

C J R MEYER, NEWS

DATE: 16 SEPTEMBER 1985

Private Secretary

cc: PS/Mr Rifkind
PS/PUS
Mr Derek Thomas
Mr Llewellyn-Smith
Soviet Department

GORDIEVSKY: SECOND WAVE EXPULSIONS

1. The Secretary of State agreed earlier today to do interviews on the same basis as last week at the time of the expulsion of the 25, that is ITN, BBC TV, BBC Radio and IRN.
2. I recommend that the sequence of events might run as follows:
 - i) News Department releases the FCO statement between approximately 6.00 - 6.30 pm following the Soviet Chargé's call on Mr Thomas, now timed for 5.30 pm.
 - ii) The Secretary of State should give interviews in the Waiting Room from approximately 6.45 pm. An important consideration will be to catch the 7.00 News on Channel 4 which runs for a whole hour. I recommend, therefore, that the Secretary of State should run himself in with IRN and then do, in the following order:
 - Channel 4 Television (which, of course, doubles up for News at Ten);
 - BBC Radio;
 - BBC TV.
3. I submit points to make, cleared with Mr Thomas, together with the press pack which the Secretary of State had at hand for his interviews last Thursday. I will let you have, as soon as I get it from Soviet Department, a copy of the on-the-record statement that we will be making after Parshin's call.

C.J.R. Meyer

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EXPULSIONS: SECOND WAVE

POINTS TO MAKE

Why more expulsions?

- When the Soviet Chargé was informed of our decision to expel 25 Russians on 12 September, it was made crystal clear that any Soviet retaliation would be totally unjustified and would be viewed extremely seriously by British Government.
- Russians have chosen to ignore this in the unwarranted and malicious expulsion of 25 innocent people from Moscow. We had no choice but to take the action announced today.
- We are therefore expelling a further Soviet officials. Firm evidence that all these concerned in the unacceptable activities of Soviet intelligence services.

Whither Anglo-Soviet relations?

- Obviously will be some time before relations can return to normal. But government will not lose sight of long-term objective of seeking more productive relationship with Soviet Union.
- Severe set-back, but not of our choosing. Did not lightly decide on expulsions, having invested so much time, effort in developing dialogue with Russians.
- But improved relations with Moscow cannot be bought at expense of national security. Activities of 25 expelled last week and expelled today presented direct threat which had to be removed.

Britain miscalculated, bit off more than could chew?

- Severe Soviet reaction always on the cards.
- But activities of 25 presented intolerable situation which had to be remedied. Evidence incontrovertible. Grossly irresponsible not to have acted when we did.

Just an elaborate game of chess/petty tit for tat?

- For Britain matter of defending vital national interests against intelligence activities designed to undermine the security of the UK. Such activities carried out by Soviet officials identified by senior KGB defector.
- For Soviet Union matter of vindictive retaliation against innocent Britons.
- No comparison between British action, Soviet response.

Possibility of further Soviet retaliation? Where will it end?

- No desire to prolong this episode.
- There should have been no retaliation in the first place and there should be none now.
- Hope they have more sense than to retaliate again, have long-term UK/Soviet interests at heart.
- [If pressed on possible third British round.] Cannot anticipate decision which will have to be taken in light of all circumstances at the time.

But why weren't today's expulsions announced last week?

- Last week's 25 were the most flagrant first line examples identified by Gordievsky. The names announced today also directly involved in Soviet intelligence activities and, given Saturday's response, their presence could no longer be tolerated.

British action too mild/too tough?

- Have given most urgent and careful consideration to Soviet retaliation. Today's action considered appropriate response in all the circumstances.

3.

FCO dither on counter-retaliation?

- Urgent, but not rushed consideration of next step. Decision has been given serious and careful thought which it required.

Why diplomatic ceiling still at 46?

- Important that each side should be able to maintain viable Embassy for legitimate activities in the other's capital.