

CONFIDENTIAL

FM MOSCOW

TO FLASH F C O

TELNO 1163

OF 121340Z SEPTEMBER 85

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YOUR TELNO. 872: EXPULSION OF SOVIET PERSONNEL FROM THE UK

1. I CALLED ON THE HEAD OF THE SECOND EUROPEAN DEPARTMENT OF THE SOVIET MFA, SUSLOV, AT 1430 MOSCOW TIME (1030Z) ON 12 SEPTEMBER AND CARRIED OUT THE INSTRUCTIONS IN YOUR TUR. I TOLD SUSLOV THAT THE SOVIET CHARGE D'AFFAIRES IN LONDON HAD BEEN CALLED TO THE FCO IN THE LAST HOUR IN ORDER TO RECEIVE CERTAIN COMMUNICATIONS: MY SECRETARY OF STATE WISHED THE SOVIET MFA TO HAVE FULL AND IMMEDIATE INFORMATION CONCERNING THESE DEMARCHES AND I HAD THEREFORE BEEN INSTRUCTED, EXCEPTIONALLY, TO TAKE PARALLEL ACTION IN MOSCOW. THIS WAS THE PURPOSE OF MY CALL. I THEN READ OUT THE SPEAKING NOTE USED BY MR GOODALL WITH PARSHIN AND HANDED OVER TEXTS OF THE TWO AIDE MEMOIRES DEALING WITH THE EXPULSIONS AND THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR CEILINGS RESPECTIVELY. ms

2. AFTER READING FROM THE SPEAKING NOTE, I SAID THAT, SPEAKING AS HM AMBASSADOR IN MOSCOW, I WISHED TO ADD A FURTHER COMMENT. I SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAD REGRETTABLY BEEN OBLIGED, AS ALWAYS, TO ACT IN DEFENCE OF THE SECURITY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM I HAD THE PERSONAL AUTHORITY BOTH OF MY PRIME MINISTER AND OF MY SECRETARY OF STATE TO SAY THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT NEVERTHELESS WISHED THE RECENT IMPROVEMENT IN ANGLO/SOVIET RELATIONS TO BE MAINTAINED, AND INDEED, TO BE DEVELOPED FURTHER.

3. SUSLOV HEARD ME OUT IN GLOOMY SILENCE. FROM GLANCES WHICH WERE EXCHANGED BETWEEN HIM AND HIS COUNSELLOR, USPENSKY, WHILE I WAS SPEAKING IT WAS FAIRLY CLEAR THAT THE SUBJECT OF MY CALL CAME AS NO SURPRISE. WHEN I HAD FINISHED, AND AFTER A LENGTHY PAUSE, SUSLOV ASKED WHETHER HE WAS TO UNDERSTAND THAT EVERYTHING I HAD TOLD HIM DEPENDED ON THE WORD OF ONE MAN WHO WAS IN LONDON AND WHO MIGHT BE PSYCHOLOGICALLY DERANGED? I DECLINED TO COMMENT. SUSLOV THEN EXPRESSED HIS REGRET AT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S 'HASTY AND UNJUSTIFIED DECISION': THIS WAS A VERY SERIOUS MATTER WHICH COULD NOT BUT HAVE CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. HE WOULD, IF NECESSARY, ASK ME TO CALL ON HIM AGAIN FOR A FURTHER EXCHANGE.

4. I THEN SAID THAT I DID NOT WISH TO CONCLUDE OUR MEETING WITHOUT EMPHASISING ONCE AGAIN THE REMARKS WITH WHICH I HAD ENDED MY STATEMENT. I HAD PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE SINCERITY AND DEPTH OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S AND YOUR WISH THAT THE RECENT IMPROVEMENT IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS SHOULD CONTINUE TO DEVELOP. THE AIDE MEMOIRE WHICH I HAD HANDED OVER ON THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR CEILINGS SHOULD BE SEEN AS SERIOUS AND CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF THAT DESIRE. SUSLOV REPLIED THAT THIS AND EARLIER STATEMENTS BY THE BRITISH SIDE DID NOT TALLY WITH THEIR PRACTICAL ACTIONS. I SAID THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S DECISION ON CEILINGS WAS PRECISELY A PRACTICAL ACTION WHICH FULLY REFLECTED OUR DECLARED ASPIRATION: IT WAS, IN ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES, A DECISION BY NO MEANS DEVOID OF POLITICAL DIFFICULTY. IT SHOULD IN NO WAY BE SEEN AS A COSMETIC ACT BUT AS A SERIOUS DEMONSTRATION OF THE IMPORTANCE WHICH WE ATTACHED TO A SOUND BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. DR SUSLOV SHOULD GIVE FULL WEIGHT TO THAT. TO THIS SUSLOV REPLIED THAT THE AIDE MEMOIRE WOULD BE STUDIED, ADDING THAT "EVEN IN MEDICINE ONE DID NOT NOW ALWAYS PROCEED STRAIGHT TO SURGERY". HE REPEATED THAT HE CONCLUDED FROM WHAT I HAD SAID THAT ON THE BASIS OF THE UNPROVEN WORDS OF ONE MAN WHO COULD SCARCELY BE TRUSTED, ACTIONS HAD BEEN TAKEN WHICH COULD NOT BUT HAVE CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS.

5. SUSLOV THEN SAID THAT HE DID NOT WISH TO PROLONG THE DISCUSSION: BOTH SIDES HAD POINTS TO MAKE AND THERE WERE CERTAINLY PLENTY WHICH THE SOVIET SIDE COULD RAISE. AS HE HAD NOT RAISED AT AN EARLIER STAGE CERTAIN GRIEVANCES WHICH THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES HAD AGAINST THE BRITISH SIDE AND AGAINST BRITISH PERSONNEL MOSCOW, IT WOULD BE EQUALLY UNTIMELY TO RAISE THEM NOW. I SAID THAT I WOULD LIKE TO LET OUR CONVERSATION REST ON THE FINAL SENTENCE OF MY OPENING REMARKS. AS I WAS LEAVING, SUSLOV SAID THAT THIS WAS "A FINE BEGINNING TO MY WORK IN MOSCOW". I SAID THAT NOBODY REJOICED IN EPISODES OF THIS NATURE: ONE COULD ONLY REGRET THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MADE THEM NECESSARY.

6. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, SUSLOV'S REACTION WAS RESTRAINED AND HIS Demeanour WAS MORE SORROWFUL THAN ANGRY. ALTHOUGH OUR REVELATION OF GORDIYEVSKIY'S DEFECTION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES CLEARLY CAME AS NO SURPRISE, I THINK THAT OUR CONCOMITANT AND POSITIVE DECISION ON CEILINGS WAS UNEXPECTED AND DID MAKE AN IMPRESSION. HOW MUCH IT WILL WEIGH IN THE BALANCE REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

CARTLEDGE