



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Knowledge Management Dept
Hanslope Park
Hanslope
Milton Keynes MK19 7BH

Mr George Nixon

By email to: request-598344-621775c7@whatdotheyknow.com

23 September 2019

Dear Mr Nixon,

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST – REF: 0816-19

We are writing with our reply to your email of 20 August 2019 requesting access, under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), to information held by the FCO. You asked for:

“I would be much obliged to receive the list of names of Soviet personnel expelled in September 1971 as part of Operation Foot. If the information is still classed as secret, please indicate when it is due to be declassified.”

Information to assist: 90 people were expelled from the UK whilst a further 15, who were waiting for their visas to be renewed, were also declared persona non grata. Therefore there should be a total of 105 names of Soviet personnel dismissed from the Soviet embassy in London, Aeroflot, Intourist, U M O Plant Ltd, the Moscow Narodny Bank, the Russian Wood Agency, and others. The list was first revealed to the Soviets by Alec Douglas-Home, who was then serving in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as Foreign Minister in Heath's Cabinet.”

We emailed you to clarify that we should undertake a search for information on Operation Foot for 1971 only and on 27 August, you confirmed that this was the case:

“Yes, I am specifically looking at Operation Foot in 1971. 105 Soviet personnel (from the embassy, trade delegation, intourist, wood company, etc), were reported to have been declared non grata, I would like at least the names please. Any other information, such as where they worked, job title, address, etc would also be good to know if, and as far as, possible.”

We can confirm the FCO holds the information you have requested.

Following a review to consider possible release, we have concluded that the material should be withheld under FOIA Section 23 (1).

Section 23 (1) states that *information held by a public authority is exempt information if it was directly or indirectly supplied to the public authority by, or relates to, any of the bodies specified in subsection (3).*

Section 23 is an absolute exemption and therefore we are not required to consider the public interest in disclosure.

If you would like a review of our decision, or if you wish to make a complaint, please write to the Central FOI Unit, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Room WH2.177, King Charles Street, London, SW1A 2AH. E-mail: foi-dpa.pmcs@fco.gov.uk. You have 40 working days to do so from the date of this letter.

You can apply directly to the Information Commissioner. However, the Information Commissioner will not normally make a decision unless you have first exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the FCO. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,

Historical FOI Team
Knowledge Management Department



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