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Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Agree that the Foreign Secretary should inform Parliament by written answer that this member of the South African Embassy will not be allowed to return to the U.K.?

London SW1A 2AH

13 December, 1982

John [unclear]

A.S.C. 14/12

No. We are on lucky ground. It was the S. Mitchell who told us they were to withdraw him. [unclear]

South African Intelligence Activities in the UK: Klue

There has been a long history of allegations of South African Embassy involvement in improper activities. The Ambassador was warned last year that any member of his staff shown to have behaved in a manner incompatible with his official status would be required to leave the country.

Earlier this year incontrovertible evidence was obtained that a member of the staff of the South African Embassy, Warrant Officer Klue, was involved in the organisation of burglaries and other offences against the ANC and SWAPO offices in London. Three men have subsequently been charged with these offences and committed for trial. Although we made it clear to the South African Ambassador that Klue's activities were unacceptable, we did not seek his immediate withdrawal because of the risk, confirmed by the Attorney General, that to do so could prejudice legal proceedings in this case, since Klue was a potential witness either for the prosecution or the defence. Instead our first step was to ask the South Africans to waive Klue's diplomatic immunity so that he could appear as a witness. The South Africans refused, and told us they were to withdraw him. We thereupon gave him seven days to leave the country and made clear that, had it not been for the legal constraint, we would have sought his earlier withdrawal. He will not be allowed to return. Klue left the UK on 23 November.

Although we were prepared to answer questions about Klue, whose name had been publicly linked with the SWAPO and ANC break-ins, we chose not to take the initiative in publicising our action against him. This was in order to minimise the risk of retaliation by the South African authorities against our own staff in Pretoria, and to reduce the overall impact of this case on our already tense relations with the South Africans. Surprisingly, neither the press nor MPs have asked any specific questions on this subject and we have made no statement to date. However, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary now considers that we should inform Parliament of what we have done. The Anti-Apartheid Movement, and in particular its Chairman, Mr Robert Hughes MP, shows persistent interest in South African intelligence activities in London, and it would strengthen our response to his questions if we could reveal to him that Klue has been withdrawn. (I understand that the Home Secretary is to write to Mr Hughes shortly). The Zotov case has focussed parliamentary and public interest on the timing of announcements

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of expulsions or withdrawals of foreign diplomats. It would also be better to release this information ourselves in a controlled and manageable fashion. Mr Pym therefore proposes to make an announcement through an inspired PQ in the near future.

I should be grateful if you could confirm the Prime Minister's agreement to this procedure. I attach a draft incorporating a suggested form of words.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretary to the Home Secretary and to the Attorney General.

Yours sincerely,

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street

WRITTEN PQ

QUESTION:

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many diplomats, other than Mr Zotov, have been expelled in the last six months for activities incompatible with their official status?

ANSWER:

A member of the staff of the South African Embassy was withdrawn in November following an approach by my Department to the South African Ambassador. We had good reason to believe that the officer concerned, Warrant Officer Klue, had been engaged in activities incompatible with his official status in this country. Warrant Officer Klue will not be allowed to return.