

588

CONFIDENTIAL FILING

MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE WILTSHIRE
ARRESTS.

INFORMATION
AND
PUBLICITY

SEPTEMBER 1987

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
16-9-87							

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10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Principal Private Secretary

16 September 1987

Dear William,

MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE WILTSHIRE ARRESTS

I have shown the Prime Minister the Home Secretary's minute of 15 September in which he suggests a course of action to persuade the media to refrain from publishing information about the houses of people who might be under threat.

The Prime Minister agrees with the course of action proposed by the Home Secretary and in particular the suggested letter, attached to the Home Secretary's minute, for Sir Brian Cubbon to send to national press editors and the Directors General of the BBC and IBA. She suggests that the letter should be sent as well to editors of provincial and Scottish newspapers since their publications could equally well contain damaging material. You should know too that Bernard Ingham will take whatever opportunity he has with his contacts to reinforce the message in Sir Brian Cubbon's letter.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Yours truly
Nigel Wicks*

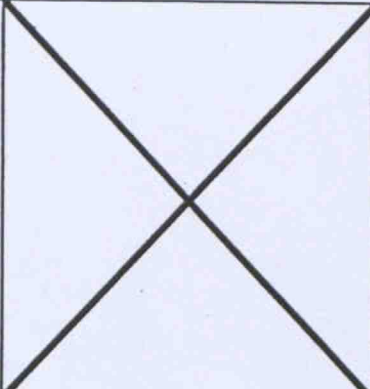
(N. L. WICKS)

William Fittall, Esq.,
Home Office

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A The National Archives

DEPARTMENT/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i> PIECE/ITEM <i>2260</i> (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
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Draft letters for signature by Sir Brian Cubbon to:

Editors

THE TERRORIST THREAT TO VIPs

In view of recent media interest in the terrorist threat to members of the Royal Family, Ministers and others, I am writing to you and other editors in the national press, and the Directors-General of the BBC and IBA, to ask for your co-operation in withholding from publication details of the private residences of VIPs which may assist terrorists in the preparation of their plans.

As you know, terrorists devote a lot of effort to researching their targets and published information can make their task very much easier. The general whereabouts of a VIP's home will be known, but there have been instances recently when not only the exact address, but detailed maps, plans and even aerial photographs have been published, together in some cases with speculation about the nature and whereabouts of protective security devices.

I therefore hope that you will agree to try to avoid publication of this kind of detail wherever possible. I do not make this request lightly but in the knowledge that detailed intelligence about the domestic circumstances of potential targets may greatly increase the threat of an attack and reduce the police's ability to provide protection.

I should also be very grateful if you would not publicise this request as it would give encouragement to terrorists to do so. If you would like to discuss it, however, or would find it helpful to have advice in particular cases, please contact my Director of Information, Brian Mower, in the first instance. His telephone number is 01 213 3616.



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