

Je Vc.



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

HETMAN

I should record briefly the conclusions of the meeting held this afternoon by the Prime Minister to discuss the minute of 3 September by the Foreign Secretary and the accompanying paper by officials on HETMAN. The Foreign Secretary, the Home Secretary, Sir A. Duff and "C" were present in addition to yourself.

It was decided that:

- (i) there was no realistic prospect that the Soviet Union would release HETMAN's family and therefore no advantage in pursuing further discussion of this possibility with them, either officially or on unofficial channels;
- (ii) it was recognised that this would be hard for HETMAN to accept. It should be explained to him that we had already risked a lot by the delay involved in the approach on unofficial channels to try to secure release of his family; and that further delay in taking action to remove Soviet intelligence officers in London was unacceptable;
- (iii) the appropriate response to the information provided by HETMAN was the expulsion of the 25 identified Soviet intelligence officers. The possibility of further expulsions would be kept open, to be decided in the light of the Soviet response;



- (iv) the expulsion of the 25 should be accompanied by a reduction in the overall ceiling for Soviet officials in London to 211. But to mitigate the likely Soviet retaliation against our Embassy in Moscow, we should offer an increase in the ceiling for diplomatic staff at the Soviet Embassy in London to 46;
- (v) we should not, for the time being, reduce the free travel area for Soviet officials in London. But the possibility of such a reduction should be kept in reserve in the light of the Soviet reponse to the expulsion of the 25;
- (vi) the decision to expel 25 Soviet officials should be communicated to the Soviet Chargé in London by a senior FCO official (or possibly a junior Minister). Parallel action should be taken by HM Ambassador in Moscow with Mr. Suslov;
- (vii) action should be taken very soon, probably on 9 September;
- (viii) a strong ground for early action was to minimise the risk of a prior summons to HM Ambassador Moscow from Mr. Gorbachev. Such a meeting would be intended, and could have the effect, of inhibiting our decision on the expulsion of the Soviet intelligence officers. If nonetheless it took place before we could act, a further Ministerial meeting might be needed to examine the consequences;
- (ix) a decision on how to respond to a Soviet request for access to HETMAN would have to be taken in the light of circumstances. Any such interview must only take place in the presence of a senior British official;
- (x) a precise text of what should be said to the Soviet Chargé (and to the Soviet authorities in Moscow)



should be prepared as soon as possible;

- (xi) the text of a press statement should similarly be prepared. This should make clear that action to expel the 25 Soviet officials was being taken following the defection of a Soviet official who had been Head of the KGB's operations in the United Kingdom for three years and who had provided a great deal of information about Soviet intelligence activities. Nothing should be said about the circumstances of his defection;
- (xii) it would also be necessary to prepare a line for Ministers to take in response to questions;
- (xiii) a message from the Prime Minister to President Reagan, to be sent on the direct line to the White House, should also be prepared but should be despatched only a matter of hours before action was being taken with the Soviet Chargé;
- (xiv) the texts in (x)-(xiii) would need to be cleared with the Prime Minister and other Ministers;
- (xv) meanwhile the circle of those aware of HETMAN's defection and the proposed expulsion of Soviet officials should remain very restricted. Press Officers and those who would need to know should be briefed only shortly before action was taken.

I am sending copies of this minute to the Private Secretaries to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Home Secretary, to Sir Antony Duff and to "C".

C.D.P.

CHARLES POWELL

4 September 1985