



TOP SECRET

HOME OFFICE  
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE  
LONDON SW1H 9AT

Prime Minister

30 August 1984

Dear Robin,

CDP  
30/8

ms

OLEG GEORGIEVICH BITOV

The Prime Minister should be aware that Mr Bitov, a Russian defector to the United Kingdom and former Foreign Culture Editor of the Soviet journal "Literary Gazette" has disappeared. (The circumstances in which Mr Bitov defected to this country and was granted asylum are recorded in Brian Fall's letter to John Coles of 21 October 1983).

The Security Services do not at present know precisely where Mr Bitov has gone but the strong circumstantial evidence points to his redefection to the Soviet Union. The evidence available at present does not show that force was used, but the circumstances of his sudden disappearance mean that this possibility cannot be ruled out entirely.

It is unlikely that his disappearance will remain secret for much longer and could break either as a result of Soviet publicity for his redefection, or as a result of enquiries by journalists here with whom he had established many contacts. A press line is being prepared for issue when the news breaks.

The questions this episode raises are being urgently pursued and we will keep you informed of significant developments.

A copy of this letter goes to Len Appleyard and Richard Hatfield.

Yours sincerely,  
H H TAYLOR

H H TAYLOR

Robin Butler, Esq.

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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

31 August 1984

Oleg Georgievich Bitov

BT/

The Prime Minister has noted with concern the information in your letter of 30 August to Robin Butler about the disappearance of Mr Bitov. She wishes to be kept closely informed of results of the investigation into this and would like to see an early report. I should be grateful if you could let me have such further information as is available by the evening of 4 September, before the Prime Minister's departure for Scotland.

I am copying this letter to Len Appleyard (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

C D Powell CST

Hugh Taylor, Esq.,  
Home Office