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Secret Soviet pact with U.S. on embassy radiation

By RICHARD BEESTON in Washington

THE United States Government is reported to have made a secret pact with Russia to remove some of the electronic intelligence-gathering equipment from the roof of the American Embassy in Moscow, in return for a reduction in the Russians' microwave radiation bombardment of the building.

The Russians began directing microwaves at the Embassy in the early 1960s as a counter-measure against American electronic spying.

The Evans and Novak syndicated news service in America reported yesterday that some electronic equipment on the Embassy roof used to penetrate confidential Soviet communications had now been removed and in return Russian radiation had been reduced.

The microwave radiation remains well above danger levels, however, and has led to repeated complaints that Embassy staff, including the Ambassador, Mr Walter Stoessel, have been physically affected.

A number of angry senior diplomats who have served in Russia were reported yesterday to be considering demanding a full explanation from the State Department about just what they

were exposed to in Moscow and what risks they underwent.

The *Washington Post*, which has interviewed a group of diplomats and their families, quoted one American official as saying: "If you ask me this is an issue that we ought to threaten to break relations over.

"It's ridiculous that we sit back and let them bombard the Embassy with radiation that may cause serious health problems."

Cancer rate

According to one report circulating among wives, a nurse who served in the Moscow Embassy has taken an informal tally that suggests an abnormally high rate of cancer among the diplomat's group.

Last week the State Department sent a doctor to the Embassy in Moscow to try to determine if two cases of lymphatic cancer and one of anaemia could be attributed to the radiation.

Mr Stoessel is reported to be suffering from anaemia. State Department officials say he made several unpublicised trips to America for treatment during the past year.