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CONSIDERATION OF EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO ENHANCE THE
PROTECTION, SECURITY AND SAFETY OF DIPLOMATIC AND
CONSULAR MISSIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES

Addendum

Report of the Secretary-General

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B. Views received from States pursuant to paragraph 11 of
General Assembly resolution 40/73

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

[Original: English]

[1 December 1986]

1. The Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations ... has the honour to refer to document A/41/547 of 17 September 1986, which contains comments submitted to the Secretary-General by the Permanent Mission of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations.

2. In paragraphs 9 and 10, on pages 20 and 21 of document A/41/547, the Soviet Union refers to certain alleged incidents in the United Kingdom which took place in the period from June 1985 to mid-September 1986. The Government of the United Kingdom wish to make the following points:

(a) Concerning the examination of two Soviet diplomats and couriers at Heathrow airport, the measures from which the Soviet complaint arose were introduced solely in the interests of aviation security. There was no intention to discriminate against the Soviet Union or to compel diplomatic couriers to submit to a search. An official of the Protocol Department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office explained this to an official from the Soviet Embassy on 15 November 1985. The Soviet official expressed gratitude for the courteous and efficient treatment of Soviet couriers at Heathrow airport since the Soviet complaint had been made.

(b) With regard to break-ins and damage to Soviet diplomatic vehicles, such incidents are regretted. Each incident is thoroughly investigated by the British authorities which are taking, and will continue to take, all appropriate steps to protect the property of diplomats in London. Unfortunately, as in many large cities throughout the world, damage to and theft from private vehicles is a common crime in London.

(c) With regard to the incident at the Soviet Ambassador's out-of-town residence, the police inspected the scene on 18 November 1985. The police authorities found no evidence that the incident had been politically motivated. They have subsequently been asked to exercise increased vigilance in the area.

(d) Following a thorough investigation into the break-in at the Information Department of the Soviet Embassy, a formal reply to the Soviet complaint was made on 17 February 1985. The British authorities expressed their regret at the incident and stated that every reasonable effort would be made to ensure that there was no repetition. Police patrols in the area were increased and the British authorities expressed their willingness to pay compensation for the damage caused on presentation of a claim supported by a precise estimate of the damage and loss suffered.

(e) Lastly, in paragraph 10 of their comments in document A/41/547, the Soviet Union makes some remarks about the illegal parking of diplomatic vehicles. Parking regulations relating to diplomats in London in no way contravene the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961. The United Kingdom Government would wish to draw attention to article 41 of this Convention which requires all persons enjoying privileges and immunities to respect the laws and regulations of the receiving State.

3. The Government of the United Kingdom wishes to take this opportunity of drawing attention to some examples of incidents involving the harassment of their post and personnel in Moscow:

(a) Over the period October 1985 to November 1986 the British Embassy in Moscow has recorded a series of serious incidents involving damage to vehicles owned by Embassy staff, illegal entry of staff residential premises and theft. There have been 7 instances of nails being found in tyres of Embassy vehicles and 10 cases of damage to vehicles, including deliberate cutting of one accelerator cable and one brake cable. Six instances of theft from locked cars have been recorded.

(b) In the same period there have been 51 cases of illegal entry into apartments of Embassy staff, including 12 occasions when freezers in the apartments were deliberately switched off and 3 major thefts of jewellery. These apartments are located in special residential blocks for foreigners, access to which is controlled by the Soviet police, who also patrol the car-parking area.

(c) The Soviet authorities are aware of these incidents through frequent reports and protests made by the British Embassy in Moscow. Notwithstanding this, since the last protest on 4 November 1986, there have been three more thefts, one from a staff apartment and two from parked vehicles in the car parks of apartment blocks.

4. In connection with this series of incidents, the authorities of the United Kingdom look forward to receiving the same detailed responses to their complaints as they have offered in relation to the complaints of the Soviet Embassy in London.
