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PREM 19/1437

SECRET.

MT

~~42.9.89~~  
42.9.89

EXECUTIVE IN SCANDINAVIA  
VIA.

HISTORY OF THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS

Confidential filing

Indian Amery MP write to the Prime Minister  
about the possibility of reviving the Special  
Operations Executive, SOE.  
Publication of a book about the Special Operations  
Executive

DEFENCE

April 1980

| Referred to  | Date               | Referred to | Date | Referred to | Date | Referred to | Date |
|--------------|--------------------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|
| <del>3</del> | <del>4-80</del>    |             |      |             |      |             |      |
|              | <del>17.4.80</del> |             |      |             |      |             |      |
|              | <del>16-7-82</del> |             |      |             |      |             |      |
|              | <del>4.10.83</del> |             |      |             |      |             |      |
|              | <del>6-10-83</del> |             |      |             |      |             |      |
|              | <del>21.7.87</del> |             |      |             |      |             |      |
|              | <del>9.1.84</del>  |             |      |             |      |             |      |
|              | 8.2.84             |             |      |             |      |             |      |
|              | 21/2/84            |             |      |             |      |             |      |
|              | <del>5.3.84</del>  |             |      |             |      |             |      |
|              | 25/7/85            |             |      |             |      |             |      |
|              | <del>6.8.81</del>  |             |      |             |      |             |      |
|              | <del>7-8-85</del>  |             |      |             |      |             |      |
|              | 16.12.85           |             |      |             |      |             |      |



File 16

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

SIR ROBERT AMRSTRONG

HISTORY OF THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS EXECUTIVE IN SCANDINAVIA

I think we can take it from the Prime Minister's comment on your minute of 19 December 1983 that she would be content for you to invite Dr. Cruickshank, the author of the History of the Special Operations Executive in Scandinavia, to send his text to the publishers and to authorise them to arrange for publication, especially as the text has been cleared by the Departments and agencies principally concerned.

N. L. WICKS

16 December 1985



NBR

Ref. A085/3266

PRIME MINISTER

History of the Special Operations Executive in Scandinavia

Mr Butler's minute to me of 21 December 1983 recorded your agreement to my proposal that an official history of Special Operations in Scandinavia in the Second World War should be prepared for publication by the historian Dr Cruickshank, who was to be given access to official records in order to do so.

2. Dr Cruickshank has now completed his work, and the text has been cleared by the Departments and agencies principally concerned.

3. If you agree, I should now like to invite Dr Cruickshank to send the text to the publishers (Oxford University Press), and to authorise them to arrange for publication.

MS

for

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

13 December 1985

DEFENCE : Special Operations Executive: April 1980



cc FCO  
MOD

## 10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

7 August 1985

Dear Julian

Thank you for your letter of 23 July about Special Operations, copies of which you sent to Geoffrey Howe and Michael Heseltine.

We have of course given a great deal of thought to the problem of coping with terrorism. Since the outrage in St. James's Square in April 1984, we have extensively reorganised the arrangements in the Cabinet Office and the relevant Whitehall Departments for dealing with terrorist threats. I can assure you that there has never been wider recognition within Government of the need for prompt and adequate assessment of intelligence about terrorist threats and the importance of prompt and co-ordinated counter measures. We shall continue to see to it that our national arrangements reflect this. Internationally our priorities should be the fullest and most effective exchange with our major allies of intelligence and assessments about terrorism. At the diplomatic level we should work for strengthened international co-operation where this offers a real prospect of helping to counter the terrorism threat. Here too, we have made progress; but there is still much to be done. As you know, we circulated various proposals for combating terrorism, particularly hijacking, at the Milan Summit.

/Unfortunately,

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Unfortunately, there was not time to press them at that meeting. But the Foreign Affairs Council on 22/23 July agreed that the Ten should urgently look at this whole question. We shall be following this up.

In dealing with acts of terrorism, we can and do make use of the Special Forces if the circumstances are appropriate. You will of course recollect that the SAS took part in the action against the siege of the Iranian Embassy in London.

Turning to Special Operations in general, I am sure you will understand that it would be inappropriate for me to go into details.

As I mentioned when we met in my room in the House last year, the political and other risks of using such a capability in the circumstances of today need to be weighed with great care; otherwise the consequences could be serious and outweigh the results achieved. But you have my assurance that the capability we do have is appropriate for the kind of tasks we might be required to undertake.

*Yours  
Ranger*

The Rt. Hon. Julian Amery, M.P.

SECRET AND PERSONAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

6 August 1985

Dear Tim,

Can see this

Charles Powell wrote to Len Appleyard on 23 July enclosing a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from the Rt Hon Julian Amery MP about special operations. I enclose a draft reply, couched in general terms, which has been cleared with the MOD and our friends. We would not recommend that the Prime Minister take up the detailed points in paragraph 2 of Mr Amery's letter.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Richard Mottram at the MOD.

Yours ever,

(P F Ricketts) Peter Ricketts

Tim Flesher Esq  
10 Downing Street

SECRET AND PERSONAL



DRAFT: ~~memo~~/letter/teletext/dispatch/news

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:  
Prime Minister

Reference

DEPARTMENT: TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

The Rt Hon Julian Amery MP  
House of Commons  
London SW1

Copies to:

PERSONAL

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

Thank you for your letter of 23 July about Special Operations, copies of which you sent to Geoffrey Howe and Michael Heseltine.

CAVEAT.....

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Enclosures—flag(s).....

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Spec. Operations Exec.  
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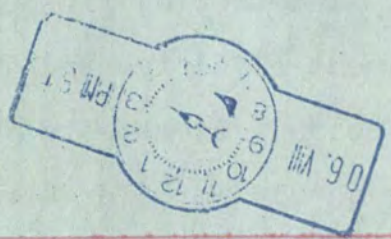
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Unfortunately there was not time to press them at that meeting. But the Foreign Affairs Council on 22/23 July agreed that the Ten should urgently look at this whole question. We shall be following this up.

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Turning to Special Operations in general, I am sure you will understand that it would be inappropriate for me to go into details.

As I mentioned when we met in my room in the House last year, the political and other risks of using such a capability in the circumstances of today need to be weighed with great care; otherwise the consequences could be serious and outweigh the results achieved. But you have my assurance that the capability we do have is appropriate for the kind of tasks we might be required to undertake.



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✓

CF PPS

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

A 23 July 1985

I enclose a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from the Rt. Hon. Julian Amery, MP, returning once more to his earlier theme of the need to reconstitute a special operations capability. He cites a number of reasons why the Prime Minister might be more disposed toward this than when he discussed it with her in February.

I see that he has copied his letter to the Foreign Secretary and to the Defence Secretary. I should be grateful for a draft reply which might issue on behalf of all three recipients of the letter. I have no reason to suppose that the Prime Minister's views have changed since February.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

(CHARLES POWELL)

L.V. Appleyard, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'L.V. Appleyard'.



FROM: THE RT. HON. JULIAN AMERY, M.P.

112, EATON SQUARE,  
SW1W 9AA  
TEL: 01-235 1543  
01-235 7409

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

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23rd July, 1985

*Dear Margaret,*

May I refer to my letters to you of 6th July 1982, 31st January 1984 and 29th February 1984? I tried in those and in our talk on 21st February 1984 to put the case for giving Britain an increased capability on the lines of wartime SOE and PWE in order to counter terrorism directed against us and our friends and to support "resistance" in countries occupied by the Soviet Union or by its surrogate powers. At our talk you gave me a very fair hearing but, I think, felt that on the grounds of cost involved and the dangers of exposure by investigative journalism, the objections to my proposal outweighed its advantages.

Forgive me if I return to the subject but a number of things have happened since we spoke.

1. There has been a sharp increase in terrorism world wide including terrorism directed against Britain from the IRA and from Libya.
2. President Reagan has declared war on terrorism. So did you in your speech to the American Bar Association.
3. Vice-President Bush has stressed that counter-terrorism may not only involve security measures but may also call for pre-emptive action against terrorist centres. He has publicly asked that America's allies should support the CIA in this.
4. The Soviet connection with the training and equipment of international terrorism has been widely accepted.
5. The US Congress has openly appropriated funds for the support of the "Contras" in Nicaragua and the Freedom Fighters in Afghanistan.

The Clarke amendment seems to have been virtually rescinded.

6. The European Community Governments are actively considering measures to counter terrorism. Britain is probably the most experienced of them all both from our experiences in Northern Ireland, Malaya, Kenya and Cyprus and as the leading power in World War II in supporting "Resistance" in Europe and South East Asia. The French have similar experience. So to a greater or lesser extent have other members of the European Community.

../. .

23.7.85

contd:

I don't know how far you were able to discuss counter-terrorism at the Milan summit, but clearly it will be difficult to give support to the Americans (or if need be restrain them) or to cooperate with our Continental colleagues/partners in these matters unless we have an organisation to give us the necessary capabilities. If we are to protect our intelligence sources this may have to be more distinct from the intelligence services than is, I understand, at present the case though, no doubt, under the same overall control.

I have not wanted to go back to the group listed in my letter of 6.7.82. The less these things are talked about the better. I have, however, consulted Professor R.V. Jones of Aberdeen and Alun Chalfont who both have some experience of the business. They have urged me, to ask whether in the light of recent developments, you would care to look at the whole matter again.

I have also discussed all this with Alec Home who said he would try to have a word with you or Geoffrey Howe about it. Alec has a copy of this letter and of my earlier letters to you.

I am copying this letter to Geoffrey Howe and Michael Heseltine.

*Yours ever,*

*Julian*

Julian Amery

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, MP  
Prime Minister



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Of yours?

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

5 March, 1984

Dear Julian,

Thank you for your letter of 29 February about our recent discussion.

I note that you will be telling those interested that you have put your case both to me and to two Foreign Secretaries. I was interested to hear it myself and it certainly provides some food for thought.

*Lawson*

*Raymond*

The Rt. Hon. Julian Amery, M.P.

307



FROM: THE RT. HON. JULIAN AMERY, M.P.

112, EATON SQUARE,  
SW1W 9AA  
TEL: 01-235 1543  
01-235 7409

*Secret*

29th February, 1984.

*Dear Margaret,*

I am grateful to you for giving me the chance to discuss the political side of Special Operations with you the other day (February 21st).

As I said then the para-military side - SBS and SAS seems to be well looked after. My anxiety remains about the political side.

I do not think we need anything very elaborate at this stage. A small headquarters designed (a) to support any team we may send to existing trouble spots and (b) to recointre potential trouble spots and look out for individuals who might be useful if the potential becomes actual. To start with this should probably be under the overall control of C but a distinct organisation to avoid Operations compromising Intelligence.

I would not be too concerned about the danger of investigative journalism. Our adversaries certainly make no secret of their support for what they regard as freedom fighters; nor for that matter do the Americans, French or Israelis.

I have bitter memories of how ill-prepared we were for this kind of thing when war broke out in 1939. I don't think world was is likely now but we are already far more at war with the Soviets in the subversive sphere than we ever were with Hitler until he invaded Poland.

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As you may recall, I was originally asked to raise all this with you by a small group of friends with experience of Special Operations. I would propose to tell them that I am happy about what is being done on the para-military - SAS, SBS - side but that I remain concerned about the weakness of our capability on the "political" side. I would, however, add that I have been given the opportunity to put the case to two Foreign Secretaries and to you personally and that I am satisfied that our views have been taken on board at the highest level. As the subject is essentially secret I would not need to go beyond that.

*Yes*

*Julian*

Julian Amery

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, MP

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OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

21 February 1984

Special Operations: Mr. Julian Amery, M.P.

Thank you for your letter of 20 February. Mr. Amery called on the Prime Minister in her room in the House of Commons this afternoon. Michael Alison and I were present.

Mr. Amery said that he believed that the SAS and SBS were first class. But our capacity for political subversion was weak. The United States, France and Israel were much more active than we were. What was needed was a small group of people who would identify countries where crises could emerge and who would then be in touch with British citizens who had skills to contribute. These could range from mining engineers to academics to businessmen. They could be used for collecting information or for actual sabotage activity. The basic organisation could be expanded as the need arose. It could be placed under "C" but should not be part of his organisation. It was essential to keep intelligence and operational activities separate. What he had in mind would not involve much expenditure.

The Prime Minister commented that this was a difficult subject. The political risks of operations of the kind described by Mr. Amery were far greater in peacetime than during war. Journalists were alert for signs of such activities. But she would reflect on the ideas put forward by Mr. Amery.

The Prime Minister told me afterwards that she did not consider any follow up action to be necessary - though she might take an opportunity at some point in the future to have a further talk with Mr. Amery.

A.L. COLES

Brian Fall, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

SECRET AND PERSONAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

20 February 1984

*Dear John*

Special Operations: Mr Julian Amery MP

Flag A

You told me that, following his letter of 31 January, Mr Amery will be calling on the Prime Minister on 21 February to discuss his ideas on the need for a Special Operations organisation. Mr Amery made reference to earlier correspondence - on which, I understand, the Ministry of Defence provided briefing.

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As indicated in his letter to the Prime Minister, Mr Amery discussed this subject with the Foreign Secretary on 15 December. Sir Geoffrey spoke on the lines of the attached Points to Make, which the Prime Minister might care to draw on. These, of course, are in fairly guarded terms, as there are obvious limits as to how far Ministers would wish to go in disclosing details about the Government's capabilities and intentions on this sensitive subject to Mr Amery, even on a Privy Councillor basis.

I shall be putting a copy of this letter to the Foreign Secretary overnight, and am sending a copy to Richard Mottram and to Richard Hatfield.

(B J P Fall)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street

MEETING WITH MR AMERY: SPECIAL OPERATIONS

Points to Make

1. Most interested to hear about your earlier discussions with the former Secretaries of State for Defence and Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and more recently with Sir Geoffrey Howe. Special Operations is, of course, a highly sensitive area and, even on Privy Councillor terms, it is not possible to go into great detail.
2. Circumstances changed a good deal since SOE was operating during the War. Political risks of these operations far greater in peace-time. Investigative journalists always alert for signs of such activities.
3. But capability  
needs to be used with great care. Otherwise consequences could be serious and outweigh results achieved.
4. Doubtful about idea of prepositioning Special Operations' capabilities overseas. Expensive and risky way to use scarce resources.
5. Not certain of need for separate SOE-type organisation today. Inclined to think that Special Operations best left to SIS and MOD.

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cc Feo!

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

8 February 1984

Special Operations Organisation

BT  
Mr. Julian Amery will be calling on the Prime Minister on 14 February to discuss his ideas about a Special Operations Organisation.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary will have received a copy of Mr. Amery's letter of 31 January to the Prime Minister. I should be most grateful if you could let me have a short brief by close of play on 13 February.

A. J. COLES

Brian Fall, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

SECRET

SC

M. BUTLER ✓  
MR. COLES ✓  
MR. TURNBULL  
MR. FLESHER  
MR. BARCLAY  
MR. ALISON  
MR. SHERBOURNE

I have arranged the following meeting with the Prime Minister:-

Subject .. *Special operations*  
*Defence foreign affairs* ..  
Date .. *14 February* ..  
Time .. *16.45* ..  
Venue .. *H/C* ..  
Person/people invited .. *Julian Aronson MP.*  
*+ M.A.* ..  
Added Ministerial attendance ..

Briefing

a) I have commissioned briefing from ..

✓ b) Could you arrange briefing if necessary

*Tessa is attaching letter.*

Caroline Ryder



FROM: THE RT. HON. JULIAN AMERY, M.P.

A

112, EATON SQUARE,  
SW1W 9AA

TEL: 01-235 1543  
01-235 7409

Confidential

31st January, 1984.

Dear Margaret,

1982

You may remember that I wrote to you on 6th July<sup>1982</sup> to let you know about an unofficial meeting which recommended the need to reconstitute, though on a modest scale, a Special Operations organisation such as was formed shortly before the last war and which continued during the war and in the early post war period.

You replied on 30th July suggesting that as a first step I might have a talk with John Nott, then Secretary of State for Defence, on Privy Councillor terms.

I accordingly had a talk with Francis Pym, then Foreign Secretary. His reaction to the proposal to develop the political capability for Special operations appeared to be mainly negative but he agreed to look into the matter further in the light of my representations and to have a further talk.

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OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

I cannot help feeling that this is a branch of policy in which we have been pre-eminently successful in the past and which does call for rather more attention than we have given it hitherto. Nor do I see any reason why we should be embarrassed by leaks. Our public opinion is, I expect, sophisticated enough not to be too shocked if we are found to be giving the same sort of support to freedom fighters against Soviet domination as the Soviets give to dissident movements in the West and the Third World.

Perhaps you would let me come and have a talk to you about all this before I report back to my Committee.

I am copying this letter to Geoffrey Howe and Michael Heseltine.

*Yours ever,*  
*Julian*  
Julian Amery

The Rt.Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, MP



NBPM

MO 23/2

PRIME MINISTERHISTORIES OF THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS EXECUTIVE (SOE)

I am content with the proposal which Sir Robert Armstrong put to you in his minute of 19th December. I trust that the Departments concerned will be given adequate time to consider the authors' manuscripts when they are presented for clearance.

2. I am sending copies of this minute to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*W.A.*

Ministry of Defence  
9th January 1984



Defence - April 1980

Special Operations Exec.



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10 JAN 1984

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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

HISTORIES OF THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS EXECUTIVE

The Prime Minister was grateful for your minute of 19 December A083/3506. Provided that the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Secretary of State for Defence are also content, she agrees that official histories of Special Operations in Greece and Scandinavia during the Second World War should be prepared on the basis set out in your minute.

I am sending copies of this minute to Mr. Fall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Mr. Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

E. E. R. BUTLER

21 December 1983

Ref.A083/3506

PRIME MINISTER

Yes. ms

This seems straightforward.  
 Agree, provided that the  
Foreign Secretary and Secretary of  
 State for Defence are also content?

FERB

20.12

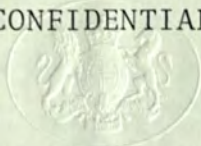
Histories of the Special Operations Executive (SOE)

I am seeking your approval to the preparation of two official histories about Special Operations in Greece and in Scandinavia during the Second World War. Both histories would be published by the Oxford University Press (OUP) under the same arrangements as you approved for the 'History of SOE in the Far East' by Dr Charles Cruickshank which was published by the OUP on 13 October.

2. The approval for the history by Dr Cruickshank (your Private Secretary's letter of 2 May 1980 refers) was on the basis that the OUP funded the work; the Government provided facilities for privileged access to closed records under controlled conditions; and the author - who would be given the status of an official historian - and the publisher both agreed to accept any necessary changes in the text and to obtain approval before publication. These arrangements worked well at all stages.

3. There is a continuing interest and pressure from Sir Douglas Dodds-Parker, Chairman of the Special Forces Club, for further histories of special operations. The first such history 'SOE in France' by M R D Foot was produced by HMSO as part of the Government's programme of official histories. But the funds for this programme have been fully committed for some years and no slot for a further history on any subject is likely to emerge before the end of 1984. Mr Ian Gow, replying to Sir Douglas Dodds-Parker on your behalf in July 1981, said that a further private venture history (on the lines of the 'Cruickshank' model) offered the best prospect of initiating new work in the SOE field, after 'SOE in the Far East' was finished.

4. Sir Douglas Dodds-Parker has now proposed that Dr Cruickshank should prepare a history of SOE in Scandinavia; and that Mr Richard Clogg, a highly respected historian in the Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Kings College, should be made an official historian to write a history of SOE in Greece.



5. Sir Antony Acland and I believe that in these two areas there are worthwhile stories to be told. We cannot fund the work ourselves, but the arrangement with OUP would secure two further histories of SOE without any additional cost to public funds. Access to closed records will be necessary, and the facilities to service two authors can be made available. The authors will also draw on the memories of those who were directly involved in the events to supplement the documentary evidence. Dr Cruickshank and Mr Clogg have the right experience and standing, and are otherwise suitable, to tackle the work. No difficulties are foreseen in obtaining the necessary guarantees from them and the publisher as regards the right to change their text and their obligation to seek approval to publish.

6. I am sending copies of this minute to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and to the Secretary of State for Defence.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

19 December 1983



FILE

R07

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

The Prime Minister was grateful for your minute of 4 October (A083/2750) about the publication of "History of the Special Operations Executive in the Far East", which she has seen and noted. She will not expect you to give it to her as a birthday present.

**F. E. R. BUTLER**

6 October, 1983

6

Prime Minister 2



He will not give  
it you as a present.

Ref. A083/2750

PRIME MINISTER

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FERB

5.10

In September last year, the first Official History to be commissioned and prepared, from the outset, for private publication, "History of the Special Operations Executive in the Far East", by Dr Charles Cruickshank, was, with your consent, sent to the publishers, the Oxford University Press.

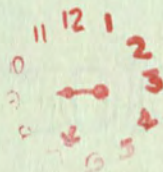
2. The book will be published on 13 October:  
a very appropriate day.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

4 October 1983



OCT 1983



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file LB #

Deference.

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

MR. JULIAN AMERY

Thank you for your minute of 14 September. The Prime Minister had some correspondence in 1980 with Mr. Amery about our capacity to undertake subversive operations. But the Prime Minister does not recall him mentioning this subject to her recently and she has not yet received the letter to which you refer in your paragraph 2. You may wish to check with this Office later as to whether a letter eventually did come.

A. J. COLES

16 September 1982

EW

SECRET



|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| DEPARTMENT/SERIES<br>..... <i>PREM 19</i> .....<br>PIECE/ITEM ..... <i>1437</i> .....<br>(one piece/item number) | Date and<br>sign                    |
| Extract/Item details:<br><br><i>Armstrong to Coles dated 14 September 1982</i>                                   |                                     |
| CLOSED FOR ..... YEARS<br>UNDER FOI EXEMPTION  |                                     |
| RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4)<br>OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958  | <i>S. Gray</i><br><i>26/11/2013</i> |
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30/7



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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

30 July 1982

Dear Julian,

Thank you for your letter of 6 July about Special Operations.

I should not want you to think that the Government is in any way unaware of the value of Special Forces and the operations that they can carry out. But, as you well know, it is not a matter which lends itself to open discussion. I know that John Nott and his people would be very interested in any ideas that you and your Group have produced. You may also find it useful if he were to tell you something about the way we have these matters organised at present.

I suggest that perhaps the first step might be for you to have a discussion with John Nott on Privy Counsellor terms. We can then decide how matters can be carried forward.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Nott whose office will be in touch with you.

Yours

Julian Amery

The Rt. Hon. Julian Amery, M.P.

LA



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1  
Telephone 01-~~333XXXX~~ 218 6169

D/S of S/PS/10

26th July 1982

*Dear Willie, Myre wh 27/6*

You wrote to me on 9th July enclosing a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from Mr Julian Amery MP about Special Operations. Mr Amery suggested, inter alia, that a personal discussion might be the next step.

My Secretary of State believes that a talk with Mr Amery might be a good idea, and he is perfectly prepared to take this on himself. It may well be that Mr Amery has got some ideas which would be helpful. At the same time it would be useful to remove any impression that the Government pays no attention to this important aspect of things, whether in the Falkland Islands or more generally.

However, these matters do not lend themselves to open correspondence, and Mr Nott, therefore, feels that a discussion with Mr Amery on Privy Counsellor terms might be preferable. We could then decide how best to take matters forward.

/ I attach a draft letter to Mr Amery for the Prime Minister's consideration.

*Yours ever  
D T PIPER*

(D T PIPER)

W F S Rickett Esq

DRAFT LETTER FROM PRIME MINISTER TO MR JULIAN AMERY

Thank you for your letter of 6 July about Special Operations.

I should not want you to think that the Government is in any way unaware of the value of Special Forces and the operations that they can carry out. But, as you well know, it is not a matter which lends itself to open discussion. I know that John Nott and his people would be very interested in any ideas that you and your Group have produced. You may also find it useful if he were to tell you something about the way we have these matters organised at present.

I suggest that perhaps the first step might be for you to have a discussion with John Nott on Privy Counsellor terms. We can then decide how matters can be carried forward.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Nott whose office will be in touch with you.



LPO

23/7

Julian AMERY, MP

10 DOWNING STREET

Chased MOD in S/S's office

From the Private Secretary

Spoke MOD - coming today  
9 July 1982  
hsc 23/7  
26/7

I enclose a letter to the Prime Minister from The Rt. Hon. Julian Amery, M.P., in which he suggests that we should reconstitute a Special Operations organisation on the lines of the SOE. He asks if two or three of his fellow thinkers might join him at a meeting with appropriate officials to consider this idea.

I should be grateful if you could let me have a draft reply for the Prime Minister's signature by Friday 23 July.

W. F. S. RICKETT

Derek Piper, Esq.,  
Ministry of Defence.



WFO

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

9 July 1982

I am writing on behalf of the Prime Minister to thank you for your letter of 6 July.

I shall place this before the Prime Minister and a reply will be sent to you as soon as possible.

**W. F. S. RICKETT**

The Rt. Hon. Julian Amery, M.P.



2

**10 DOWNING STREET**

PRIME MINISTER

Here is a letter from Julian Amery, M.P., suggesting that we should reconstitute a Special Operations organisation on the lines of the SOE. He asks if two or three of his fellow thinkers might join him at a meeting with appropriate officials to consider this idea.

We will let you have a draft reply.

WR

MT

9 July 1982

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|--|-------------------------------------|
| DEPARTMENT/SERIES<br>..... <i>PREM 19</i> .....<br>PIECE/ITEM ..... <i>1437</i> .....<br>(one piece/item number) | Date and<br>sign                    |
| Extract/Item details:<br><br><i>Amery to PM dated 6 July 1982</i>  |                                     |
| CLOSED FOR ..... YEARS<br>UNDER FOI EXEMPTION  |                                     |
| RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4)<br>OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958  | <i>S. Gray</i><br><i>26/11/2013</i> |
| TEMPORARILY RETAINED   |                                     |
| MISSING AT TRANSFER  |                                     |
| MISSING  |                                     |
| NUMBER NOT USED  |                                     |





10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

17 April 1980

Personal

Dear Julian,

Thank you for your letter of 3 April.

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

Just what its strength should be is a matter of judgement, but I am not persuaded that we need a large standing force or that we should face difficulties in building it up if we needed to expand. As you say, this is a field where we have a certain flair, and I am sure that the right people would be found. I also believe that much of our success in the past stemmed from the use of a comparatively small force of high quality.

I have not put any classification on this letter but I know that you will handle it with appropriate discretion.

Yours

Raymond

The Rt. Hon. Julian Amery, M.P.

BH



10 DOWNING STREET

Draft prepared by FCO  
& cleared with 'C' - see  
background letter attached.

Ant  
- 16/4



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Type for PM's signature.

16 April 1980

Dear Michael,

Thank you for your letter of 3 April enclosing a letter to the Prime Minister from Mr Julian Amery about our capacity to undertake subversive operations. I am returning Mr Amery's letter, together with a draft reply from the Prime Minister.

Mr Amery's letter is similar in substance to letters from Sir Douglas Dodds-Parker, who wrote to Lord Carrington from the Special Forces Club in January, and from Lord Mais, who wrote last October.

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OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

We do not think however that Mr Amery need be briefed on these points.

Mr Amery suggests that the 'old hands from SOE and PWE' should be consulted about building up our strength for covert operations. Our friends see no advantage in this and a number of potential disasters.

'C', who is himself a former member of SOE, has seen and agreed the proposed reply.

Yours etc

P Lever  
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON

DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM: The Prime Minister

Reference

DEPARTMENT: TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO: The Right Honourable  
Julian Amery MP  
112 Eaton Square  
LONDON SW1W 9AA

Your Reference

Top Secret

Secret

Confidential

Restricted

Unclassified

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

Thank you for your letter of 3 April.

CAVEAT.....

Just what its strength should be is a matter of judgement, but I am not persuaded that we need a large standing force or that we should face difficulties in building it up if we needed to expand. As you say, this is a field where we have a certain flair, and I am sure that the right people would be found. I also believe that much of our success in the past stemmed from the use of a comparatively small force of high quality.

I have not put any classification on this letter, but I know that you will handle it with appropriate discretion.

Enclosures—flag(s).....

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OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

file

ds

SECRET

1  
BF/15.4.80

3 April 1980

I enclose a copy of a letter which the Prime Minister has received from Mr. Julian Amery about the possibility of reviving the SOE or something like it. I should be grateful if you could let me have a draft reply which the Prime Minister might send to Mr. Amery. It would be helpful if this could reach me by close of play on Tuesday 15 April.

MICHAEL ALEXANDER

Paul Lever, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

SECRET

ABO

ll  
GR  
Many thanks for your letter of  
2 April about your recent trip to the  
Gulf. I have read it with considerable  
interest.

I shall be replying separately to  
your letter to me of 3 April on a different  
subject.

The Rt. Hon. Julian Amery, M.P.

FROM: THE RT. HON. JULIAN AMERY, M.P.

112, EATON SQUARE,

SWIW 9AA

TEL: 01-235 1543  
01-235 7409

*Secret*

3rd April, 1980.

*Dear Margaret,*

Under the last Government a decision was taken by the Reserve Forces Association in conjunction with the Ministry of Defence to disband their Resistance and Psychological Operations Committee. I thought this is mistake at the time partly because I was given to understand that General Haig, then SACUR, was opposed to it and partly because the RPOC seemed to keep together a nucleus of people with experience of the kind of work PWE and SOE did during the last war.

I tried to get the decision reversed; unsuccessfully. I suspect myself, though I have no evidence on the point, that this may have been partly due to a reluctance on the part of Labour Ministers to encourage what would inevitably have been anti Soviet activities.

After we came into office I reopened the matter with Francis Pym. Francis fully appreciates the importance of Resistance, psychological warfare and counter subversion operations but, after giving the matter a good deal of thought, considers that this is not an appropriate responsibility for the armed forces in peace time.

I do not dispute the conclusion. My concern is that we should have a sufficiently strong nucleus organisation to conduct Special Operations as distinct from the Intelligence and at least a register of suitable people who could be called upon in case of need.

I was associated with what later became SOE from the early days of the war when it was still called the "D" section of MI6. It had been hurriedly put together after the Munich Agreements under an enterprising Major Lawrence Grand who managed to supplement the tiny budget on which he had to operate by getting a grant from the late mining tycoon Alfred Chester Beatty. The organisation was literally run on a shoe string and was much too small to make anything like the contribution it might otherwise have made in the critical years of 1940 and 1941. It was not until well into 1941 that it was developed into a significant organisation responsible to the Minister of Economic Warfare.

We are not at war in the formal sense but, as Peter Carrington has rightly stressed, there are signs that special operations and subversion are already major elements in the east-west power struggle. I am not saying, at least for the purpose of this letter, that Britain ought to be supporting the resistance in Afghanistan or Angola; but surely we ought to be able to do so if we so wished and thought it useful. This is a type of operation for which we have many qualified people and a certain national flair. As far as I know there is not even a register kept of younger people who might be called upon for this sort of work in an emergency.



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RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)  
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

To the best of my knowledge [redacted] and there are in any case some risks in combining operations with intelligence.

My purpose in writing is to ask whether, in an increasingly darkening international scene, the Government ought not to be taking more active steps to revive SOE or something like it. It may be that more is being done than I know about. This was certainly not the case when I was responsible for that side of things at the Foreign Office in our last Government and I should be very surprised if the Labour Government had done anything very much about it.

If you wanted to do something on these lines there are still a few old hands from SOE and PWE who might be worth consulting about how best to proceed. But the first step must be to decide whether this is a capability we need.

*gr am,*  
*Julian.*

The Rt.Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.



