

SECRET

19A-E

cc 10



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

18 May 1989

Sean Chalks,

Pl. bring forward
on 23 May.

CBD 1075.

Czech Expulsions plot

Further to my letter of 15 May, I attach the speaking note which we propose to use with the Czech Ambassador on Wednesday 24 May.

As already agreed, we shall not initiate publicity in the hope of avoiding Czech retaliation. We propose, therefore, as in the case of the Russians, to decline to comment on what seem to be purely speculative questions. In the event of a more substantive leak or retaliation by the Czechs, which becomes public, the attached defensive press lines will be used. We have suggested including the names of those involved for the reasons explained in my letter of 17 May about the Soviet expulsions.

167 paper

You will see that in the Speaking Note the Czechs will be warned that retaliation could result in the imposition of a ratchet and ceiling system on the number of staff allowed at their Embassy in London and possibly jeopardise the Foreign Secretary's visit in July. Whether or not those threats should be implemented will have to depend on the extent of any retaliation.

I am copying this letter to Colin Walters (Home Office) and to the Director General of the Security Service.

James
Stephen Wall

(J S Wall)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

SECRET

SECRET (until used)

SPEAKING NOTE FOR USE WITH THE CZECHOSLOVAK AMBASSADOR

- The British Government continues to attach great importance to UK/Czechoslovak relations. This is underlined by our regular ministerial visits and political consultations and the expansion of contacts in all areas. Your Government's constructive and helpful approach over the problems of plastic explosives has been a good example of how our two countries can co-operate;
- We look forward to the development of a more constructive and fruitful relationship between our two countries;
- It is therefore the more regrettable that I have to raise again a problem about which I spoke to you last September.
- I shall give you a copy of this speaking note and should be grateful if you would report all I have said to your authorities.
- I have to draw to your attention the fact that the following four members of your staff have engaged in unacceptable intelligence activities in this country incompatible with their status:-

[Redacted]

Press Attache

[Redacted]

Second Secretary

[Redacted]

Third Secretary

[Redacted]

Technical Adviser,

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

/I must therefore

SECRET (UNTIL USED)

C

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 2(4)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

- I must therefore ask you to arrange for [redacted] to leave the United Kingdom within 14 days, that is, not later than 7 June;
- I made clear to you only last September that we will not tolerate the kind of hostile intelligence activities which Czechoslovak intelligence agencies have nevertheless continued to carry out. Despite regular warnings of this kind, such activities continue. We have also been obliged to refuse numerous visa applications from identified Czechoslovak intelligence officers;
- We very much regret that the Czechoslovak authorities have chosen to disregard these warnings. The British Government will not, however, be deflected from their efforts to improve Anglo-Czechoslovak relations. For this reason we have decided not to initiate any publicity for the expulsions;
- Any retaliation would be totally unjustified. I must remind you of the warning which I gave you last year about the possibility of the imposition of a system of ratchet and ceilings limiting the number of Czechoslovak diplomats and officials in the UK;
- Furthermore, we are well aware that other intelligence officers remain in your Embassy and retaliation could also result in action against them;
- We have no wish to risk this matter damaging the further development of our relations or jeopardising the Secretary of State's planned visit to Prague in July;
- For our part we are ready to put this incident behind us in the hope that there will be no need for it to be repeated in the future.

SECRET (UNTIL USED)

d

SECRET (until used)

CZECHOSLOVAK EXPULSIONS: ON THE RECORD STATEMENT

(to be used only if the story leaks)

1. The Czechoslovak Ambassador was asked to call on Sir John Fretwell on Wednesday 24 May. He was informed that four members of his staff, [redacted] and [redacted]

[redacted] had been found to have engaged in activities incompatible with their status. Mr Fidler was asked to arrange for their withdrawal within 14 days.

2. The Ambassador was told that we continue to attach importance to UK/Czechoslovak relations. But, while we wish to build up those relations, we are not prepared to relax our policy on the sort of activities in which the four expellees have engaged.

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

SECRET (until used)

e

SECRET (until used)

NOTES FOR SUPPLEMENTARIES (on the record)

[In the event of no retaliation]

What actually did those expelled do? What damage have they done to national security? A link with Van Harlem/Ludvik?

1. It is our invariable practice not to comment on such matters

Do you expect any retaliation?

2. Any retaliation would be totally unjustified

Are any further expulsions planned?

3. No, but we shall continue to take appropriate action against any foreign officials who engage in unacceptable activities

Why did you not announce the expulsions in the first place?

4. We look at each case on its own merits and on this occasion decided not to initiate publicity

But why not?

5. It is not our policy to comment on individual cases.

[Unattributably, if pressed]

The expulsions have reaffirmed to the Czechoslovaks our determination to deal with unacceptable activities and we saw no advantage in initiating publicity.

/Personal details

SECRET (until used)

SECRET (until used)

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

Personal details

8. [redacted] Press Attache

Age:39, married, arrived UK September 1986

[redacted] Second Secretary, Czechoslovak Embassy

Age:over 21 (38), married, arrived UK November 1986

[redacted] Third Secretary, Czechoslovak Embassy

Age:35, married, arrived UK April/May 1986

[redacted] Technical Adviser, Czechoslovak Embassy

Age:35, married, arrived UK September 1986.

How many Czechoslovaks have been expelled from UK?

9. Two in 1983
Two in 1984
Three in 1988

Did the Czechoslovaks retaliate on those occasions?

10. They did not in 1983. In 1984 they expelled two members of our Embassy staff in Prague and two others in 1988

[If Czechoslovaks retaliate]

11. This is entirely unjustified and a deliberate attempt to damage Anglo-Czechoslovak relations

/Will this

SECRET (until used)

SECRET (until used)

Will this mean a reduction in the ceiling on the number of Czechoslovaks allowed in their Embassy here?

12. We have not operated a ceiling on them.

[In the event of unreasonable retaliation]

13. But, in view of the totally unjustified retaliation, we have now informed the Ambassador that we shall be imposing such a ceiling to limit their staff to .

SECRET (until used)

SOVIET UNION (Relata) PT 12

