



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

6 April 1988

*Dear Charles,*Stockholm Document: UK Inspection of the Soviet Union

The Prime Minister may wish to be aware that it is our intention to invoke the provisions of the Stockholm Document in order to mount an inspection of a military activity in the Soviet Union taking place between 8 and 13 April in the Odessa region, an area close to Turkey. We plan that the inspection will begin on 10 April. It will last up to 48 hours. The exercise concerned has been notified by the Soviet Union under the Stockholm Document as involving 3,000 airborne troops. Observers are not invited since according to the information provided the numbers fall below the observable threshold of 5,000 troops for exercises involving amphibious landings or parachute assaults.

Given the proximity of the exercise to Turkey and Turkish interest in military activities in this part of the Soviet Union, we shall be giving the Turks advance warning in strictest confidence of what we intend, probably on 6 April, and seeking diplomatic clearance for the inspection team's flight into the Soviet Union. It is possible therefore that the subject might briefly be referred to in the course of the Prime Minister's discussions in Ankara.

This will be the eighth inspection under the Stockholm Document and the second by the United Kingdom (we mounted an inspection of the GDR last September). We see the exercise of the right of inspection as making a valuable contribution to the building of confidence between East and West and to establishing on-site verification as a regular and routine part of the Stockholm process. The inspections so far have passed off in a cordial manner but the Turks have hitherto been lukewarm about them, in part because they fear that they are natural candidates for "retaliatory" inspections (they saw the Soviet inspection of Turkey last October as to some extent a response to the US inspection of the Soviet Union in August). But recent soundings taken by the Embassy in Ankara indicate that they may now be more relaxed and may indeed be contemplating inspections of their own.

I am copying this letter to Brian Hawtin in the MOD.

L Parker

(L Parker)
Private Secretary

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