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PRIME MINISTER

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HETMAN

I shall not be able to attend your meetings this evening because I shall have departed for a short official visit to Canada. I am therefore sending you this note of my views in writing.

2. I had a meeting with those concerned this morning. The general view, with which I agree, is that, given the harshness of the Soviet response, and what was said to the Soviet Chargé and in public, it is not possible to make no further response: public opinion would not understand that.

3. On the other hand the Soviet response has been carefully planned to match our original action closely. In particular they have not expelled any of our Service people nor have they touched any of the Embassy's senior political staff. If we are to respond we can choose between further expulsions and other measures, for instance restricting the free travel area.

4. I should be against restricting the free travel area at this stage. That measure would change the category of the action in which we are engaged. The Russians would be bound to respond with a similar reduction in Moscow which would damage the morale of our remaining people there. We should therefore keep this in hand in case we are forced to a further stage. The Security Service is considering whether it might be possible to make partial rather than wholesale restrictions at the periphery of the free travel area in London so as to match exactly the Moscow pattern.

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5. If the response is to be expulsions my own conclusion would be that we should expel a further four people, none of whom have diplomatic status and would not therefore count against the diplomatic ceiling. These are two KGB cypher clerks in the Embassy; the London correspondent of Novosti and the Managing Director of the Soviet travel service CTC. The London Correspondent of Novosti is a co-opted KGB member.

6. The advantages of this course would be: none of the four would count against the diplomatic ceiling and we should not therefore have touched the position on that; we could justifiably claim that all four had intelligence-related functions though of a less important nature than of the 25 whom we expelled initially. We should make no further threats, and we should use whatever way is best to signal to the Russians that, provided there is no further response, as far as we are concerned that is the end of the matter.

7. Such a response would seem to me to be the best means of taking action without imposing further damage on our representation in Moscow and on Anglo-Soviet relations. If the Russians go for a further harsh response, we should be forced to consider further action on expulsions, ceilings and perhaps the free travel area; and this could deepen and prolong the freeze in Anglo-Soviet relations.

8. I am sending copies of this minute to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Home Secretary.

*Michael Storch*

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

*Approved by Sir Robert and signed in his absence.*  
15 September 1985