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bc PC

10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

19 November 1986

*From the Private Secretary*

**PROPOSED VISIT BY LORD WILSON TO THE SOVIET UNION**

Thank you for your letter of 18 November about the difficulties which arise from a proposal by Lord Wilson to visit the Soviet Union.

The Prime Minister is content with the line which it is proposed to take with Lord Wilson but feels that the Foreign Secretary must really explain the matter personally to him rather than doing it through his office. We have had recent experience where pursuing the latter route has led to complications.

(C.D. POWELL)

C.R. Budd, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

AB



IN CONFIDENCE

CCF



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

18 November 1986

Prime Minister  
Oh dear! This is probably right, but perhaps Lady Long should speak directly to Lord Wilson to explain COP 18 Jan

Dear Charles,

Proposed Visit by Lord Wilson to the Soviet Union

The Foreign Secretary would like you to be aware of the problems arising from a proposal by Lord Wilson to visit the Soviet Union from 27 November to 3 December.

Lord Wilson will be accompanying representatives of the I.C.E. Group Ltd, a commercial firm interested in hotel construction. He has asked to stay at the Embassy.

This raises two problems:

(i) the poor commercial reputation of the I.C.E. Group, whose organisation of an exhibition in China in July 1985 led to numerous complaints to the DTI from exhibitors. Sir Bryan Cartledge believes that it would be damaging to be too closely associated with this Group.

(ii) Lord Wilson's own failing memory and increasing tendency (demonstrated during his last visit in 1983) to indulge in irrelevant and repetitive reminiscence at meetings with Soviet hosts.

For both reasons, we believe that the Embassy should not be too closely associated with Lord Wilson's visit, and that their involvement should be limited to what is required by the courtesy due to an ex-Prime Minister.

We therefore propose to tell Lord Wilson's office that it is established policy that our Embassies should not be seen to be quite so closely and extensively associated with one commercial company as Lord Wilson's stay would imply. We shall go on to suggest that while engaged in I.C.E. business Lord Wilson should stay at a hotel, along with other company representatives. The Ambassador will however be happy to put him up for that part of his time in which he is not engaged in commercial business, eg the weekend.

It is rather sad that we should be put in this position, which we should much prefer to avoid; but Lord Wilson shows no signs of calling a <sup>halt</sup> talk to his overseas travel.

Yours ever,  
Colin Budd

C D Powell Esq  
PS/10 Downing Street

(C R Budd)  
Private Secretary

IN CONFIDENCE

Lord Wilson  
to explain  
COP  
18 Jan  
I would be talking to the P.C.S. to protect him  
not

OLD

John Eden



New file

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EX PM's series <sup>mt</sup>

~~AD~~  
With the compliments of

15/10  
Roger Bone

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE  
LONDON, SW1A 2AH





Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

11 October 1982

Prime Minister

To see.

Dear Lady Fieldhouse,

*mt*

A.J.C. - <sup>12</sup>/<sub>10</sub>

Thank you for your letter of 5 October about Sir Harold Wilson's proposed visit to the Soviet Union in late November.

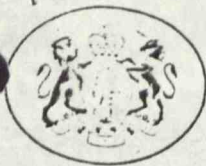
Mr Pym has considered this suggestion very carefully. He does not doubt that Sir Harold Wilson's experience of the Soviet Union and the regard in which he is held by the Soviet leadership would lead to interesting and senior-level discussions in Moscow, which might well offer useful insights into Soviet thinking. However, Mr Pym is concerned that now might not be the appropriate time for Sir Harold to visit Moscow in his capacity as President of the GB-USSR Association.

The Association is, of course, largely funded by HMG, and a visit to Moscow by its President would inevitably be regarded by the Soviet Government as to some extent involving and having the specific approval of HMG. In view of Sir Harold Wilson's decision to cancel the visit which he had arranged in January 1980 (which would also have been in his capacity as President of the Association) because of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, a visit by him now might convey the wrong signal to the Russians, implying that Britain no longer took so serious a view of their actions in Afghanistan and also of their complicity in the declaration and maintenance of martial law in Poland. As you know, the Government's policy remains to avoid high-level political contacts except where these are deemed particularly advantageous.

A further point is that, as we understand it, Sir H Wilson would be going to Moscow primarily as part of the exchange of specialists on international affairs envisaged in the Association's present programme with its Soviet counterpart. Since the Soviet visitor to the UK under this exchange was a Pravda journalist, for Sir H Wilson to go in return would add to the impression that a major signal was intended, which makes it all the more likely that the Russians would seek to give the visit a strong political character.

/Mr Pym's





Mr Pym's advice would therefore be to defer any visit by Sir Harold in his capacity as President of the GB-USSR Association for the time being. A British academic or journalist could fulfil the exchange of international affairs specialists, and the programme discussions between the Association and its Soviet counterpart for 1983 could be adequately conducted by the Association's Director and/or Sir Fitzroy Maclean.

The above considerations would not of course apply in the same degree to a visit by Sir Harold in a personal capacity. When Sir Fitzroy Maclean rang the junior minister responsible for East/West relations last week to ask how things stood, I gather that Mr Rifkind spoke to him on these lines. Mr Rifkind asked whether, if Sir Harold were particularly keen to go, it might not for instance be possible to revive his previous invitation from the Soviet Union for May 1981, which we gather was a purely personal one and which was not in the event taken up. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary would have no objection to a visit of this style provided that ways could be found to make its personal nature clear to the Russians.

We should be grateful to hear what Sir Harold finally decides. Mr Pym would of course be happy to discuss the matter further with him personally should he so wish.

*Yours sincerely*

*R B Bone*

(R B Bone)  
Private Secretary

Lady Falkender  
Private Secretary to the Rt Hon  
Sir Harold Wilson KG OBE FRS MP  
House of Commons  
LONDON SW1A 0AA



From the office of  
Rt.Hon.Sir Harold Wilson, KG OBE FRS MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

5th October 1982

*J.H.L.* 2. EEESA for advice +  
off reply for PS per in  
consultation PS with ERD.  
PS/R.P.J.L.D  
CRD  
all 6/10.

Dear Private Secretary,

Sir Harold Wilson has asked me to write to you about a request which has come to him to visit the Soviet Union.

Sir Harold has been asked whether he would be able to undertake a visit there on behalf of the Great Britain-USSR Association, of which he is President.

I think it is proposed that Sir Harold would be accompanied on the visit by other members, including Sir Fitzroy Maclean. It would be Sir Harold's intention to undertake the visit from the 27th November to the 2nd December.

However, before making any decision about this invitation, he would very much welcome the Foreign Secretary's advice and comments.

Sir Harold is at the moment, as you will know, on a visit to the United States and is not back in the United Kingdom as from Monday, the 11th October.

Yours sincerely,

*Narcia Falkender*

Private Secretary.

Private Secretary to  
The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.