

Soviet Union

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

✓ cc. Mr. Ingham
Mr. Coles (o/r)

Mr. Dolgov, Counsellor at the Soviet Embassy, telephoned me at 1700 yesterday. He said that he was calling on the instructions of his Ambassador. The Ambassador had been instructed by President Brezhnev to seek an interview with the Prime Minister. The purpose of the interview was to discuss "US/Soviet relations" and to pass on the President's "personal congratulations" to the Prime Minister. Mr. Dolgov said that there was some urgency about his request.

I consulted the FCO. Their advice was that the Prime Minister should refuse to see the Soviet Ambassador. They felt this was an attempt by the USSR to show that they were still on good relations with the Ten, despite the situation in Poland, and the measures announced by President Reagan. In these circumstances, to receive the Soviet Ambassador would embarrass the Americans. The FCO were confirmed in their view by the fact that Signor Spadolini had received a similar request from the Soviet Ambassador in Rome. Signor Spadolini was being advised to refuse this request.

In any case, the FCO pointed out that it was not normal practice for Prime Ministers to receive Ambassadors unless there was a specific, important, and urgent reason for doing so. The Soviet request in this case was hardly specific. The FCO advised that the Ambassador should be asked to address himself to the FCO through the usual channels.

I subsequently spoke to the Prime Minister, who accepted the FCO's advice. I then told Mr. Dolgov that the Prime Minister would be grateful if his Ambassador could address himself to the Foreign Office through the usual channels.

WFS

31 December, 1981