

Russia 'intimidating' Brits, official says

by UPI

MOSCOW -- The British Council closed two of its Russian offices amid escalating "intimidation" over diplomatic disputes. The BBC said British officials on Thursday closed offices in St. Petersburg and Yekaterinburg amid pressure from the Russian intelligence services who summoned British staff members or questioning. The closure follows an encounter the organization's director Stephen Kinnock had with Russian authorities over an alleged drunken driving that Downing Street said was an act of Russian "intimidation," The New York Times reported Thursday. The row is part of ongoing diplomatic tensions between London and Moscow concerning the death of former KGB officer Alexander Litvinenko who died in London in November 2006 from polonium 210 poisoning. Scotland Yard accused another former KGB officer Andrei Lugovoi in the case and Moscow refused to hand him over for prosecution.

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