

Ireland Warned of Tit-for-Tat

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The  **Moscow Times**

The Foreign Ministry threatened retaliation Wednesday after Ireland expelled a Russian diplomat in a dispute over the use of forged Irish passports by Russian agents in the United States.

Ireland asked the Russian diplomat to leave after a police investigation showed that Russian intelligence had stolen the identities of Irish citizens to forge passports for use by a spy ring operating in the United States.

"This groundless and unfriendly act will not go without a corresponding reaction," Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Titov said, Interfax reported.

The diplomatic dispute follows on the heels of several tit-for-tat expulsions between Moscow and other Western countries after charges of spying and intelligence activities.

Both Russia and Britain carried out mutual diplomatic expulsions in December after London cited evidence of Russian intelligence service activities against British interests.

Earlier last year, 10 Russian spies uncovered by Washington were deported from the United

States in a Cold War-style spy swap.

The Irish government last June called on Israel to withdraw a staffer at its Dublin embassy over the use of fake passports in the assassination of a Hamas commander in Dubai.

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