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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

Dear An,

HETMAN

Thank you for your letter of 6 September with which you enclosed texts for the Prime Minister's approval relating to the action to be taken with the Russians next week.

Texts

In general the Prime Minister was well content with these. Her main comment relates to the on the record statement to the press (E). She does not want the statement to mince words. The Russians were caught redhanded in intelligence activities and HETMAN was in a position to know all about them, both personnel and activities. The end of the first paragraph should therefore read:

"... defection to the UK of a senior member of the Soviet Embassy, Mr. Oleg Gordievsky. Mr. Gordievsky was in a position to know full details of Soviet intelligence activities and personnel in this country. Mr. Parshin was told that he had provided information showing that a significant number of Soviet representatives in London have been engaging in intelligence activities which are of course totally incompatible with their status and declared tasks. The scale and nature of the activities are completely unacceptable."

There is a small drafting point in the last paragraph of the draft message to President Reagan. The first sentence should read: "At this critical time in East/West relations, with your meeting with Gorbachev and that of President Mitterrand approaching ..."

Incidentally two different spellings of Parshin appear in the texts.

Procedure

The Prime Minister agrees with the procedure proposed. But the messages for President Reagan and President Mitterrand should not be despatched without specific authority from me.

Line for Ministers

Your letter promises this for early next week. The Prime Minister is concerned that it should be a robust line which puts the need for firm action to deal with Soviet intelligence activities as the first priority, with our interest in not allowing this action to block the development of Anglo/Soviet relations in second place. We should not convey any hint of apology: the blame for any damage to Anglo/Soviet relations and wider East/West dialogue belongs and must be placed firmly on Russian shoulders.

Timing of Action

You wrote to me separately about this. The Prime Minister is distinctly uneasy about the Foreign Secretary's recommendation that action should be postponed until 12 September. She has no doubt that the Russians will register her own and the Foreign Secretary's absence from London and will calculate that this may delay action, with the risk that they will try to pre-empt us by summoning Sir Bryan Cartledge. But she recognises the force of the presentational points put by the Foreign Secretary and would reluctantly be prepared to agree to wait until 12 September on the condition that we have contingency arrangements which would allow us to act within a matter of an hour or two were we to receive news before then that HM Ambassador Moscow had been summoned by Mr. Gorbachev. I should be grateful if such arrangements could be considered at Sir Robert Armstrong's meeting on 9 September so that I can subsequently report them to the Prime Minister.

I am copying this letter to Hugh Taylor in the Home Office, to Sir Robert Armstrong, Sir Antony Duff and to "C".

Yours sincerely  
Charles Powell

(CHARLES POWELL)

L.V. Appleyard, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.