, be concerned to avoid any damage to Anglo-Soviet relations that might result from the admission of further Soviet soldiers, particularly in the context of your forthcoming visit to Moscow; and I know that there are sensitivities in relation to the Pakistan Government.

All this, it seems to me, points to the desirability of our making a further attempt to involve our Western allies in a joint approach. If that could be achieved, I would be ready to admit a proportion of the prisoners. Otherwise there is a danger that many will look to us for resettlement. I am aware

/that so far

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP

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that so far attempts to interest our partners in the Ten in a joint approach have failed to arouse any interest, but I think that it is important that a further effort should be made, at Ministerial level; and that we should also bring in the Americans.

I am prepared to hold off reaching a decision on Naumov and Chukin while such an exercise is mounted, and I would, of course, avoid taking action that might be embarrassing in connection with your visit to Moscow, but I expect that we shall soon come under pressure for a favourable decision, which it will be difficult to resist.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

W  
con,  
L  
sa