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confidential filing.

The Labour Party National Executive Committee (NEC)
Study Group examining policy issues related to
the Security Services.

SECURITY.

February 1981.

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
6-2-81.							
10-2-81.							
28-7-82.							
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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

LABOUR PARTY DISCUSSION
DOCUMENT ON THE SECURITY SERVICES

The Prime Minister has seen and noted your minute A09136 of 27 July 1982 about the Discussion Document on the Security Services which has been prepared by a Study Group of the Labour Party National Executive Committee. She is grateful for this early warning.

I am sending copies of this minute to Mr Halliday (Home Office), Mr Fall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), and Mr Omand (Ministry of Defence).

JAW.

28 July 1982

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AND PERSONAL

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Prime Minister. 4

RW
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Ref. A09136

PRIME MINISTER

Labour Party Discussion Document on the Security Services

--- I attach a short article reporting the conclusions of a Discussion Document on the Security Services, prepared by a Study Group of the Labour Party National Executive Committee (NEC), which appeared in "The Labour Weekly" dated 25 June. We have since had unofficial access to the full Discussion Document and it is clear that the article accurately describes the report and its conclusions. The document has not yet been published; we understand that the NEC fully intend to publish it but no date has been fixed.

2. The Discussion Document includes a comprehensive description of what the Group has been able to piece together about each of the institutions concerned with security and intelligence. It acknowledges that much of the basis of the Study is provided by the recent Bills sponsored by Labour MPs such as Robin Cook (Security Services), Bob Cryer (Interception of Communications) and Frank Hooley (Freedom of Information), together with the written works of journalists such as Duncan Campbell. Much of the substance of the Report is based on misunderstandings about the security and intelligence machinery and there are a number of factual inaccuracies.

3. Many of the misconceptions and inaccuracies occur in the section concerned with the organisation and function of each of the institutions responsible for Security and Intelligence; for example the Cabinet Office and/or the "Co-ordinator of Security and Intelligence" are described as being "in control" of the Security Service, SIS, DIS and GCHQ; the Director GCHQ is described as being "nominally responsible to the Foreign Office but is in fact at least equally responsible to the Cabinet Office and American control".

4. The publication of this document will no doubt lead to further comment and questions about the security and intelligence services.

5. I am copying this minute and the annex to the Secretaries of State for the Home Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and Defence.

RA
ROBERT ARMSTRONG

27 July 1982

The Security Services

The next Labour government will ensure through a series of measures that our Security Services become accountable to democratic institutions. There is a need to strike a balance between the undoubted security requirements of a country and its individual and collective rights. In the absence of a clear framework of duties, the Security Services have drifted into practices which undermine the very freedoms they are supposed to defend. Arising out of a consultative paper and a National Executive Committee Study, we will shortly publish a Discussion Document on the Security Services. This suggests lines of action for the next Labour government which will bring the Security Services within a constitutional framework. We set out below the basic outlines of our approach.

We believe that Labour should, for the first time, legally establish the Security Services through an Act of Parliament which will have to be renewed annually.

This Security Act could:

- define powers and terms under which the Security Services operate and provide comprehensive definitions of presently ambiguous terms such as 'subversion';
- in the context of our determination to introduce a Freedom of Information Act, replace the all embracing and outdated espionage sections of the Official Secrets Act with provisions which relate strictly to wilful espionage;
- ensure that an annual Security Services Report is compiled by the relevant ministers and debated by parliament;
- abolish 'D' notices which act as devices for unofficial censorship.

Parliamentary accountability, which in reality is almost non-existent, must also be extended by a further series of measures. Among the proposals to be included in the Discussion Document are the following:

- the establishment of a Parliamentary Select Committee on Security Services whose comments would accompany the Annual Report to Parliament and which would oversee the issue of interception warrants;
- extending the rights of MPs to receive answers to parliamentary questions relating to the Security Services which presently are blocked;
- bringing security services expenditure, like the expenditure of all other public services, under scrutiny by clarifying the public accounts available to parliament.

The rights of the individual citizen will be reinforced by our commitments to the Freedom of Information Act and the Data Protection Act mentioned earlier. The Labour party will control the interception of mail and telephone tapping. We are therefore considering the introduction of an Interception of Communications Act. This would permit only in certain clearly defined circumstances, and regulate both the issuing of warrants and the informing of those who have been under surveillance.

Equally as important as national accountability will be the local accountability of the Security Services. This particularly applies to the activities of the Special Branch. We believe that Special Branch officers like all other police ranks should be enabled to join the trade union of their choice. We would suggest that the Special Branch sections of chief constables' annual reports which are at present optional should become mandatory so that local Police Authorities are fully aware of the local security presence. Such mandatory reports could then be collated by the Home Secretary to give a national picture of the strength and scope of the Special Branch.

Apart from regaining control of the public sector security services, we believe that proper regulation of the private sector is also essential. Hence the next Labour government must seriously consider establishing a Private Security Registration Council to oversee and licence private security companies.

It is our belief that only by establishing clear lines of accountability will those who are charged with the difficult and sensitive task of protecting our freedom be able to enjoy greater public acceptance and respect than is now the case.

Ref: A04228



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Sec 3
Prime Minister
To note x/ [initials]

*(on advice you asked
for advice).*

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MR. WHITMORE

Thank you for your minute of 9th February.

2. I enclose a copy of the letter which I have now sent to Mr. Hayward.

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3. I can see no objection to the Prime Minister saying in the House of Commons, if she is asked, that she understands that under the previous Administration the National Executive Committee was informed, on Mr. Callaghan's authority, that the Study Group could not look for any help or information from official sources beyond what has already been published.

RA

(Robert Armstrong)

10th February 1981

SECRET



SECRET



(Name: Minister)

To: Mr. X

(In: ...)

(By: ...)

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SECRET

1. I enclose a copy of the letter which has now
 been sent to Mr. Hayward.

2. I am sure that no objection to the British Minister
 being in the House of Commons, in the event of his
 being asked to give evidence, will be raised. The
 Government will, of course, be prepared to give
 evidence in the House of Commons, if necessary, and
 will, of course, be prepared to give evidence in the
 House of Commons, if necessary, and will, of course,
 be prepared to give evidence in the House of Commons,
 if necessary, and will, of course, be prepared to
 give evidence in the House of Commons, if necessary.

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CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 8319

From the Secretary of the Cabinet: Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO

Ref: A04233

10th February 1981

At the end of last month you wrote to certain senior officials inviting them to talk to the Study Group set up by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party to examine the policy issues related to the Security Services.

The Prime Minister has authorised me to let you know that, while she will be ready to arrange for you (if you so wish) to be provided with references to sources of published official material relating to the Security Services, it will not be possible for officials to respond to invitations that they should come and talk to the Study Group.

I should be grateful if you would regard this letter as being in effect the reply to the letters of invitation which you have sent.

Ron Hayward, Esq., CBE

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

The Prime Minister has seen your minute A04210 of 6 February 1981 about the invitation which the Study Group set up by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party to examine the policy issues related to the Security Services has sent to a number of leading figures in the Intelligence world asking them to talk to the Group.

She is content for you to reply to Mr. Ron Hayward in the terms of the draft attached to your minute.

The Prime Minister has asked whether she is at liberty, if questioned in the House, to say that her decision in respect of the Study Group's approach to officials is the same as her predecessor's. I should have thought that it was open to the Prime Minister to say this since, for all practical purposes, Mr. Callaghan's decision, once conveyed to the NEC, was in the public domain, but I should be grateful for your advice.

C. A. WHITMORE

9 February 1981

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PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister -

Yes: Ann! Announcing name with that my at liberty, if he agrees? the House to say that are 6: my predecessor?

A little over two years ago there was a proposal for the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party to set up a Study Group "to examine the policy issues related to the Security Services". The National Executive Committee was informed, on your predecessor's authority, that the Study Group could not look for any help or information from official sources beyond what had already been published.

2. No more was heard about the Study Group at that time, perhaps because those concerned (who included Mr. Benn) were caught up in more urgent political business. Evidently, however, the proposal did not die. It has been revived, and the Director General of the Security Service, 'C', the Director General of Intelligence (Ministry of Defence), and the Intelligence Co-ordinator have all received letters within the last week inviting them to talk to the Study Group.

3. The response to these invitations can, I think, only be negative; and since the names of three of the recipients are not officially disclosed, and the existence of two of them not admitted, it would seem sensible for a general reply to be sent. I therefore propose to write in the terms of the attached draft.

4. Since, under the new management, the Opposition may seek to make political points out of this, I should be grateful for your approval of this course of action; and I should like to write in terms which make it clear that the reply is written on your authority.

REA

Robert Armstrong

6th February 1981



DRAFT LETTER FROM SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG TO
MR. R. HAYWARD

At the end of last month you wrote to certain senior officials inviting them to talk to the Study Group set up by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party to examine the policy issues related to the Security Services.

The Prime Minister has authorised me to let you know that, while she will be ready to arrange for you (if you so wish) to be provided with references to sources of published official material relating to the Security Services, it will not be possible for officials to respond to invitations that they should come and talk to the Study Group.

I should be grateful if you would regard this letter as being in effect the reply to the letters of invitation which you have sent.

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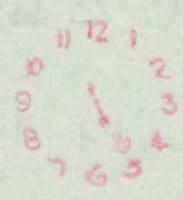


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M. I. I. I.

... and I am sure you will be able to carry out the
... to the Study Group...
... of the Labour Party to examine
... to the Security Services.
... to let you know
... for you (if you wish)
... of personnel of political staff
... it will not be
... to find out more about them that they should
... to the Study Group.
... I should be grateful if you would return this letter as
... to the fact of invitation which you

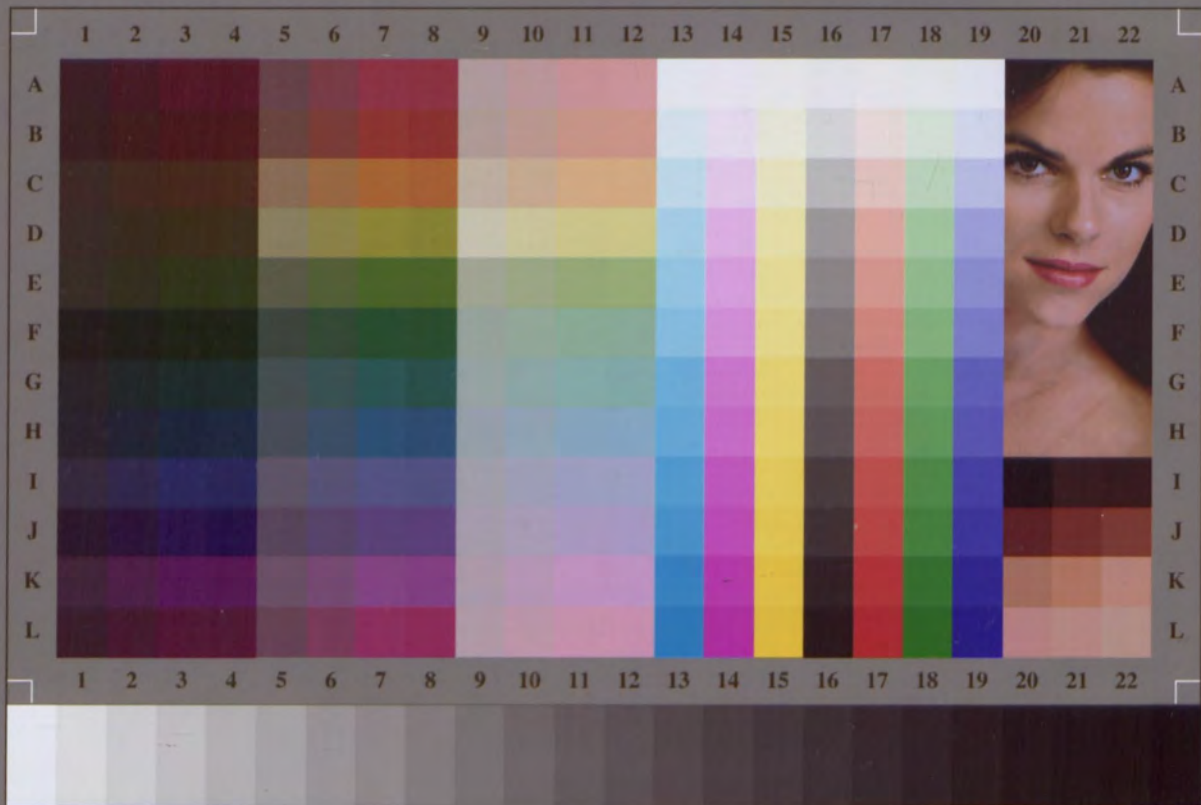
Yours faithfully,

-6 FEB 1961



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