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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

18 February 1983

Prime MinisterA.J.C. 18.
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Dear John,

Visit of Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, Mr N S Ryzhov:17/18 February

At Cabinet on 17 February, Mr Hurd gave some information about Mr Ryzhov's visit. The Prime Minister asked for further details.

Talks are in principle held annually between a Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister and the Political Director in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. In practice they have been rather less frequent. They were held in 1978, 1979 and 1981. The talks which had been arranged for March 1982 were postponed because of events in Poland.

Mr Ryzhov's talks were mainly with Sir J Bullard, but he also called on Mr Hurd, Mr Rifkind and Sir A Acland. The talks covered a number of bilateral and international issues: from the British side we also raised human rights questions including certain individual cases, among them Shcharansky. Both Mr Rifkind and Sir J Bullard spoke about the rates owed to Camden Council by the Soviet Trade Delegation, the refusal of a visa to the new BBC correspondent in Moscow, Anglo-Soviet claims and the problem of Embassy sites in London and Moscow. On East/West relations, the British side emphasised once again the continuing adverse impact of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan but there was no sign of give in the Soviet position on this. Mr Ryzhov took a standard Soviet line on East/West issues, but with unexpectedly little criticism of the United States.

It became clear that Mr Ryzhov's main objective was to press for a positive response to recent Soviet proposals on arms limitation, especially those contained in the Prague Declaration by the Warsaw Pact countries.

/Mr Hurd's



Mr Hurd's own talks with Mr Ryzhov focussed almost entirely on arms control matters. Mr Ryzhov concentrated on the Prague Declaration, and particularly the proposal for a non-aggression pact. Mr Hurd questioned whether such a pact would add anything to the commitments already contained in the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act. He emphasised our hope that serious negotiations would begin soon in the Committee on Disarmament to achieve an agreement on the banning of production and stockpiling of chemical weapons. Mr Ryzhov said that the Soviet Union were prepared to start such negotiations.

Mr Hurd told Mr Ryzhov that it was unacceptable for the Russians to try to argue that account should be taken of the British and French nuclear weapons in the INF negotiations. He pointed out that our submarines were a small strategic force, and that the Soviet Union had so described them in Salt I. He added that we had said publicly that if the strategic threat to the UK were significantly reduced, we should be willing to look again at our position in relation to arms control. The Russians took careful note of this, although Mr Ryzhov reiterated that if all the SS20s were removed while the British and French nuclear forces remained, the result would not be 'equitable'.

We shall be giving our Community partners details of the talks at a briefing on 21 February, and will also be informing the Americans.

*You are
John Holmes*

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street



Soviet Delegation

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

21 February 1983

VISIT OF SOVIET DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER

The Prime Minister has noted the contents
of John Holmes' letter of 18 February.

A. J. COLES

R. B. Bone, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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