

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*  
SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

SUEZ RECORDS

The Prime Minister had a meeting with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and you this morning to discuss your minute A01692 of 14 March 1980 about the review of Suez records.

You explained that the embargo which Mr. Macmillan had imposed when he was Prime Minister prevented the Ministry of Defence from reviewing their papers relating to the Suez campaign with a view to deciding which could be released in 1986 and which needed to be held for a longer period. There was no question of releasing the papers to the PRO immediately. The review would be undertaken by "weeder", who were normally retired senior civil servants.

The Prime Minister said that there was still intense interest in the Suez affair, and some of the active participants, including of course Mr. Macmillan himself, were still alive. The Foreign Secretary added that in reviewing these records, the weeder would have to take into consideration not only the usual factors such as security but also the political attitudes of the time. They would find it much more difficult to make judgements about which papers should be released than was normally the case.

After further discussion it was agreed that the embargo should be lifted and the Suez records reviewed. The weeder should be told, however, that they should approach their task with particular regard to personal and political sensitivities as well as taking into account the normal factors they had in mind. Whenever they were in doubt about whether certain papers should be released, they should seek the views of Ministers.

I am sending a copy of this minute to Mr. Walden (FCO).

C. A. WHITMORE

17 June 1980

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*Copied to Master Set*

*Histories*