



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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London SW1A 2AH

23 May 1989

CDP
24/5

Dear Charles,

The application of a ceiling to British organisations
in Moscow

On the Foreign Secretary's instructions, the Political Director, Sir John Fretwell, summoned the Soviet Chargé (Ivanov) earlier this afternoon and spoke in accordance with the attached note, which he subsequently handed over. Fretwell stressed that the measures described by Sergeyeve to our Embassy in Moscow did not involve parity of treatment. The ceiling which we imposed applied only to Soviet staff at the Embassy and certain other organisations, but did not extend to British nationals employed by Soviet organisations. Fretwell pointed out that we understood that some 400 British nationals were employed by these organisations. He also drew particular attention to the last sentence of the note.

Ivanov responded by complaining about the ceiling which we imposed in 1971, saying that it complicated the work of the Soviet Embassy. He added that his authorities had felt that the imposition of a ceiling on the British Embassy and organisations in Moscow was "a necessary measure" following the "unfriendly action" of last week's expulsions.

Fretwell did not allow the discussion to focus on the expulsions issue, but stressed that the measures proposed by the Soviet authorities were not parallel to the ceiling which we impose, and would not contribute to an improvement of Anglo-Soviet relations. Ivanov undertook to report to his authorities the points which had been made.

We have now sent Sir Rodric Braithwaite an account of this meeting, and have asked him to take action in parallel with Chernyayev in Mr Gorbachev's office. This will also provide an opportunity for the Ambassador to refer again to the Prime Minister's letter to Mr Gorbachev.

I enclose a copy of our press line about Ivanov's call.

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

Jans.
Stephen Wall

(J S Wall)
Private Secretary

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10 Downing Street

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SPEAKING NOTE

1. The Minister at the Embassy in Moscow, Mr Noel Marshall, was summoned by Mr Sergeyev, a Deputy Head of UPDK, on the afternoon of Monday 22 May. Mr Sergeyev said that the total number of staff, both British and Soviet, working for British organisations in Moscow would have to be reduced to 205. The organisations concerned included the Embassy, British firms, banks, airline companies, and press representatives. Soviet staff included individually engaged domestic staff.

2. We should like to point out that the measures described by Mr Sergeyev do not involve parity of treatment. The British ceiling applies only to Soviet staff in the following categories:

Diplomats at the Soviet Embassy

Non-diplomatic staff at the Soviet Embassy

Staff appointed temporarily to the Soviet Embassy when they will be staying in the UK for more than 3 months

Diplomats and officials at the Soviet Trade Delegation

Staff appointed temporarily to the Soviet Trade Delegation when they will be staying in the UK for more than 3 months

Staff of various ancillary organisations (including Aeroflot, shipping organisations, Intourist, newspaper representatives and Tass, the Moscow Norodny Bank and various trading organisations)

Staff appointed temporarily to these ancillary organisations when they will be staying in the UK for more than 3 months.

This ceiling does not however include the British nationals who are employed by the organisations listed above. We understand that some 400 British nationals are employed by these organisations.

3. In addition the ceiling does not cover well over 100 other Soviet officials who are working in the UK in various capacities.

4. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office wish therefore to point out that the ceiling proposed by Mr Sergeev does not rest on a sound basis of parity. We should be grateful if the Soviet authorities would take a fresh look at their proposals in the light of this consideration. If the Soviet Union are serious in seeking to establish the principle of reciprocity they need to think again about the full implications of the formulae they have put forward.