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CONFIDENTIAL FILING

Correspondence between Tom Dalgren, MP
and the Prime Minister concerning the
Programme 'Cabinet'.

SECURITY

August 1988

| Referred to | Date | Referred to | Date | Referred to | Date | Referred to | Date |
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File
to

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Principal Private Secretary

Mr. Turner

Thank you for your minute of 6 October about Lord Hatch's "Starred" Question about an alleged campaign against the peace campaigners.

I wonder whether the reply might not be on the following lines:

I am unaware of any such campaign. The role of civil servants in respect of the public debate on nuclear issues was to advise Ministers on the presentation of the Government's policy on deterrence and multilateral disarmament policy. This was a proper role for civil servants.

I suggest this for consistency with the Prime Minister's reply to Tam Dalyell's letter of 26 September which answers an almost identical point put to her in his letter. Without the additional sentences there is a possibility that Lord Trefgarne might be accused of misleading the House. Of course, the additional material could be saved for a Supplementary. But it may be tactically better to include it in the answer so that there can be no question that the information was forced out of the Minister under questioning.

N.h.W.

NLW

7 October, 1988.

to

file
Ho

MR. BEARPARK

You should be aware of Lord Hatch's question
and Mr. Dalyell's letter as general background
for PQs.

NLW

7 October, 1988.

Ref. A088/2938

MR WICKS

Lord Hatch has asked the following "starred" Question for answer on 11 October:

"To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any civil servants or Ministers were involved in the 1982-3 campaign against the peace campaigners, as alleged in the film "Cabinet".

Lord Trefgarne is due to answer the Question, and the answer which we propose to suggest that Lord Trefgarne gives (with which Sir Robin Butler is content) is as follows:

"I am unaware of any such campaign."

2. In the light of the correspondence between Mr Dalyell and the Prime Minister on the subject of the film "Cabinet" (the Prime Minister's letter of 26 September to Mr Dalyell refers), and given the possibility that the Prime Minister will be asked a similar question in the House of Commons, Sir Robin Butler would be grateful to know that you are content with the proposed answer.

PH Turner

P H TURNER

6 October 1988

SECURITY: Dalyell (PM)
correspondence re "Cabinet" programme

Aug 86

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PM 8
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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

DG

AKLB
CO

THE PRIME MINISTER

26 September 1988

Dear Mr. Dalyell,

You wrote to me on 28 August about allegations contained in a film 'Cabinet' shown in Edinburgh on 27 August. I have not seen the film, but I know of no evidence whatever to support any of the three allegations to which you refer. The role of civil servants in respect of the public debate on nuclear issues was to advise Ministers on the presentation of the Government's policy on deterrence and multilateral disarmament policy. This was a proper role for civil servants.

Yours sincerely

Raymond Dalrymple

Tam Dalyell, Esq., M.P.

vd



10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER

Robin Butler has suggested, in his minute below, that an extra sentence should be added to the end of the letter to Mr. Dalyell about the film 'Cabinet'. A revised draft including the extra sentence is at **Flag A**, with the signed original, which of course has not yet been sent to Mr. Dalyell, at **Flag B**. If you prefer the version with the extra sentence, please could you sign the letter at Flag A.

N.C.W.

N. L. Wicks

20 September 1988

GARDEN ROOMS

PC spent ~~£~~. about
this
Nigel

Robin Butler
ms



Ref. A088/2748

MR WICKS

Thank you for your minute of ^{attached} 16 September about the answer to Mr Dalyell's letter about the film 'Cabinet'. I agree with you and Mr Ingham that the explanations in his minute are compatible with the line in Mr Woolley's minute and the terms of the draft letter proposed for the Prime Minister. If you felt that more amplification of the reply to Mr Dalyell was necessary to protect the Prime Minister from accusations of being disingenuous in basing her denial on the fact that the Government's activities were directed towards policies not people, you might consider adding the following sentence to the draft reply:

"The role of civil servants in respect of the public debate on nuclear issues was to advise Ministers on the presentation of the Government's policy on deterrence and multilateral disarmament policy. This was a proper role for civil servants".

F.R.B.

ROBIN BUTLER

20 September 1988



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBIN BUTLER

I have submitted to the Prime Minister the advice provided in Mr. Woolley's minute of 15 September, together with the draft letter attached thereto concerning Mr. Dalyell's letter about the film 'Cabinet'.

As Mr. Woolley suggested, I have discussed with Mr. Ingham the third of Mr. Dalyell's questions, and you will wish to see Mr. Ingham's comments in his minute attached. Could I draw your attention particularly to the sentence in the first paragraph of Mr. Ingham's note which describes the work of the then Defence Secretary's Committee as seeking "... to discredit unilateralism as a policy for Britain, not the holders of unilateralist views." Mr. Dalyell's questions referred to discrediting "members on (sic) CND", and "moves to discredit persons critical of nuclear weapons".

I think that the explanations in Mr. Ingham's minute are compatible with the line taken in your Private Secretary's advice and with the terms of the draft letter which you propose to the Prime Minister. But before that letter is despatched, I should be glad to know that you share my view.

N. L. Wicks

16 September 1988

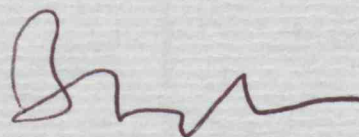
MR WICKS

A

The facts about my "involvement" in the issues raised by Mr Dalyell are as follows:

- i) In 1983 in the run up to the deployment of cruise and after the Falklands, I sat on a committee or group chaired by the then Defence Secretary, Michael Heseltine, to plan and run a campaign against unilateral nuclear disarmament. These were properly convened meetings within Government, attended by the Permanent Secretary of the MoD and the Chief of Public Relations. The work done by that Committee was entirely within the rules and conventions governing the activities of Civil Servants. We sought to discredit unilateralism as a policy for Britain, not the holders of unilateralist views. Discrediting people as distinct from policies tends to be counter-productive.
- ii) I regularly attended what was known as the Liaison Committee between 1983 and 1987 under Lord Whitelaw's chairmanship. This was primarily concerned with presentation of Government policy and was attended by CCO officials. But the meeting was convened by the Lord President as a member of the Government and attended by other Ministers. My role was to brief the meeting on presentation from a Governmental point of view. This meeting took stock of the anti-unilateralist campaigns being conducted at MoD. It is conceivable that Piers Woolley, of CCO, attended the Liaison Committee at the invitation of, or with the agreement of the Lord President. I do not myself know Mr Woolley though I might possibly recognise him as a person who had attended (but not regularly) the Liaison Committee.
- iii) You will see from the attached cutting (Guardian, March 1987) that a number of allegations have been made against me in connection with the "Secret Society" series. I am on record as dismissing a slightly more lurid version than those now current that was given an airing last year.

In the light of this I see no objection to the draft reply or to your shortening the draft answer to end at "to which you refer".



BERNARD INGHAM

15 September 1988

**MPs ask if BBC delayed film
to avoid embarrassing Tories**

**Ingham scorns
report of secret
re-election role**

By Dennis Barker

Mr Bernard Ingham, the Prime Minister's press secretary, yesterday described as "conspiracy theory born out of fantasy" a press implication that he had somehow been involved in an alleged link-up of 10 Downing Street, the Ministry of Defence, Conservative Central Office, and US-funded groups to help get the Conservatives re-elected in the 1983 general election.

Allegations of "constitutional impropriety" are said to have been made against the Government in one of the two programmes in the BBC television series *Secret Society* which the BBC says will not be scheduled until legal questions are resolved.

Mr Tam Dalyell, Labour MP for Linlithgow, yesterday wrote to Mrs Thatcher asking if there was any basis for the allegations in the *Observer* newspaper.

Mr Robin Corbett, Labour spokesman on broadcasting matters, yesterday wrote to Mr Michael Checkland, the director-general of the BBC, asking him to comment on the suggestion that the series was being postponed because one programme might embarrass 10 Downing Street.

Mr Corbett also asked for an assurance that neither this nor any other programme would be delayed or cancelled merely

because it might embarrass the Government.

The BBC has said it hopes to screen all five programmes in the series as soon as possible, though it has cancelled a sixth, on the proposed spy satellite *Zircon*, on grounds of national security.

One of the two programmes needing more legal consideration deals with the Cabinet and its relationship with other interests in the run-up to the 1983 elections.

Mr Ingham said yesterday that he knew nothing of the allegations supposed to be in the programme. "I do not recognise it," he said. "It is the usual stuff: conspiracy theory born out of fantasy. I do not know anything about it, and I do not propose to operate on the basis that if someone makes an allegation that inevitably means I have to defend myself. I would not spend my time on this nonsense."

He dismissed the possibility that he might sue the *Observer* for libel.

"You are not going to get an 'Ingham sues' out of this," he said. "All I know is that there are bits of innuendo around."

BBC staff know the risk of libel is the reason for holding back one of the programmes, but they discount the possibility that the person potentially libelled is Mr Ingham.

A BBC spokesman said yesterday: "There has been no external pressure with regard to these five programmes. The BBC is taking outside legal advice on matters raised by two programmes in the series."

Mr Checkland and everyone at the BBC hoped to see the five programmes screened as a series as soon as possible, the spokesman said. "People are looking for motives of secrecy and politics that simply aren't there at all."

Jean Stead writes: The Scottish Labour Party conference in Perth yesterday passed unanimously an emergency resolution supported by its executive deploring the police raids on the BBC's Scottish headquarters in which the *Secret Society* series was seized.



Bernard Ingham: 'conspiracy theory a fantasy'



1
R14/9
Prime Minister

See also Bernard's

note at Flag. A

Ref. A088/2704

MR BEARPARK

Thank you

See Flag B.

letter at Flag^B signature.

N.G.W.

1. In your letter of 30 August, you asked for advice on and a draft reply to the letter to the Prime Minister from Tam Dalyell, MP, dated 28 August. 16.9

2. Mr Dalyell's letter concerns the film 'Cabinet', one of the programmes made by the BBC as part of the 'Secret Society' series (of 'ZIRCON' fame) but not in the event screened. It was shown at the Edinburgh Festival on 27 August, and its content reported in 'The Independent' of 30 August (copy attached). Mr Dalyell makes a general allegation that the Government sought to prevent the televising of the Secret Society series more because of concern over 'Cabinet' than over the programme dealing with 'ZIRCON'; and asks some specific questions on the role of civil servants in a campaign to discredit CND to the advantage of the Conservative Party.

3. The background is that Mr Protheroe, the then Assistant Director General of the BBC, had told the MOD in November/December 1986 that the 'Cabinet' programme was pretty tame and in his view would not say anything very new. Mr Wicks' letter of 23 February 1987 to Mr Boys Smith recorded that the Prime Minister accepted the Lord Advocate's advice that no recourse should be had to the Courts to prevent publication of the material in either "Powers" or "Cabinet Government"; nor did she believe that any attempt should be made to persuade the BBC to make any cuts in material from the two films. On the other hand, following Mr Wicks' separate (and more limited circulation) letter of the same date to Mr Boys Smith, the Home Secretary mentioned privately to Mr Hussey on 28 February 1987



that the Government's concern over the "Secret Society" series was not confined to the Zircon film. In a brief conversation, the Home Secretary got the impression that Mr Hussey would not feel able to prevent the series being shown. But Mr Hussey was "emphatic that the series should never have been made, that under Mr Milne the machinery stopping these bad ideas before they were acted on had simply not functioned and that this failing now had to be remedied" (Mr Boys Smith's letter on 2 March 1987 to Mr Wicks).

4. On 10 April 1987 the New Statesman, reporting that four of the six programmes were shortly to be shown, described the BBC as having said that the unscheduled "Power Play" [sic] programme still required further legal checking, which was under way. Subsequently, the draft press release on "Zircon" and "Cabinet" given to Sir Robin Butler by Mr Birt on 30 June 1988 explained that the BBC had decided not to transmit "Cabinet", in the period immediately prior to the General Election, because it dealt with controversial political issues. The draft continued: "The script of Cabinet was published in the New Statesman and material contained in the programme was also published in newspapers and magazines. As a result of these publications, new information was advanced about events in 1978/79 and 1982/83 with which the programme dealt. It would therefore need a great deal of work to update and complete the programme before it could be offered again for transmission. The Executive Producer of the series together with the management of the BBC in Scotland and London have agreed that this extensive update cannot be justified, and so the programme will not be shown". In short, while the Government was not neutral about whether the programme should be shown, it was the BBC, without seeking Government advice, which decided not to schedule it. This is reflected in the reply by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton) to a Parliamentary Question from Mr Galbraith in February about who in the Government the BBC consulted before deciding not to show

the 'Cabinet' programme. He said "I understand that the BBC did not seek advice from the Government about that programme" (Official Report, 18 February 1988, col 730).

5. Turning to Mr Dalyell's specific questions about the role of civil servants, there have been no 'Government and Cabinet Committees designed to ^{discredit} ~~disinhibit~~ members on (sic) CND'. The reference to 'Cabinet Committees' is perhaps a misconception of the Ministry of Defence's branch Defence Secretariat (DS) 19, wrongly described by 'The Independent' in an attribution to Piers Woolley, a Conservative Party official, as a 'committee'. In response to previous enquiries about the role of DS 19, Ministers have stated that the Secretariat was established to advise the then Secretary of State for Defence on how best to explain to the public the facts about the Government's policy on deterrence and multilateral arms control (eg the Parliamentary reply by the then Minister for the Armed Forces to Mr Cohen of --- 21 July 1986, copy attached).

6. You should also note that DS 19, and the Ministry of Defence's Defence Arms Control Unit, which inherited some of DS 19's duties, coordinated the drafting of a number of reports for Ministers on trends in the public debate on nuclear issues and on the Government's own public information strategy. Most recently such work has been undertaken by the Inter-Departmental Official Group on Nuclear Weapons and Public Opinion; on occasions this reported to an ad hoc Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group. The reports included references to the public activities of the main campaigning groups, and involvement in their compilation was fully compatible with the stated role of the Secretariats. Their work cannot be considered to encompass Mr Dalyell's allegations.



7. We are unaware of any proposal that civil servants should be a party to the interruption or disruption of meetings of persons critical of nuclear weapons. It is inconceivable that such a proposal would be officially sanctioned.

8. You will no doubt wish to discuss the third of Mr Dalyell's questions with Mr Ingham, but we are confident that the allegation is unfounded.

--- 9. I attach a draft reply for the Prime Minister to send to Mr Dalyell.

10. I am copying this minute to Brian Hawtin (Ministry of Defence).

Trevor Woolley

TREVOR WOOLLEY

14 September 1988

A film shelved by the BBC has led an MP to question

TV decision attacked as political

FOLLOWING the showing at the Edinburgh Festival of part of *Cabinet*, one of the *Secret Society* series of programmes which the BBC refused to broadcast, its maker Duncan Campbell yesterday denounced the decision to drop it as political.

"The bottom line on *Cabinet* is that the programme was completely cleared legally and editorially by the Director-General (then Alisdair Milne), his assistant (then Alan Protheroe) and the BBC solicitor. What changed between January and March 1987 was not the facts or the quality of the programme but the scale to which the governors' political and personal views intruded into the corporation's whole management," he said.

The BBC was last night sticking to the argument that the only reason for not showing the film, about the behaviour of politicians in the Callaghan and Thatcher governments, was that it was "old hat" and that to update it would be too expensive. Yet the film, which has been shown to *The Independent*, is essentially historical,

mixing farce and skulduggery — as two extracts from the transcript (right) show.

Mr Protheroe said yesterday that when he left the BBC, the film was not ready for transmission: "Parts of it were neither copper-bottomed nor watertight." Mr Milne, in his biography, speaks of "flaws" in the *Secret Society* programmes but concludes that "all were transmittable" apart from their controversial *Zircon* installment. *Zircon* is now to be screened, however, but not *Cabinet*. After the arrival of Marmaduke Hussey as chairman of the BBC board of governors, Mr Milne adds that the board "bounced me unpleasantly over *Secret Society*".

Whatever the reason for not showing the film, the argument now advanced by BBC executives that it is, essentially, stale, does not seem to be borne out by the material it includes — which, for instance, has this week prompted Tam Dalyell, Labour MP for Linlithgow, to write to Mrs Thatcher challenging her to deny some of its key allegations.



Michael Heseltine



Lord Callaghan

A big deal in missing t

THE first tale of government wheeler-dealing told in *Cabinet* dates back to March 1979 when Lord Callaghan, then Prime Minister, faced losing a vote of confidence to the Opposition, led by Margaret Thatcher, by a single vote.

The Liberals intended to vote with the Conservatives. The then Liberal MP, Sir Clement Freud, had been battling to get a Private Members Bill on freedom of information through the Commons.

The Labour government had been, at best, equivocal but now, through the pro-freedom of information MP Chris Price, offered Mr Freud an extraordinary deal.

Price:

"Everybody was changing their minds as defeat stared them in the face. On the day Labour was facing a vote of confidence and the votes

were being secretly added up and it looked as though Labour was losing by one, I was approached by the Chief Whip and told that if I could save the day by getting Clement Freud to miss his train from Liverpool, Clement Freud could have his Bill passed into law."

Freud (who was in Liverpool, campaigning in a by-election with David Alton) takes up the story:

"And David Alton and I went into Littlewoods shaking hands with ladies who were checking pools coupons. And a man came along and said, there's a telephone call for Mr Clement Freud, can he take it in a private office? And I said, who is it? And they said it was the Prime Minister's office. And I must say the people in Littlewoods were enormously impressed... and I went into the office as if the Prime Minister phones me a lot..."

"And there was this talk about, is

Bernard Ingham, Mrs Thatcher's Press Secretary and, of course, a civil servant.

Mr Woolley described the campaign against CND, including the activities of the DS19 committee set up by Michael Heseltine, then Secretary of State, inside the Ministry of Defence, thus:

"The main purpose was to win the Election. And that is why the nature of the campaign was information, disinformation and on many occasions, character assassination."

Asked his view of civil servants attending meetings like those of the Conservative liaison committee, Sir Frank Cooper, former Permanent Secretary at the MoD, said:

"I think it would be fundamentally wrong for any civil servant to go to a purely political decision-making gathering which is purely a party political occasion."

is this a secure line, is nobody listening, and I told the man to go away. And it was Chris Price... and he said, I am speaking to you from Number 10 Downing Street, and you can have your Bill, provided you miss your train."

Price:

"Well I told Clement Freud that I wasn't just speaking in my capacity as an MP, I was speaking because the Chief Whip had called me, I assumed that that was on the full authority of the Prime Minister, and all he had to do was to miss his train to London, he didn't have to do anything more than that and if he wanted to make it look like an accident he could do that."

Freud had two hours to weigh up the offer. He decided not to miss his train, and voted against the Labour Government, which then fell.

ALONGSIDE the tale of Labour's desperation to stay in office, the film discusses the equally desperate efforts made by the Conservatives in the early 1980s to win hearts and minds away from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and into a pro-nuclear consensus. As with the Labour tale, the Tory one has elements of high farce.

In particular, *Cabinet* relates how Ministers were concerned about public reaction to the 1980 civil defence exercise *Square Leg*, which assumed 130 nuclear bombs would land on Britain leaving, in Duncan Campbell's words, "not a lot left". In the next exercise for Autumn 1982, the target map was changed dramatically, with only 50 bombs dropping: most British and US bases would be excluded and bombs would "miss" any major towns they were aimed at.

This meant bombs would have

to drop on remote Scottish towns like Mallaig and on uninhabited Welsh mountains. But, the film says, ministers were still not satisfied and asked civil servants to list the constituencies which still included "targets".

Politically marginal ones were then eliminated, Mr Campbell says: "The Cairngorm mountains came under attack, as more bombs were moved from populated areas or sensitive targets." Eventually, Lord Whitelaw, then Home Secretary, abandoned the increasingly bizarre exercise.

The film also deals with the relatively well-known use made of government, Conservative Party and right-wing groups to discredit CND and its leaders in the run-up to the 1983 general election. A key witness was Piers Woolley, then a Conservative Party official working on the Tory liaison committee — which was also attended by

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Price "I was as at the C sum thori all he to Lo thing want dent I

Freud the o his t Labo fell.

Section DS19

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will explain the functions of his Department's section DS19.

Mr. Stanley: Defence Secretariat 19 was disbanded in September 1983. It was formed to advise the then Secretary of State for Defence on how best to explain to the public the facts about the Government's policy on deterrence and multilateral disarmament.

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the number of staff and the annual expenditure of his Department's section DS19 in each year since its inception.

Mr. Stanley: Defence Secretariat 19 was set up in February 1983 and disbanded in September 1983. The number of staff employed was eight and the costs of the unit were confined to the salaries of those eight posts and associated administrative costs which totalled approximately £142,000 at 1983 prices.

South Africa

Mr. Caborn asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy henceforth to refuse permission to officers of the British forces to serve in the South African Defence Force.

Mr. Stanley: Under the Government's present policies any request for a serving officer of the armed forces of the United Kingdom to be attached to the South African defence forces would be refused.

Mr. Caborn asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give details of the measures taken to prohibit all forms of military co-operation with South Africa, as agreed in the Commonwealth accord on Southern Africa adopted on 20 October 1985.

Mr. Stanley: The last major defence arrangement between the two countries, the 1955 agreements on the Simonstown naval base (Cmd. 9520) were terminated by an exchange of letters between Governments in June 1975 (Cmd. 6229). The United Kingdom operated a voluntary arms embargo against South Africa from 1974 and then introduced legislation in 1978 in order to comply with UN Security Council resolution 418 which imposed a mandatory arms embargo with South Africa. The United Kingdom does not import arms, ammunition and military vehicles produced in South Africa in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 558. In addition, no South African service men have received training at British military establishments, nor have British service men received training at South African military establishments, since 1976. As my right hon. Friend the then Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs announced on 20 November 1985 in column 263, the British military attachés in Pretoria have been withdrawn.

Virgin Atlantic Challenger

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) of 7th July, *Official Report*, column 7, when the operational training sortie referred to was planned; and what was its estimated cost.

Mr. Freeman: The RAF Nimrod operational training sortie was planned some two months in advance and was

approved in accordance with standing instructions. The estimated cost of the sortie based on the hourly flying rate was about £50,000.

Government and the Media (Study)

Mr. Robert Atkins asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will make available copies of the studies into relations between the Government and the media commissioned in 1982 from King's College, London and University College, Cardiff; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Younger: I have placed copies of the study by King's College, London into "Unofficial commentary in the media on military aspects of the Falklands Campaign 1982" in the Library. I have also placed in the Library copies of the study by the Centre for Journalism Studies at University College, Cardiff, into "Relations between Government, the Armed Forces and the media in time of armed conflict". The second study contains a large number of recommendations which are being considered in parallel with the work that is already taking place on the Beach report on censorship. I am grateful to the authors of both these studies for the work they have done.

Departmental Contracts

Mr. Kennedy asked the Secretary of State for Defence if, in the light of the recent contract awarded for the transport of formaldehyde to Gruinard Island, he will make it his policy that his Department be involved in the selection of subcontractors in similar cases.

Mr. Lee: No. In general, it is the Ministry's policy to make its contractors fully responsible for the conduct of the work required, including the selection of any subcontractors.

Land

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Defence what area of land is owned by his Department in (a) England, (b) Wales and (c) Scotland.

Mr. Freeman: Ministry of Defence land and forshore holdings, at 1 April 1986, are set out below:

England

Land:
Freehold: 425,370 acres
Leasehold: 18,737 acres

Foreshore:
Freehold: 25,693 acres
Leasehold: 11,476 acres

Scotland

Land:
Freehold: 41,364 acres
Leasehold: 6,232 acres

Foreshore:
Freehold 3,662 acres
Leasehold 486 acres

Wales

Land:
Freehold 48,717 acres
Leasehold 179 acres

Foreshore:
Freehold 2,530
Leasehold —

Tam Dalyell MP

14/9



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

M

30 August 1988

I attach a copy of a letter the Prime Minister has received from Tam Dalyell, M.P.

I should be grateful if you could let us have a draft reply for the Prime Minister to send, to reach us by Wednesday 14 September.

P.A. Bearpark

Trevor Woolley, Esq.,
Cabinet Office.

SW



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

230
28/8/88

T. C. M. B.

Dear Prime Minister,

For many months, and especially since the cancellation of the Zircon Project, I have suspected that the Government's reaction to the Secret Society Series had as much if not more to do with the political embarrassment of the film, "Cabinet", as it had from any security consideration arising out of Zircon.

The showing of extracts from Cabinet yesterday in Edinburgh would seem to give added credibility to such a suspicion.

In particular, arising out of the showing of "Cabinet" in Edinburgh, ~~may~~ I ask you :

1. Is it true that civil servants were asked to take part in Government and Cabinet Committees, designed to discredit members on CND ?
2. Is it true that civil servants were asked to take part in any proposal, involving the knowledge of Ministers of the Crown to interrupt or in any way disrupt meetings of persons, critical of nuclear weapons ?
3. Is it true that your Press Secretary, as the film "Cabinet" claims, was in any way involved in any moves to discredit persons critical of nuclear weapons ?

If Mr Ingham was not involved in any way, can we expect a statement from you declaring that Mr Ingham was in no way involved in such matters, and declaring that the film "Cabinet" is wholly inaccurate in this respect ?

Do you propose to raise the issue of Mr Ingham's alleged involvement with the Governors of the BBS ?

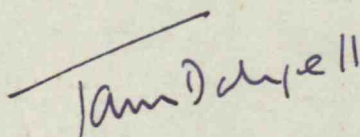


HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

As you know, I have been your Parliamentary colleague for over 26 years, and feel that in a situation where one person has been Prime Minister for so long, it is more than ever necessary for you and your Parliamentary colleagues of all Parties to be vigilant about the standards of public life.

I would be grateful for a response since what happened in Edinburgh yesterday in the opinion of many of those present raises not only general issues of public standards, but particular issues affecting the integrity of the British Civil Service. That is why I am sending a copy of this letter, with a covering letter to Sir Robin Butler, as Head of the Home Civil Service.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Ian Daryell", with a horizontal line above it.



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Image
Access

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