

TOP SECRET

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CONFIDENTIAL FILING

[REDACTED]

THE CASE OF INTELLIGENCE CORPS LANCE CORPORAL
ANDRIDGE PASSING SECRET INFORMATION TO THE SOVIETS

SECURITY

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NOVEMBER 1982

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
29.12.82							
15.12.82							
20.12.82							
23.12.82							
5.1.83							
21.12.83							
16.2.84							
26.3.84							

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Published Papers

The following published paper(s) enclosed on this file have been removed and destroyed. Copies may be found elsewhere in The National Archives.

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Signed J. Gray Date 11/9/2013

PREM Records Team



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

The Aldridge Report

Thank you for your minute of 26 March. The Prime Minister has written to Mr Kinnock in the attached terms. By agreement with your office, I arranged for the Prime Minister to enclose a proof copy of the Security Commission Report for Mr Kinnock's information.

FEB 27

27 March 1984

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cc RTA (co)
enc. ✓



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

27 March 1984

Dear Mr. Kinoshita,

In my statement to the House on 20 January 1983, I announced, after consulting your predecessor, that I had asked the Security Commission to investigate the circumstances in which breaches of security had, or might have, occurred arising out of the case of Lance Corporal P. L. Aldridge who had been charged, and later convicted, of an offence under Section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920, and to advise in the light of the investigation whether any changes in security arrangements were necessary or desirable.

The Commission have now completed their task and submitted their Report to me. I should like to proceed with its publication as soon as possible. I therefore propose to publish on 29 March, as a Command Paper, the full text, save for an Appendix containing highly classified information which it would not be in the public interest to publish. This has been agreed with Lord Bridge and his colleagues. I am enclosing with this letter, for the present on Privy Counsellor terms, the text of the proposed Command Paper.

/ I would

I would like to announce publication of the Report by way of a Written Answer to a Parliamentary Question. I hope that you would agree to follow the practice of your predecessors, and to put down on 28 March a Question for Written Answer on the following lines:-

"To ask the Prime Minister, whether the Security Commission has reported on the case of Lance Corporal Aldridge, and when the Commission's report will be published."

Yours sincerely
Raymond Sheltie

The Rt. Hon. Neil Kinnock, M.P.

DRAFT LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO
THE RT HON NEIL KINNOCK MP, HOUSE OF COMMONS

In my statement to the House on 20 January 1983, I announced, after consulting your predecessor, that I had asked the Security Commission to investigate the circumstances in which breaches of security had, or might have, occurred arising out of the case of Lance Corporal P L Aldridge who had been charged, and later convicted, of an offence under Section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920, and to advise in the light of the investigation whether any changes in security arrangements was necessary or desirable.

The Commission have now completed their task and submitted their Report to me. I should like to proceed with its publication as soon as possible. I therefore propose to publish on 29 March, as a Command Paper, the full text, save for an Appendix containing highly classified information which it would not be in the public interest to publish. This has been agreed with

Lord Bridge and his colleagues. *I am enclosing with this letter, for the present on Privy Counsellor terms, the text of the Report proposed Command Paper.*

on 29th March I would like to announce publication of the Report by way of a Written Answer to a Parliamentary Question, ~~and I should be grateful if you could let me know, whether you are content for me to proceed in this manner.~~ If so, I hope that you would agree to follow the practice of your predecessors, and to put down on 28 March a Question for Written Answer on the following

lines -

"To ask the Prime Minister, whether the Security Commission has reported on the case of Lance Corporal Aldridge, and when the Commission's report will be published."

Ref. A084/948

MR BUTLER

The Aldridge Report

____ Thank you for your minute of 7 March.

- 2. I now submit for the Prime Minister's consideration the draft Written Answer, announcing publication of the Security Commission Report on the Aldridge case. I have cleared the draft Answer with colleagues. If the Prime Minister is content, the Parliamentary Question might be tabled on 28 March, for Answer on 29 March.
- 3. I also attach a draft letter for the Prime Minister to send to the Leader of the Opposition.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

26 March 1984

DRAFTRevised Prime Minister's Statement

To ask the Prime Minister, whether the Security Commission has yet reported on the case of Lance Corporal Aldridge, and when the Commission's report will be published.

DRAFT ANSWER

I announced on 20 January 1983 that, after consultation with the Rt Hon Gentleman the then Leader of the Opposition, I had asked the Security Commission to investigate and report on the circumstances in which breaches of security had, or might have, occurred, arising out of the case of Lance Corporal P L Aldridge, who had been charged with an offence under Section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920, and to advise in the light of the investigation whether any change in security arrangements was necessary or desirable.

2. The Security Commission's findings are being published this afternoon as a Command Paper which comprises the full text of the Commission's report, save for an Appendix containing highly classified information which it would not be in the public interest to publish.

3. Section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920 makes it an offence to do an act preparatory to the commission of an offence under the Official Secrets Act 1911. Aldridge's preparatory act was the setting up of arrangements to communicate with the Russians, and the

relevant offence he was preparing to commit was the communication, to the Russians, by means of those arrangements, of a classified document. As a result of their enquiries the Commission conclude that no classified information was in fact passed on. Aldridge's attempts to sell this country's secrets were frustrated and he was in due course identified and brought to justice by the co-operation of the Security Service and the Army.

4. An undoubted breach of security gave Aldridge the opportunity to remove a highly classified document and the Commission directed their attention to specific breaches of prescribed procedures or shortcomings in the procedures themselves which could be considered of some direct relevance as having facilitated Aldridge's removal of the document. They have made the following recommendations for improving security procedures:

- a. consideration should be given to the circumstances in which persons under 21 should be allowed access to TOP SECRET material and the degree of supervision to which they should be subject, with a view to issuing general guidance on the employment of holders of restricted Positive Vetting (PV) certificates;
- b. responsibility for supervision of the holder of a restricted PV certificate appointed to a PV post should always be allocated to a named person;

c. the rules governing the destruction of highly classified documents, in particular the need for two persons to witness the destruction, should now be reviewed;

d. local security instructions should be issued and written in clear and unambiguous terms.

5. They have also recommended that protective security in the DIS should be the subject of a full review by the Security Service which should aim at a comprehensive overhaul of the existing security arrangements.

6. All these recommendations have been accepted in principle by the Government, and once the precise method of implementation has been decided they will be put into effect as soon as possible. The general recommendations will apply equally to Government Departments, the security and intelligence agencies and the Armed Forces.

DRAFT LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO
THE RT HON NEIL KINNOCK MP, HOUSE OF COMMONS

In my statement to the House on 20 January 1983, I announced, after consulting your predecessor, that I had asked the Security Commission to investigate the circumstances in which breaches of security had, or might have, occurred arising out of the case of Lance Corporal P L Aldridge who had been charged, and later convicted, of an offence under Section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920, and to advise in the light of the investigation whether any changes in security arrangements was necessary or desirable.

The Commission have now completed their task and submitted their Report to me. I should like to proceed with its publication as soon as possible. I therefore propose to publish on 29 March, as a Command Paper, the full text, save for an Appendix containing highly classified information which it would not be in the public interest to publish. This has been agreed with Lord Bridge and his colleagues.

I would like to announce publication of the Report by way of a Written Answer to a Parliamentary Question, and I should be grateful if you could let me know whether you are content for me to proceed in this manner. If so, I hope that you would agree to follow the practice of your predecessors, and to put down on 28 March a Question for Written Answer on the following

lines -

"To ask the Prime Minister, whether the Security Commission has reported on the case of Lance Corporal Aldridge, and when the Commission's report will be published."

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

BF | Thank you for your minute of 6 March (A084/736) about the Security Commission's Report on the Aldridge case. I agree that we should recommend the Prime Minister to follow the same procedure as in the Prime case and will await the draft letter which you are kindly preparing.

A. E. R. BUTLER

7 March, 1984

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WJ

Ref.A084/736

MR BUTLER

In your minute of 16 February, you told me that the Prime Minister was content for the Security Commission's Report on Aldridge to be published in the form of a White Paper and you asked about the need for consultation with the Leader of the Opposition.

2. It is indeed normal practice for the Prime Minister to consult the Leader of the Opposition before publication and for him to put down the Parliamentary Question. In the case of Prime, the Prime Minister informed Mr Foot two days before publication that she proposed to publish the full text of the Commission's Report with the exception of four of the appendices which contained classified information which it would not be in the public interest to disclose. I think it will be sufficient for the Prime Minister to follow this procedure in the present case, and I will therefore supply a draft letter to Mr Kinnock with the draft Answer as soon as possible. I am at present clearing the draft statement with colleagues.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

P1. Type a reply to Sir R. Armstrong
Similarly classified:-

6 March 1984

Thank you for your minute of 6 March (A084/736) about the Security Commission's Report on the Aldridge case. I agree that we should recommend the Prime Minister to follow the same procedure as in the Prime case and ~~to~~ ^{with await} ~~am grateful~~

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the draft letter which you are kindly preparing.

F.R.B.

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

The Prime Minister was grateful for your minute of 15 February (AO84/525) about the Security Commission report on the case of Lance Corporal Philip Leslie Aldridge. The Prime Minister is content that the report should be published, as amended, in the form of a White Paper.

I think that the procedure requires the Prime Minister to consult the Leader of the Opposition before the report is published, and the Leader of the Opposition usually puts down the Written Question. This raises a question over whether the Prime Minister should inform the Leader of the Opposition about the omission of Appendix B, and if so, in what terms. The Prime Minister would be very grateful for your advice on this aspect.

FALB

16 February 1984

Prime Minister

Agree to publication of
the report with these amendments?Yes
mk

Ref. A084/525

PRIME MINISTER

I believe that the procedure
requires you to write to Mr. Kinnock and tell
him what is proposed. There are difficulties
about showing him Appendix B which is not to be published.
I will seek Sir Robert's advice on this aspect.The Security Commission submitted to you on 21 December their
report on the case of Lance Corporal Philip Leslie Aldridge. PERB
15.2.

2. The Commission drafted their report with a view to publication and, following consultation with my senior colleagues in accordance with normal procedures, I now recommend publishing in full, with the exception of Appendix B which contains highly classified information about how Aldridge was caught. The proposed published version differs in two respects from the original which was submitted to you. The Commission themselves wish to see the Ministry of Defence witnesses listed in alphabetical order, without job titles or grades and, in accordance with normal practice, the names of the Security Service witnesses omitted altogether. Secondly, Lord Bridge has agreed the substitution of "the appropriate inter-departmental Committee" for "the Official Committee on Security".

3. Sir Clive Whitmore urged consideration of four amendments to remove references to the Commission's concern about security weaknesses in the Defence Intelligence Staff. He considered that these references could undermine the confidence of the United States agencies in the Ministry of Defence's ability to protect the large quantities of sensitive intelligence material which pass from the United States to the Ministry of Defence, particularly as the report does not specify the nature of these weaknesses. I discussed this concern with Lord Bridge, whose view was that the report represented fairly the Commission's view of the situation and, apart from agreeing one small amendment ("the" for "many" at the beginning of paragraph 6.3), was not disposed to accept the proposed changes. Sir Clive has accepted that this amendment goes some way to alleviating his concern, and is content to agree to publication of the report subject to that amendment.

4. The proposed amendments are shown in red in the attached copy of the report.

Paras. ---
5.6, 6.3
and 8.3



5. If you agree that the report should now be published in the form of a White Paper, as has been done in respect of earlier Security Commission cases except that of Miss Rhona Ritchie, I will provide a draft statement for your consideration, which, I suggest, might be given as a Written Answer to an arranged Parliamentary Question.

REA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

15 February 1984

CONQUEROR

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PRIME MINISTER

REPORT OF THE SECURITY COMMISSION ON THE CASE OF
LANCE CORPORAL PHILIP LESLIE ALDRIDGE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 On 18 January 1983 Philip Leslie Aldridge pleaded guilty to an offence under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920. This section makes it an offence to do an act preparatory to the commission of an offence under the Official Secrets Act 1911. The preparatory act here was the unauthorised abstraction of a highly classified document. The relevant offence under the Act of 1911 which Aldridge was preparing to commit was the communication of that document to the Russian Intelligence Service. He was sentenced to four years imprisonment.

1.2 By your letter dated 23 December 1982 you had already asked the Security Commission "to investigate the circumstances in which breaches of security have or may have occurred arising out of the case of Lance Corporal P L Aldridge who has been charged with an offence under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920; and to advise in the light of the investigation whether any change in security arrangements is necessary or desirable".

1.3 It is right to record at the outset of this Report, as a matter for public satisfaction, that Aldridge's attempts to sell his country's secrets to Russia were frustrated by the alertness and efficiency of the Security Service and that Aldridge himself was in due course unmasked and brought to justice by the co-operation of the Security Service and the Army. A full account of these highly successful operations is set out at Appendix B. It is unfortunate that, for security reasons, this story cannot be publicly recounted. The public and the media are rightly concerned by, and ready to criticise, any failure of security in the public service. It is, in a sense, ironic that the opportunity to redress the balance in a case where our counter-intelligence service can be seen to have operated at its best must yield to the requirement of security that the methods employed should remain secret.

1.4 It was, on the other hand, an undoubted breach of security that Aldridge, while on temporary secondment from the Intelligence Corps to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and working in the Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) should have been able to abstract a highly classified document. The precise circumstances

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in which the document was taken and even the precise identity of the document have never been determined with certainty. We recognise that, once a determined spy is in a position where he has free access to highly classified documents, no system of document security can be guaranteed to provide effective protection against their illicit abstraction. Nevertheless, the prescribed system, within the limits of what is practicable, should be designed and enforced in such a way as to minimise the risk. We have directed our attention primarily at specific breaches of prescribed procedures or shortcomings in the procedures themselves which could be considered of some direct relevance as having facilitated Aldridge's removal of the document. However, in the course of a protracted and detailed investigation extending over many months, in which we have called for and been supplied with successive reports by the MOD and these have in turn been amplified for us by the oral evidence of MOD witnesses, we have become increasingly concerned at what we have learned about the state of security in the DIS generally and we have thought it right to address ourselves to this subject in this Report as well as to the matters immediately connected with Aldridge's treachery.

CONDUCT OF THE INQUIRY

2.1 We held our first meeting on 5 January 1983 and subsequently met on 11 occasions, including several meetings which lasted for the whole day.

2.2 We asked for and received a great deal of written material, particularly from the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and in addition to this, we have examined the papers relating to Aldridge's vetting clearances; the transcript of his trial and the relevant briefing for it; the general security regulations which apply in the MOD and are contained in 'MOD Manual 4'; and the Branch Security Instructions issued in June 1983 provided especially for the Directorate of Economic and Logistic Intelligence (DELI).

2.3 Much of the written evidence supplied by the MOD related to the security regulations and procedures in force at the time of Aldridge's service in the DIS. In addition, however, the MOD were carrying out an investigation to identify the particular document which Aldridge claimed he had taken and the way that this might have been done. This, of course, meant that the evidence had to be updated and amended as further information came to light. In May 1983, nearly four months after his conviction, Aldridge

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changed his story about the document he claimed he had taken (see paragraph 4.3). This new story had to be thoroughly investigated and this investigation has brought to light some of the inadequacies in security procedures within the MOD on which we comment in the following sections. We have also studied the report of a detailed inspection of the DIS carried out by the Directorate of MOD Security during the summer months to which we refer in paragraph 7.2. This was not made available to us until very late in our inquiry, which helps to explain the time taken in submitting this Report.

2.4 We took oral evidence from those listed in Appendix A. Because of the changing nature of the MOD's evidence during the inquiry, it was necessary to see the Second Permanent Secretary, Mr Ewen Broadbent, on six occasions, the last being on 21 October 1983. The Commission record their gratitude to Mr Broadbent for the helpful and courteous manner in which he gave evidence and clarified apparent inconsistencies in the Ministry's evidence which had earlier given us some cause for concern.

2.5 Mrs Sally Sutton resigned from the Civil Service and was replaced as secretary of the Commission during the course of the inquiry by Miss Patricia Andrews. Fortunately continuity in the secretariat was ensured by our continued enjoyment, in the role of senior secretary, of the services of Mr Rex Davie, who was secretary of the Commission in 1977 and 1978 and who is now Head of the Security Division in the Cabinet Office. We express our gratitude to Mr Davie and Miss Andrews for all their help to us in facilitating the conduct of the inquiry and in the preparation of this Report.

ALDRIDGE'S RECRUITMENT, PV CLEARANCE, AND SECONDMENT TO THE MOD

3.1 Aldridge was born on 4 September 1962. He joined the Intelligence Corps on 8 December 1981. All members of the Intelligence Corps are required to obtain Positive Vetting (PV) clearance during training. Aldridge was subjected to all appropriate PV procedures, including the psychological testing to which we made reference in paragraph 9.21 of our Report which was published as Cmnd 8876. No adverse indication was revealed. Clearance was granted on 5 May 1982 subject to the restriction which it is standard practice to impose on persons under 21 years of age that until reaching that age "access to TOP SECRET is to be given on a need to know basis only and under strict supervision".

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3.2 On 9 July 1982 Aldridge qualified as a Grade III Operator. On 3 August 1982 he was posted to 96 Security Section at Aldershot in the rank of Lance Corporal.

3.3 The Falklands campaign provoked an enormous upsurge of work in the DIS. Even after the Argentinians surrendered, many of the demands for relevant intelligence continued at an only slightly lower level of intensity. It was in these circumstances that the DELI established a small section on 30 July 1982 to handle a particular specialised area of the work. The personnel in the section comprised a Principal Research Officer (PRO), a Senior Research Officer (SRO), a Leading Naval Writer, and an Intelligence Corps NCO seconded from the Army. Reinforcement of the DIS by secondment from the Forces, particularly in the provision of additional clerical staff, was undertaken in pursuance of standard arrangements applicable to such a situation as that provoked by the Falklands crisis.

3.4 The Intelligence Corps NCOs seconded to work in this section were initially provided by the Army on a fortnightly rotation. Aldridge was the third to fill the post and worked in the section from 24 August to 3 September 1982.

3.5 The section was housed in a single room in the Metropole Building. It is unnecessary to describe in detail the important responsibilities of the two Research Officers, but suffices, for present purposes, to say that they were working under great pressure and were handling a very considerable volume of highly classified documents. The Leading Naval Writer and the Intelligence Corps NCO shared responsibility for document control. During Aldridge's time working in the section, he was responsible for maintaining the Confidential Documents Register (CDR), in which receipt, movement, and final disposal of all documents classified SECRET and above were required to be recorded and, as instructed, for the copying, filing, and eventual destruction of documents.

THE DOCUMENT TAKEN BY ALDRIDGE

4.1 A great deal of painstaking research has been directed at identifying the document taken by Aldridge in the face of different accounts given by him. Two conclusions can, we think, be stated with confidence. First, there is no reason to doubt that Aldridge did abstract a document of the highest classification. Although some of the accounts he gave of his activities in the course of the investigation turned out to be imaginary, it is not conceivable that he should have adhered throughout, both before

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and after trial, to the central feature of his confession on which the prosecution relied, if this had not occurred. Secondly, it is established as certainly as a negative proposition can be that Aldridge did not, in the event, communicate the document to any third party, but destroyed it himself some time after his return to his unit at Aldershot and sometime before the investigation described in Appendix B had identified him.

4.2 In the room where Aldridge worked classified documents awaiting destruction, having been torn in pieces, were stored in a canvas bag kept in a Manifoil lock cabinet awaiting transfer to an official classified waste sack for eventual incineration. In the course of the initial investigation Aldridge claimed to have taken from this bag a document which had only been torn in half. He gave a detailed description of the appearance and some account of the contents of the document. Aldridge adhered to this account in an interview with MOD investigators after his trial. The MOD investigators were unable to relate Aldridge's description of the document and the circumstances of its abstraction to any document which they could identify as having been handled in the section and destined for disposal.

4.3 On 4 May 1983, however, Aldridge was seen again, at his own request, by MOD investigators. He now changed entirely his description of the document he had taken. He said that he thought that the document he had taken was an especially sensitive one, and he had previously been afraid to describe it correctly for fear of making the case against himself worse. He had therefore made up a description of a paper of lesser importance, which so far as he knew had never existed. When he was interviewed by the MOD investigators on 14 February (only some four weeks after his trial) he was still frightened and confused and felt it best to stick to his original story. In the subsequent months, spending most of his time in solitary confinement, he had had time to reflect more seriously on the matter and wanted to clear his conscience by telling the truth about the paper. He also hoped that such frankness might lead to a favourable consideration of a change from his present Category A status (i.e. as a high security risk prisoner) which was, for example, preventing him from enrolling for a course of study for the Open University.

4.4 The entirely new description of the document given by Aldridge on 4 May has enabled the MOD to identify a document which corresponds with that description sufficiently closely, although not precisely in all respects, to engender the belief that this very probably was in fact the document taken. There was received in the section where Aldridge worked on 24 August 1982 a copy of the Joint Intelligence Committee Weekly

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Survey of Intelligence for 6-12 August 1982. This was entered in the CDR by another member of the staff. Aldridge was instructed, probably later on the same day, by the PRO to abstract and file 5 pages of this Survey, which he did, and to destroy the remaining 17 pages. If the identification is right, Aldridge retained this portion of the Survey and took it with him when he left the MOD on 3 September 1982.

THE RESTRICTED PV CERTIFICATE

5.1 The PV certificate relating to a soldier is normally held by his Commanding Officer. If he is posted away from his unit for a period in excess of 14 days, his certificate will accompany him and any relevant restriction on his clearance will then come immediately to the notice of those by whom he is to be employed. Since Aldridge was only to be seconded to the MOD for 14 days, his PV certificate did not accompany him. The restriction on Aldridge's PV certificate was, however, known to the security officer in the DIS who was responsible for authorising his clearance for employment in the section where he was to work. The officer not only gave him clearance, but told no-one under whom Aldridge would be working that his PV clearance was restricted or that he was under 21 years of age. Aldridge looked older than 21.

5.2 We heard a body of evidence from MOD witnesses who sought to persuade us:

- (i) that Aldridge's restricted PV clearance was no obstacle to his employment in work where he would have extensive access to TOP SECRET material;
- (ii) that he was to be employed in a position where the degree of supervision to which he would be subject would be sufficient to comply with the requirement of 'strict supervision' in the PV certificate; and
- (iii) that communicating the restriction on his PV certificate to those with whom he would be working was a formality which would have had little, if any, practical effect.

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The security officer referred to in paragraph 5.1 above accepted that "with hindsight" it was an omission on his part not to have communicated the restriction on Aldridge's PV certificate to those with whom he was to be working.

5.3 On the other hand, the PRO in charge of the section where Aldridge worked, on whom the responsibility for exercising any supervision over him necessarily rested, firmly maintained that, if he had been told of the restriction on Aldridge's PV certificate, he would not have been prepared to accept him, since, in the prevailing conditions, it would have been impossible to exercise any effective supervision over his access to TOP SECRET material. If no holder of an unrestricted PV certificate was available, he would have preferred that his section should accept the additional burden of working with only one clerical assistant.

5.4 We accept that, at the time of Aldridge's secondment, the DIS were overworked and short, in particular, of PV cleared clerical staff. Once Aldridge was employed, it followed, of course, that he had a 'need to know' the contents of the TOP SECRET documents he was daily handling, since he could not do the job without seeing what they contained. But we question whether the 'need to know' restriction on a PV certificate ought to be interpreted to allow the holder to be employed in a job for which he has no special qualification and for which the one essential qualification is a PV clearance. A narrower, and possibly preferable, interpretation would be that the restricted certificate is intended to permit the employment of young people trained in special technical skills in positions where those skills are indispensable notwithstanding that the positions involve access to TOP SECRET material.

5.5 There is room for wide differences of opinion, as the evidence we heard clearly illustrated, as to what is required to satisfy the criterion of 'strict supervision' which the restricted certificate demands.

5.6 Insofar as it is necessary to employ people under 21 in positions where they must have access to TOP SECRET material, some form of restricted PV certificate is, for obvious reasons, necessary and appropriate. We think it is important, however, that the restriction should be uniformly

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interpreted and applied throughout the public service. We accordingly recommend that the ~~Official Committee on Security~~ ^{appropriate interdepartmental Committee} be invited to consider the circumstances in which persons under 21 should be allowed access to TOP SECRET material and the degree of supervision to which they should be subject, with a view to issuing general guidance on the employment of holders of restricted PV certificates.

5.7 We consider that failure to communicate the known restriction on Aldridge's PV certificate to those with whom he was to work was a serious omission. In the light of all the evidence we have heard, we doubt if this was an isolated oversight on the part of the security officer concerned, but think rather that it reflected a general laxity of approach to restricted PV certificates. Our impression is that the standard restriction on PV clearance granted to a person under 21 is treated by security staff in the MOD as having little significance. We recommend that in future whenever the holder of a restricted PV certificate is to be employed in a position where he will need to have access to TOP SECRET material, the officer responsible for authorising his employment in that position should allocate responsibility for his supervision to a named person and give specific instructions, in the light of any guidance issued in pursuance of our recommendation in the foregoing paragraph, as to how supervision is to be exercised.

DESTRUCTION OF DOCUMENTS CLASSIFIED SECRET AND ABOVE

6.1 If the letter of MOD security regulations had been complied with, whenever the destruction of a document classified SECRET or above was authorised by the PRO or the SRO in the section where Aldridge was working, Aldridge should have torn the document into small pieces and placed it in the canvas bag referred to in paragraph 4.2 above, the officer authorising the destruction should have physically witnessed this process, and both should then have signed an entry in the CDR recording the destruction of the document.

6.2 In fact the procedure described in the foregoing paragraph was never followed. The two Research Officers concerned told us with the utmost candour that, having authorised the destruction of a highly classified document, they never supervised Aldridge in the physical act of its destruction. They insisted that they were unaware at the time that security regulations required them to do so. We accepted this evidence.

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6.3 This is only one of ~~many~~^{the} security weaknesses in the DIS which the Aldridge investigation has brought to light. It is the most directly relevant since, if the requirement of supervised destruction had been strictly complied with, Aldridge could not have retained intact the document referred to in paragraph 4.4 above and eventually removed it as there described.

6.4 The requirement that the destruction of a TOP SECRET or SECRET document be witnessed and certified by two persons affords an example of a security procedure which raises for consideration two matters of general principle. The first question which must be asked of any prescribed security procedure is whether its importance and effectiveness as a security safeguard are sufficient to warrant the expenditure of time and energy (and in some cases material resources) which compliance with the procedure involves. One way of answering this question is to ask whether those instructed to comply with the procedure will appreciate the necessity for it and be willing to carry it out without constant supervision and the threat of disciplinary measures if the procedure is disregarded. We find it extremely difficult to suppose that the disregard of the requirement of supervised destruction of highly classified documents in the section where Aldridge worked was in any way exceptional. On the contrary, if two officers, one empowered to authorise the destruction of TOP SECRET or SECRET documents, the other his clerical assistant, have worked together long enough to know and trust each other, even if they are well aware that the regulations require that both should witness every destruction, they are very likely, we would suppose, to treat this as a tedious and unnecessary formality. Moreover, if a spy or potential spy is in a position where he has access to TOP SECRET or SECRET documents, supervised destruction is unlikely to frustrate him in obtaining a document or copy at some stage in its life before destruction. All this leads us to the conclusion that, despite the part played in the present case by lack of supervision of Aldridge in the destruction of classified documents, this requirement may, on examination, be one which it is hard to justify in terms of its overall utility as a security safeguard against hostile penetration. Like the over-classification of documents, which the Security Commission have criticised so often, it must do a positive disservice to the interests of security to stipulate a security procedure which, from its nature, is likely to be widely disregarded and thus tend to discredit the whole system.

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6.5 The second matter of general principle to which it is convenient to draw attention in this context is the paramount importance of ensuring that those responsible for observing security procedures are precisely instructed as to what it is they are required to do. The question of security education generally in the MOD is beyond the scope of this Report. But some matters have come to our attention which we think it right to mention. Our impression from the whole of the evidence is that there is a tendency in the MOD to place too much reliance on MOD Manual 4 as the repository of all wisdom on every aspect of security and to which all concerned with security may be expected to refer to find the answer to their particular security problem. MOD Manual 4 is a massive, complex, and indigestible document, which is certainly not always drafted in such a way as to provide a simple answer to a simple question. No doubt such a document, in which all security rules are collected, is very necessary. But it provides, in our view, no reliable instrument of security education. It is very desirable that in different areas of activity within the MOD appropriate local security instructions should be issued in clear and unambiguous terms covering at least the most important security procedures required to be observed in each area. At the time of Aldridge's employment in the DIS there were no local security instructions applicable to the DELI, which embraced Aldridge's section. A new Director of the DELI was appointed in October 1982. He issued security instructions for his Directorate in June 1983. Unfortunately, apart from a reference to the relevant paragraphs of MOD Manual 4, the text of these instructions describing the procedures for destroying and certifying the destruction of highly classified documents is at best ambiguous, at worst misleading.

THE SECURITY INSPECTION OF THE DIS

7.1 In a report to us dated 28 February 1983 the then Director of MOD Security drew attention to some of the security weaknesses in the DIS which the investigation following the discovery of Aldridge's theft of a TOP SECRET document had brought to light, and discussed remedial measures which had been put in hand or were under consideration. The report stated:-

"We intend to carry out a review of security arrangements in the DIS as a whole to assess in particular whether the level of document security is acceptable."

7.2 The review was in fact put in hand under terms of reference issued by the Assistant Director of MOD Security on 3 June 1983. A complete security inspection of the DIS was undertaken by a team of eight officers headed by

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a Senior Executive Officer (SEO) who reported on 12 September 1983. A copy of the report was furnished to us on 19 October 1983.

7.3 The full document is extremely lengthy. It comprises 35 individual reports on branches and sections within the DIS, presumably each made by an individual member of the team, and a general report written, we understand, by the SEO, setting out his conclusions and recommendations.

7.4 Before passing any criticism on the inspection report or the security weaknesses within the DIS which it reveals we wish to acknowledge our full awareness of the security problems created for the DIS by their current workload, in particular by the large volume of highly classified documents which they handle, and by shortage of staff, particularly clerical staff.

7.5 We are nevertheless disturbed by what the inspection report reveals and far from satisfied that, even within the limitations imposed by shortage of staff, the solutions proposed are the best that could be devised.

7.6 Much painstaking industry has undoubtedly gone into the production of the report and we would not wish to criticise any of those who have contributed to it. As to the methods employed in producing the report, we observe that the individual branch and section reports follow no set pattern and it would appear that each member of the team was left to pursue his inquiries in whatever way he thought best. The task of the SEO who produced the general report was a particularly onerous one and we feel bound to observe that, however expert in his field, an officer of his grade should not have been expected to carry so heavy a responsibility.

7.7 We recommend that protective security in the DIS should be subject to a fresh review, this time by the Security Service which, while taking due account of the problems created by manpower restrictions, will aim at a comprehensive overhaul of the existing security arrangements.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Aldridge's attempts to sell his country's secrets to the Russians were frustrated by the efficiency of the Security Service. Aldridge was brought to justice by the co-operation of the Security Service and the Army (paragraph 1.3 and Appendix B).

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BRIDGE OF HARWICH

(The Rt Hon the Lord Bridge of Harwich)
(Chairman)

HUGH GRIFFITHS

(The Rt Hon Lord Justice Griffiths MC)

ALLEN OF ABBEYDALE

(The Lord Allen of Abbeydale GCB)

HUGH BEACH

(General Sir Hugh Beach GBE KCB MC)

21 December 1983

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APPENDIX A

LIST OF WITNESSES

(i) Ministry of Defence

Mr E Broadbent CB CMG
Mr G J Burton
Mr J W Crichton
Mr P R Davies
Mrs B A Dunphy
Major-General H E M L Garrett CBE (Retd)
Mr D Hills
Mr M Holton
Leading Writer A Hugill
Mr E Pendlebury
Mr R Primrose
Lt Col A N L Thom
Mr J Tolson
Brigadier P D Wickenden

(ii) Representatives of the Security Service



file

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Lord Bridge has submitted the Security Commission's Report (of which I think you already have a copy) on Lance Corporal Philip Leslie Aldridge. I enclose a copy of his letter and of my acknowledgement. I should be grateful if you would arrange to advise the Prime Minister on the next steps.

FORB

21 December 1983



PC VC

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

21 December 1983

I am writing to acknowledge your letter of 21 December covering the Report of the Security Commission on the case of Lance Corporal Philip Leslie Aldridge. I am laying your letter and the Report before the Prime Minister.

E. E. R. BUTLER

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Bridge of Harwich



Prime Minister
I have acknowledged
and asked for Sir Robert
Armstrong's advice

FERB

21.12

21 December 1983

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Dear Prime Minister,

I now have pleasure in submitting the Security Commission's
Report on the case of Lance Corporal Philip Leslie Aldridge.

In drafting the Report we had in mind that you would wish to publish as much of it as possible, consistently with the interests of national security. We have accordingly tried to confine the body of the Report to material suitable for publication. We have relegated to Appendix B that part of the narrative which obviously could not be published.

Yours sincerely
Bridge of Harwich

LORD BRIDGE OF HARWICH

TOP SECRET

2 .

COPY NO 1

REPORT OF THE SECURITY COMMISSION

December 1983

TOP SECRET

PRIME MINISTER

REPORT OF THE SECURITY COMMISSION ON THE CASE OF
LANCE CORPORAL PHILIP LESLIE ALDRIDGE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 On 18 January 1983 Philip Leslie Aldridge pleaded guilty to an offence under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920. This section makes it an offence to do an act preparatory to the commission of an offence under the Official Secrets Act 1911. The preparatory act here was the unauthorised abstraction of a highly classified document. The relevant offence under the Act of 1911 which Aldridge was preparing to commit was the communication of that document to the Russian Intelligence Service. He was sentenced to four years imprisonment.

1.2 By your letter dated 23 December 1982 you had already asked the Security Commission "to investigate the circumstances in which breaches of security have or may have occurred arising out of the case of Lance Corporal P L Aldridge who has been charged with an offence under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920; and to advise in the light of the investigation whether any change in security arrangements is necessary or desirable".

1.3 It is right to record at the outset of this Report, as a matter for public satisfaction, that Aldridge's attempts to sell his country's secrets to Russia were frustrated by the alertness and efficiency of the Security Service and that Aldridge himself was in due course unmasked and brought to justice by the co-operation of the Security Service and the Army. A full account of these highly successful operations is set out at Appendix B. It is unfortunate that, for security reasons, this story cannot be publicly recounted. The public and the media are rightly concerned by, and ready to criticise, any failure of security in the public service. It is, in a sense, ironic that the opportunity to redress the balance in a case where our counter-intelligence service can be seen to have operated at its best must yield to the requirement of security that the methods employed should remain secret.

1.4 It was, on the other hand, an undoubted breach of security that Aldridge, while on temporary secondment from the Intelligence Corps to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and working in the Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) should have been able to abstract a highly classified document. The precise circumstances

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in which the document was taken and even the precise identity of the document have never been determined with certainty. We recognise that, once a determined spy is in a position where he has free access to highly classified documents, no system of document security can be guaranteed to provide effective protection against their illicit abstraction. Nevertheless, the prescribed system, within the limits of what is practicable, should be designed and enforced in such a way as to minimise the risk. We have directed our attention primarily at specific breaches of prescribed procedures or shortcomings in the procedures themselves which could be considered of some direct relevance as having facilitated Aldridge's removal of the document. However, in the course of a protracted and detailed investigation extending over many months, in which we have called for and been supplied with successive reports by the MOD and these have in turn been amplified for us by the oral evidence of MOD witnesses, we have become increasingly concerned at what we have learned about the state of security in the DIS generally and we have thought it right to address ourselves to this subject in this Report as well as to the matters immediately connected with Aldridge's treachery.

CONDUCT OF THE INQUIRY

- 2.1 We held our first meeting on 5 January 1983 and subsequently met on 11 occasions, including several meetings which lasted for the whole day.
- 2.2 We asked for and received a great deal of written material, particularly from the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and in addition to this, we have examined the papers relating to Aldridge's vetting clearances; the transcript of his trial and the relevant briefing for it; the general security regulations which apply in the MOD and are contained in 'MOD Manual 4'; and the Branch Security Instructions issued in June 1983 provided especially for the Directorate of Economic and Logistic Intelligence (DELI).
- 2.3 Much of the written evidence supplied by the MOD related to the security regulations and procedures in force at the time of Aldridge's service in the DIS. In addition, however, the MOD were carrying out an investigation to identify the particular document which Aldridge claimed he had taken and the way that this might have been done. This, of course, meant that the evidence had to be updated and amended as further information came to light. In May 1983, nearly four months after his conviction, Aldridge

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changed his story about the document he claimed he had taken (see paragraph 4.3). This new story had to be thoroughly investigated and this investigation has brought to light some of the inadequacies in security procedures within the MOD on which we comment in the following sections. We have also studied the report of a detailed inspection of the DIS carried out by the Directorate of MOD Security during the summer months to which we refer in paragraph 7.2. This was not made available to us until very late in our inquiry, which helps to explain the time taken in submitting this Report.

2.4 We took oral evidence from those listed in Appendix A. Because of the changing nature of the MOD's evidence during the inquiry, it was necessary to see the Second Permanent Secretary, Mr Ewen Broadbent, on six occasions, the last being on 21 October 1983. The Commission record their gratitude to Mr Broadbent for the helpful and courteous manner in which he gave evidence and clarified apparent inconsistencies in the Ministry's evidence which had earlier given us some cause for concern.

2.5 Mrs Sally Sutton resigned from the Civil Service and was replaced as secretary of the Commission during the course of the inquiry by Miss Patricia Andrews. Fortunately continuity in the secretariat was ensured by our continued enjoyment, in the role of senior secretary, of the services of Mr Rex Davie, who was secretary of the Commission in 1977 and 1978 and who is now Head of the Security Division in the Cabinet Office. We express our gratitude to Mr Davie and Miss Andrews for all their help to us in facilitating the conduct of the inquiry and in the preparation of this Report.

ALDRIDGE'S RECRUITMENT, PV CLEARANCE, AND SECONDMENT TO THE MOD

3.1 Aldridge was born on 4 September 1962. He joined the Intelligence Corps on 8 December 1981. All members of the Intelligence Corps are required to obtain Positive Vetting (PV) clearance during training. Aldridge was subjected to all appropriate PV procedures, including the psychological testing to which we made reference in paragraph 9.21 of our Report which was published as Cmnd 8876. No adverse indication was revealed. Clearance was granted on 5 May 1982 subject to the restriction which it is standard practice to impose on persons under 21 years of age that until reaching that age "access to TOP SECRET is to be given on a need to know basis only and under strict supervision".

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3.2 On 9 July 1982 Aldridge qualified as a Grade III Operator. On 3 August 1982 he was posted to 96 Security Section at Aldershot in the rank of Lance Corporal.

3.3 The Falklands campaign provoked an enormous upsurge of work in the DIS. Even after the Argentinians surrendered, many of the demands for relevant intelligence continued at an only slightly lower level of intensity. It was in these circumstances that the DELI established a small section on 30 July 1982 to handle a particular specialised area of the work. The personnel in the section comprised a Principal Research Officer (PRO), a Senior Research Officer (SRO), a Leading Naval Writer, and an Intelligence Corps NCO seconded from the Army. Reinforcement of the DIS by secondment from the Forces, particularly in the provision of additional clerical staff, was undertaken in pursuance of standard arrangements applicable to such a situation as that provoked by the Falklands crisis.

3.4 The Intelligence Corps NCOs seconded to work in this section were initially provided by the Army on a fortnightly rotation. Aldridge was the third to fill the post and worked in the section from 24 August to 3 September 1982.

3.5 The section was housed in a single room in the Metropole Building. It is unnecessary to describe in detail the important responsibilities of the two Research Officers, but suffices, for present purposes, to say that they were working under great pressure and were handling a very considerable volume of highly classified documents. The Leading Naval Writer and the Intelligence Corps NCO shared responsibility for document control. During Aldridge's time working in the section, he was responsible for maintaining the Confidential Documents Register (CDR), in which receipt, movement, and final disposal of all documents classified SECRET and above were required to be recorded and, as instructed, for the copying, filing, and eventual destruction of documents.

THE DOCUMENT TAKEN BY ALDRIDGE

4.1 A great deal of painstaking research has been directed at identifying the document taken by Aldridge in the face of different accounts given by him. Two conclusions can, we think, be stated with confidence. First, there is no reason to doubt that Aldridge did abstract a document of the highest classification. Although some of the accounts he gave of his activities in the course of the investigation turned out to be imaginary, it is not conceivable that he should have adhered throughout, both before

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and after trial, to the central feature of his confession on which the prosecution relied, if this had not occurred. Secondly, it is established as certainly as a negative proposition can be that Aldridge did not, in the event, communicate the document to any third party, but destroyed it himself some time after his return to his unit at Aldershot and sometime before the investigation described in Appendix B had identified him.

4.2 In the room where Aldridge worked classified documents awaiting destruction, having been torn in pieces, were stored in a canvas bag kept in a Manifoil lock cabinet awaiting transfer to an official classified waste sack for eventual incineration. In the course of the initial investigation Aldridge claimed to have taken from this bag a document which had only been torn in half. He gave a detailed description of the appearance and some account of the contents of the document. Aldridge adhered to this account in an interview with MOD investigators after his trial. The MOD investigators were unable to relate Aldridge's description of the document and the circumstances of its abstraction to any document which they could identify as having been handled in the section and destined for disposal.

4.3 On 4 May 1983, however, Aldridge was seen again, at his own request, by MOD investigators. He now changed entirely his description of the document he had taken. He said that he thought that the document he had taken was an especially sensitive one, and he had previously been afraid to describe it correctly for fear of making the case against himself worse. He had therefore made up a description of a paper of lesser importance, which so far as he knew had never existed. When he was interviewed by the MOD investigators on 14 February (only some four weeks after his trial) he was still frightened and confused and felt it best to stick to his original story. In the subsequent months, spending most of his time in solitary confinement, he had had time to reflect more seriously on the matter and wanted to clear his conscience by telling the truth about the paper. He also hoped that such frankness might lead to a favourable consideration of a change from his present Category A status (i.e. as a high security risk prisoner) which was, for example, preventing him from enrolling for a course of study for the Open University.

4.4 The entirely new description of the document given by Aldridge on 4 May has enabled the MOD to identify a document which corresponds with that description sufficiently closely, although not precisely in all respects, to engender the belief that this very probably was in fact the document taken. There was received in the section where Aldridge worked on 24 August 1982 a copy of the Joint Intelligence Committee Weekly

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Survey of Intelligence for 6-12 August 1982. This was entered in the CDR by another member of the staff. Aldridge was instructed, probably later on the same day, by the PRO to abstract and file 5 pages of this Survey, which he did, and to destroy the remaining 17 pages. If the identification is right, Aldridge retained this portion of the Survey and took it with him when he left the MOD on 3 September 1982.

THE RESTRICTED PV CERTIFICATE

5.1 The PV certificate relating to a soldier is normally held by his Commanding Officer. If he is posted away from his unit for a period in excess of 14 days, his certificate will accompany him and any relevant restriction on his clearance will then come immediately to the notice of those by whom he is to be employed. Since Aldridge was only to be seconded to the MOD for 14 days, his PV certificate did not accompany him. The restriction on Aldridge's PV certificate was, however, known to the security officer in the DIS who was responsible for authorising his clearance for employment in the section where he was to work. The officer not only gave him clearance, but told no-one under whom Aldridge would be working that his PV clearance was restricted or that he was under 21 years of age. Aldridge looked older than 21.

5.2 We heard a body of evidence from MOD witnesses who sought to persuade us:

- (i) that Aldridge's restricted PV clearance was no obstacle to his employment in work where he would have extensive access to TOP SECRET material;
- (ii) that he was to be employed in a position where the degree of supervision to which he would be subject would be sufficient to comply with the requirement of 'strict supervision' in the PV certificate; and
- (iii) that communicating the restriction on his PV certificate to those with whom he would be working was a formality which would have had little, if any, practical effect.

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The security officer referred to in paragraph 5.1 above accepted that "with hindsight" it was an omission on his part not to have communicated the restriction on Aldridge's PV certificate to those with whom he was to be working.

5.3 On the other hand, the PRO in charge of the section where Aldridge worked, on whom the responsibility for exercising any supervision over him necessarily rested, firmly maintained that, if he had been told of the restriction on Aldridge's PV certificate, he would not have been prepared to accept him, since, in the prevailing conditions, it would have been impossible to exercise any effective supervision over his access to TOP SECRET material. If no holder of an unrestricted PV certificate was available, he would have preferred that his section should accept the additional burden of working with only one clerical assistant.

5.4 We accept that, at the time of Aldridge's secondment, the DIS were overworked and short, in particular, of PV cleared clerical staff. Once Aldridge was employed, it followed, of course, that he had a 'need to know' the contents of the TOP SECRET documents he was daily handling, since he could not do the job without seeing what they contained. But we question whether the 'need to know' restriction on a PV certificate ought to be interpreted to allow the holder to be employed in a job for which he has no special qualification and for which the one essential qualification is a PV clearance. A narrower, and possibly preferable, interpretation would be that the restricted certificate is intended to permit the employment of young people trained in special technical skills in positions where those skills are indispensable notwithstanding that the positions involve access to TOP SECRET material.

5.5 There is room for wide differences of opinion, as the evidence we heard clearly illustrated, as to what is required to satisfy the criterion of 'strict supervision' which the restricted certificate demands.

5.6 Insofar as it is necessary to employ people under 21 in positions where they must have access to TOP SECRET material, some form of restricted PV certificate is, for obvious reasons, necessary and appropriate. We think it is important, however, that the restriction should be uniformly

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interpreted and applied throughout the public service. We accordingly recommend that the Official Committee on Security be invited to consider the circumstances in which persons under 21 should be allowed access to TOP SECRET material and the degree of supervision to which they should be subject, with a view to issuing general guidance on the employment of holders of restricted PV certificates.

5.7 We consider that failure to communicate the known restriction on Aldridge's PV certificate to those with whom he was to work was a serious omission. In the light of all the evidence we have heard, we doubt if this was an isolated oversight on the part of the security officer concerned, but think rather that it reflected a general laxity of approach to restricted PV certificates. Our impression is that the standard restriction on PV clearance granted to a person under 21 is treated by security staff in the MOD as having little significance. We recommend that in future whenever the holder of a restricted PV certificate is to be employed in a position where he will need to have access to TOP SECRET material, the officer responsible for authorising his employment in that position should allocate responsibility for his supervision to a named person and give specific instructions, in the light of any guidance issued in pursuance of our recommendation in the foregoing paragraph, as to how supervision is to be exercised.

DESTRUCTION OF DOCUMENTS CLASSIFIED SECRET AND ABOVE

6.1 If the letter of MOD security regulations had been complied with, whenever the destruction of a document classified SECRET or above was authorised by the PRO or the SRO in the section where Aldridge was working, Aldridge should have torn the document into small pieces and placed it in the canvas bag referred to in paragraph 4.2 above, the officer authorising the destruction should have physically witnessed this process, and both should then have signed an entry in the CDR recording the destruction of the document.

6.2 In fact the procedure described in the foregoing paragraph was never followed. The two Research Officers concerned told us with the utmost candour that, having authorised the destruction of a highly classified document, they never supervised Aldridge in the physical act of its destruction. They insisted that they were unaware at the time that security regulations required them to do so. We accepted this evidence.

CONFIDENTIAL

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6.3 This is only one of many security weaknesses in the DIS which the Aldridge investigation has brought to light. It is the most directly relevant since, if the requirement of supervised destruction had been strictly complied with, Aldridge could not have retained intact the document referred to in paragraph 4.4. above and eventually removed it as there described.

6.4 The requirement that the destruction of a TOP SECRET or SECRET document be witnessed and certified by two persons affords an example of a security procedure which raises for consideration two matters of general principle. The first question which must be asked of any prescribed security procedure is whether its importance and effectiveness as a security safeguard are sufficient to warrant the expenditure of time and energy (and in some cases material resources) which compliance with the procedure involves. One way of answering this question is to ask whether those instructed to comply with the procedure will appreciate the necessity for it and be willing to carry it out without constant supervision and the threat of disciplinary measures if the procedure is disregarded. We find it extremely difficult to suppose that the disregard of the requirement of supervised destruction of highly classified documents in the section where Aldridge worked was in any way exceptional. On the contrary, if two officers, one empowered to authorise the destruction of TOP SECRET or SECRET documents, the other his clerical assistant, have worked together long enough to know and trust each other, even if they are well aware that the regulations require that both should witness every destruction, they are very likely, we would suppose, to treat this as a tedious and unnecessary formality. Moreover, if a spy or potential spy is in a position where he has access to TOP SECRET or SECRET documents, supervised destruction is unlikely to frustrate him in obtaining a document or copy at some stage in its life before destruction. All this leads us to the conclusion that, despite the part played in the present case by lack of supervision of Aldridge in the destruction of classified documents, this requirement may, on examination, be one which it is hard to justify in terms of its overall utility as a security safeguard against hostile penetration. Like the over-classification of documents, which the Security Commission have criticised so often, it must do a positive disservice to the interests of security to stipulate a security procedure which, from its nature, is likely to be widely disregarded and thus tend to discredit the whole system.

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Bridge of Harwich

BRIDGE OF HARWICH

(The Rt Hon the Lord Bridge of Harwich)
(Chairman)

Hugh Griffiths

HUGH GRIFFITHS

(The Rt Hon Lord Justice Griffiths MC)

Allen of Abbeydale

ALLEN OF ABBEYDALE

(The Lord Allen of Abbeydale GCB)

Hugh Beach

HUGH BEACH

(General Sir Hugh Beach GBE KCB MC)

LIST OF WITNESSES

Ministry of Defence

Mr E Broadbent CB CMG	Second Permanent Secretary
Mr E Pendlebury	Co-ordinator, Security Directorate
Major-General H E M L Garrett CBE (Ret'd.)	Director of Security (Army)
Brigadier P D Wickenden	Director of Army Psychology and Consultant Psychiatrist to the Army
Mr M Holton	Director of MOD Security
Mrs B A Dunphy	Assistant Director of MOD Security
Mr G J Burton	Senior Executive Officer, MOD Security Directorate
Mr J W Crichton	Higher Executive Officer, MOD Security Directorate
Mr R Primrose	Defence Intelligence Staff
Lt Col A N L Thom	Defence Intelligence Staff
Mr J Tolson	Principal Research Officer, DI73
Mr P R Davies	Senior Research Officer, DI73
Leading Writer A Hugill	Clerk DI73
Mr D Hills	Director, Economic and Logistic Intelligence (DELI)

Security Service

Sir John Jones KCB CMG	Director-General
Mr C O Shipp OBE	Deputy Director-General

DEPARTMENT/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i> PIECE/ITEM <i>1386</i> (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
Extract/Item details: <i>Appendix B</i> <i>Report of the Security Commission December 1983</i>	
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TOP SECRET



TOP SECRET

Security

Question: To ask the Prime Minister whether she will make a statement on the case of Lance Corporal Aldridge.

Answer: On 18 January Lance Corporal Aldridge pleaded guilty to an offence under Section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920, and was sentenced to four years imprisonment. The details of the charge were that on various days between 18 August and 14 September 1982 in the United Kingdom he did certain acts preparatory to communicating to another person, for a purpose prejudicial to the safety or interests of the State, documents calculated to be useful to an enemy.

In accordance with the procedure outlined to the House by my predecessor on 10 May 1965, after consulting the Chairman of the Security Commission and the Rt Hon Gentleman, the Leader of the Opposition, I referred this case to the Security Commission on 23 December. The terms of reference were as follows:

"To investigate the circumstances in which breaches of security have or may have, occurred arising out of the case of Lance Corporal P L Aldridge who has been charged with an offence under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920; and to advise in the light of the investigation whether any change in security arrangements is necessary or desirable."

It will be for the Commission to decide whether to report separately on this case or together with their reports on the Prime and Ritchie cases which have already been referred to them.

Question: To ask the Prime Minister whether she will make a statement on the case of Lance Corporal Aldridge.

~~Lance Corporal Aldridge to~~

Answer: On 18 January Lance Corporal Aldridge pleaded guilty to an ~~charge~~ offence under Section 7 of the Official Secrets Act, 1920, and DRAFT ANSWER was sentenced to four years imprisonment. The details

VP In accordance with the procedure outlined to the House by my predecessor on 10 May 1965, after consulting the Chairman of the Security Commission and the Rt Hon Gentleman, the Leader of the Opposition, I referred this case to the Security Commission on 23 December. The terms of reference were as follows:

"To investigate the circumstances in which breaches of security have or may have, occurred arising out of the case of Lance Corporal P L Aldridge who has been charged with an offence under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920; and to advise in the light of the investigation whether any change in security arrangements is necessary or desirable."

It will be for the Commission to decide whether to report separately on this case or together with their reports on the Prime and Ritchie cases which have already been referred to them.



POSSIBLE SUPPLEMENTARY

Why was this case referred to the Security Commission before proceedings were complete when this was not done in the Prime case?

DRAFT ANSWER

In both cases it was decided that the person charged with an offence should not be interrogated for the purpose of a Security Commission investigation until criminal proceedings were complete. In the Prime case it would have made little sense to start a security investigation until Prime could be interrogated as virtually all the information available derived from his confession to the police. In the Aldridge case there was sufficient information available to begin the investigation without waiting for further interrogation of Aldridge.

Early today acting Lance Corporal Aldridge was charged with an offence under Section 7 of the Official Secrets Act ~~1926~~. / The details of the charge are ^{was} that on various days between 18 August and 14 September 1982 in the United Kingdom he did certain acts preparatory to communicating to another person, for a purpose prejudicial to the safety or interests of the State, documents calculating^{ed} ~~ing~~ to be useful to an enemy. //

As the matter is now sub judice I cannot comment further.

From: The Right Honourable the Lord Bridge of Harwich

Security

2



MT

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

5th January, 1983.

Dear Prime Minister

Thank you very much for your letter of 23rd December giving me the terms of your references to the Security Commission in the cases of Ritchie and Aldridge. I am grateful to you for leaving it to the Commission to decide whether to report on these cases and that of Prime separately or together.

I much appreciated having the opportunity to meet you at the Law Society's dinner before Christmas and to hear your views on the task of the Commission.

*Yours sincerely
Bridge of Harwich*

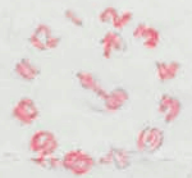
The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,
10 Downing Street,
LONDON, S.W.1.

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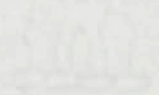
Security, Nov '82, Aldridge



177 JAN 1983



COMMUNICATIONS



LONDON



Security
2.6 AH

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

SECURITY COMMISSION : MISS RHONA RITCHIE
AND LANCE CORPORAL ALDRIDGE

Thank you for your minute of 21 December
(A082/0607).

The Prime Minister has signed letters to
Lord Bridge and Mr Foot in the terms
which you suggested, and I attach copies
of them.

F.R.B

23 December 1982

AIA



20 HL
cc CO

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

23 December 1982

Dear Lord Bridge,

In the light of your advice and after consulting the Leader of the Opposition, I have decided, in accordance with the arrangements announced in 1969, formally to ask the Security Commission to investigate and report upon the cases of Rhona Jane Ritchie and Lance Corporal P.L. Aldridge. The terms of reference are:

"To investigate the circumstances in which breaches of security have, or may have, occurred arising out of the case of Rhona Jane Ritchie, who was convicted on 29 November 1982 of an offence under Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911; and to advise in the light of that investigation whether any change in security arrangements is necessary or desirable".

and "To investigate the circumstances in which breaches of security have or may have, occurred arising out of the case of Lance Corporal P.L. Aldridge who has been charged with an offence under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920; and to advise in the light of the investigation whether any change in security arrangements is necessary or desirable".

It will be for the Commission to decide whether the issues raised in these cases overlap with your current investigation into the case of Geoffrey Arthur Prime and whether to report on the three together or separately. However, until the pending criminal proceedings on the Aldridge case have been completed

/ it will

AW

it will not be possible to interrogate Aldridge himself or to make any public announcement about this reference.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Thatcher

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Bridge of Harwich



26 142
cc CO

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

23 December 1982

Dear Michael,

Thank you for your letter of 16 December about the Aldridge case.

On the point in your second paragraph, in both the Prime and Aldridge cases the view was taken that the person charged with an offence should not be interrogated for the purpose of the Security Commission's investigation until criminal proceedings were complete. In Prime's case, the information available virtually all derived from Prime's confession to the police, and it would have made little sense for the Security Commission to start an investigation until there had been some interrogation of Prime. In Aldridge's case, enough information is available to enable a useful start to be made with the investigation without having to wait for further interrogation of Aldridge.

I am accordingly proceeding with the reference of the Aldridge case to the Security Commission; but, as I told you in my earlier letter, I shall not announce the reference until the criminal proceedings are complete.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Thatcher

The Rt. Hon. Michael Foot, M.P.

174

Ref. A082/0607

MR BUTLER

Prime Minister
Two letters attached for
Signature, please.

FERS

22.12.

Security Commission: Miss Rhona Ritchie and
Lance Corporal Aldridge

--- The Prime Minister wrote to the Leader of the Opposition on
15th December proposing that the Aldridge case should be referred
to the Security Commission and Mr Foot replied on 16th December
agreeing to the reference.

2. The way is now clear for the Prime Minister formally to
refer both the Ritchie case (as has already been announced to
Parliament) and the Aldridge case to the Commission. A draft letter
for the Prime Minister to send to Lord Bridge for this purpose
--- is attached.

--- 3. In his letter of 16th December Mr Foot also asked for an
explanation of why it is possible to refer the Aldridge case to
the Security Commission before criminal proceedings are completed
--- when it was not possible to do so in the Prime case. I attach
a self-explanatory draft of a letter which the Prime Minister might
send in reply.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

21st December 1982

DRAFT LETTER FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO SEND TO

The Rt Hon the Lord Bridge of Harwich
House of Lords
LONDON
SW1A OPW

SECURITY COMMISSION: MISS RHONA RITCHIE AND LANCE CORPORAL
ALDRIDGE

In the light of your advice and after consulting the Leader of the Opposition, I have decided, in accordance with the arrangements announced in 1969, formally to ask the Security Commission to investigate and report upon the cases of Rhona Jane Ritchie and Lance Corporal P L Aldridge. The terms of reference are:

"To investigate the circumstances in which breaches of security have, or may have, occurred arising out of the case of Rhona Jane Ritchie, who was convicted on 29th November 1982 of an offence under Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911; and to advise in the light of that investigation whether any change in security arrangements is necessary or desirable."

and

"To investigate the circumstances in which breaches of security have or may have, occurred arising out of the case of Lance Corporal P L Aldridge who has been charged with an offence under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920; and to advise in the light of the investigation whether any change in security arrange



ments is necessary or desirable."

It will be for the Commission to decide whether the issues raised in these cases overlap with your current investigation into the case of Geoffrey Arthur Prime and whether to report on the three together or separately. However, until the pending criminal proceedings on the Aldridge case have been completed it will not be possible to interrogate Aldridge himself or to make any public announcement about this reference.

CONQUEROR



DRAFT LETTER FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO SEND TO

The Rt Hon Michael Foot, MP

Thank you for your letter of 16th December about the Aldridge case.

On the point in your second paragraph, in both the Prime and the Aldridge cases the view was taken that the person charged with an offence should not be interrogated for the purpose of the Security Commission's investigation until criminal proceedings were complete. In Prime's case, the information available virtually all derived from Prime's confession to the police, and it would have made little sense for the Security Commission to start an investigation until there had been some interrogation of Prime. In Aldridge's case, enough information is available to enable a useful start to be made with the investigation without having to wait for further interrogation of Aldridge.

I am accordingly proceeding with the reference of the Aldridge case to the Security Commission; but, as I told you in my earlier letter, I shall not announce the reference until the criminal proceedings are complete.

Security



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

covering CONFIDENTIAL

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

40 / K A
I attach a copy of a reply to the Prime Minister from the Leader of the Opposition about Lance Corporal Aldridge. Could you please advise me on how the Prime Minister might reply to the second paragraph of Mr Foot's letter.

I am informing the Lord President's office of the contents of the third paragraph.

F.R.B.

20 December 1982

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

20 December 1982

Dear David,

HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATE ON SECURITY

This is to let you know that in replying to the Prime Minister's letter of 16 December about Lance Corporal Aldridge, Mr Foot said:-

"I am glad to have your assurance that we will be able to have a debate on security in the House before very long".

Your sincerely,

Robin Butler

David Heyhoe Esq.,
Lord President's Office.

CONFIDENTIAL



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

From:
Michael Foot MP

16 December 1982

CONFIDENTIAL

L18
PPS

Dear Margaret

Thank you for your letter about your intention to refer the case of Lance Corporal P.L. Aldridge to the Security Commission. From the information you give me, I can certainly have no objection to that.

I should be grateful to know, however, the criteria by which the Security Commission differentiate between the Prime case and the Aldridge case so that they can examine one before criminal proceedings are completed and not the other.

I am glad to have your assurance that we will be able to have a debate on security in the House before very long.

Margaret Thatcher

The Right Honourable Margaret Thatcher MP



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary
SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG
CABINET OFFICE

LANCE CORPORAL ALDRIDGE

Thank you for your minute of 14 December (ref. A082/0529). The Prime Minister has written to Mr Foot on the lines attached to your minute, and I enclose a copy of the letter. In consultation with Mr Heyhoe (Lord President's Office), I abbreviated the last paragraph while (I hope) retaining the sense of it..

I am copying this minute to David Heyhoe, with the last paragraph only of the letter to Mr Foot in case Mr Foot raises the point at business questions with the Lord President tomorrow.

C. R. BUTLER

15 December, 1982

088



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

15 December, 1982

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Michael,

You might have seen that Lance Corporal P.L. Aldridge, of the Intelligence Corps, has been charged with an offence under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920. This is the section which makes it an offence, among other things, to do any act preparatory to the commission of any offence under the Official Secrets Acts.

The facts of this case briefly are as follows. It was learnt in August 1982 that someone from Aldershot was in touch with the Soviet Embassy. Enquiries narrowed the range of suspects to a group which included Aldridge, and then to a point where sufficient evidence was available to enable his Commanding Officer to summon him. Aldridge admitted that he had been in touch with the Soviet Embassy with the intention of passing secret information, but claims not actually to have passed such information. He was arrested and detained under a holding charge under the Army Act. On 26 November it was decided to put the case in the hands of the civil authorities. On 30 November he was charged under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920.

The facts of this case have been placed before the Chairman of the Security Commission who takes the view that this is a case in which a reference to the Security Commission would be likely to serve a useful purpose.

/ In this

RM

CONFIDENTIAL

In this case - unlike the Prime case - I am advised that it would be possible to make the reference before criminal proceedings are completed without risk of adverse effect upon those proceedings, provided of course that no announcement of the reference was made until it was appropriate to do so in relation to the proceedings.

I therefore propose, if you agree, to make an immediate reference to the Security Commission; but not to make any announcement of that reference until the proceedings against Aldridge are complete. I understand that it is expected that he will be committed for trial early in the New Year and that it should be possible to have the trial within a few weeks thereafter.

It will be for the Security Commission itself to decide whether to deal with this reference at the same time and with the same panel as the Prime case, or whether to deal with it separately.

Perhaps I could respond to the second paragraph of your letter of 3 December about a possible debate on security in the House. I appreciate that there is a general wish in the House to debate security, but I do not think that it would make sense to have that debate at least until we have the report on the Prime case. Until we have that report, it would be difficult if not impossible for the Government to add anything substantial to what has already been reported to the House. I do not know that this need greatly delay a debate; I know that the Security Commission is seeking to complete its work with all the speed compatible with thoroughness.

Yours sincerely
Raymond S. Helber



Ref. A082/0529

MR BUTLER

Prime Minister
Letter attached. I
have cleared the last
paragraph with the
Lord President's office.

Lance Corporal Aldridge

FERB
15.12.

I reported to you on this case in my minute of 29th November.

2. As you know, Lance Corporal Aldridge was in fact charged on 30th November under Section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920 with committing acts preparatory to the commission of offences under Section 1 of the Official Secrets Act 1911.

3. I have placed the facts of the case before the Chairman of the Security Commission. He takes the view that a reference to the Commission would be likely to serve a useful purpose in this case. He also agrees, and the Attorney General is content, that the reference should be made immediately, even though proceedings are pending, on the understanding that the reference will not be announced and Aldridge himself will not be indicated until the proceedings are complete. ^{told} ?

--- 4. I propose accordingly the attached letter to the Leader of the Opposition. You will see that I have taken the opportunity in the last paragraph of suggesting a reply to the second paragraph of Mr Foot's letter of 3rd December about the Ritchie case.

RIA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

14th December 1982



DRAFT LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE RT HON MICHAEL

CONFIDENTIAL

FOOT, MP

You might have seen that Lance Corporal P L Aldridge, of the Intelligence Corps, has been charged with an offence under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920. This is the section which makes it an offence, among other things, to do any act preparatory to the commission of any offence under the Official Secrets Acts.

The facts of this case briefly are as follows. It was learnt in August 1982 that someone from Aldershot was in touch with the Soviet Embassy. Enquiries narrowed the range of suspects to a group which included Aldridge, and then to a point where sufficient evidence was available to enable his Commanding Officer to summon him. Aldridge admitted that he had been in touch with the Soviet Embassy with the intention of passing secret information, but claims not actually to have passed such information. He was arrested and detained under a holding charge under the Army Act. On 26th November it was decided to put the case in the hands of the civil authorities. On 30th November he was charged under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920.

The facts of this case have been placed before the Chairman of the Security Commission who takes the view that this is a case in which a reference to the Security Commission



would be likely to serve a useful purpose.

In this case - unlike the Prime case - I am advised that it would be possible to make the reference before criminal proceedings are completed without risk of adverse effect upon those proceedings, provided of course that no announcement of the reference was made until it was appropriate to do so in relation to the proceedings.

I therefore propose, if you agree, to make an immediate reference to the Security Commission; but not to make any announcement of that reference until the proceedings against Aldridge are complete. I understand that it is expected that he will be committed for trial early in the New Year and that it should be possible to have the trial within a few weeks thereafter.

It will be for the Security Commission itself to decide whether to deal with this reference at the same time and with the same panel as the Prime case, or whether to deal with it separately.

Perhaps I could respond to the second paragraph of your letter of 3rd December about a possible debate on security in the House. ~~[I note the Opposition's preference for a general debate on security ahead of the Security Commission's report on the Prime case.]~~ While I appreciate that there will ^{be} a general wish in the House to debate security ~~[when the time is right]~~, ^{but I do not think that} I question whether it would make sense to have ^{that} a debate at least until we have the report

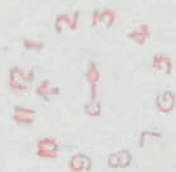


on the Prime case. ^{Until we have that report} Certainly, until the Security Commission has reported on that case, it would be difficult if not impossible for the Government to ^{add} say anything substantial ^{what the House what has already been reported to the House} about the cases which are under reference to the Security Commission. I should therefore see some difficulty in finding Government time for such a debate ahead of the Security Commission's report.] I do not know that this need greatly delay a debate; I know that the Security Commission is seeking to complete its work with all the speed compatible with thoroughness.



Security
Aldridge
Nov 82

74 DEC 1982



Ref. A082/0325

MR BUTLER

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

Lance Corporal Aldridge

The facts of this case briefly are as follows.

2.

Inquiries

narrowed the range of suspects to a group which included Aldridge. The discovery in his wastepaper basket of a diary containing Soviet contact numbers was sufficient to enable his commanding officer to summon him. He admitted that he had been in touch with the Soviet Embassy with the intention of passing secret information, but claims not actually to have passed any such information.

3. He was arrested and detained under a charge under the Army Act. On 26th November it was decided to put the case in the hands of the civil authorities. The Director of Public Prosecutions is considering whether to recommend charges under the Official Secrets Act. On what is at present known, the charges would be under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1911, of committing acts preparatory to the commission of espionage acts governed by section 1.

4. It may be that, by the time the Prime Minister answers questions tomorrow afternoon, Aldridge will have been charged. In that event I will submit further advice: it should be possible for the Prime Minister then to say that Lance Corporal Aldridge has been charged with offences under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act, and the latter will be in effect sub-judice.

5. If Aldridge has not by then been charged, and the Prime Minister is questioned I suggest that she should follow the line in the attached note.

6. The press have leapt to the conclusion that because the Headquarters of 5 Brigade is at Aldershot, Lance Corporal Aldridge may have been leaking (or preparing to leak) information about Falklands operations. Aldridge did not approach the Soviet Embassy until well after the end of the Falklands campaign. So far as we know he passed no actual information. Investigations to what he might have been



intending to pass continue.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

29.12.82

CONQUEROR



4/c Ald

I confirm that a Lance Corporal has been charged under Section 69 of the Army Act with conduct or neglect of the breaches of good order and military discipline.

The matter has now been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions, who is considering whether to recommend ~~the~~ other charges and the institution of proceedings. The House will understand that I cannot say any more than this at the present time.

CONQUEROR

CONFIDENTIAL



See AH

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

Mr. Rockett

To see

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SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Thank you for your minute of 26 November (A082/0303) about the arrest of a Lance Corporal in the Intelligence Corps at Aldershot. The Prime Minister has seen and noted your minute.

In view of the prominence given to this story in the weekend's newspapers, and the further details which are emerging, I should be grateful if you could arrange briefing for the Prime Minister for her Questions tomorrow afternoon.

F.R.B.

29 November 1982

CONFIDENTIAL

AH

SECRET



MF

Prime Minister
When trouble comes, they come not single spies

But in battalions!

FERB

26.11

Ref. A082/0303

MR BUTLER

This is to confirm that I told the Prime Minister that a Lance Corporal in the Intelligence Corps at Aldershot had been arrested and was in detention, being suspected of having made an offer to the Soviet Embassy in London to sell classified information. He has stated that he contacted the Soviet Embassy by post or telephone on four occasions in August and September 1982 but that he never actually passed any classified documents or classified information to them.

2. A number of elements in his story are subject to considerable doubt and the matter continues to be under close investigation by the Special Investigation Branch of the Royal Military Police and the Security Service.

3. The Lance Corporal joined the Army in December 1981 and was positively vetted in May 1982.

4. The Attorney General is being kept informed. There appears to be a prima facie case for a charge under Section 1 of the Official Secrets Act which could be tried by either Civil Court or General Court Martial. It will be for the Attorney General to decide in due course whether there should be a prosecution.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

26 November 1982

SECRET

