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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

23 March 1981

*Private and Confidential*

*Dear Sir Harold,*

You should know that we are expecting the publication this week of a new book by Chapman Pincher, entitled "Their Trade is Treachery". It will consist largely of an account of the investigations into penetration of the Security and Intelligence Services which were undertaken following the defection of Burgess and Maclean. Its main theme will be to set out the case for the author's belief that Sir Roger Hollis, a former Director General of the Security Service who is now dead, was probably an agent of the Russian Intelligence Service.

It will also refer to about twenty other people, some named and mostly dead, others not named and living, as having been investigated as possible agents or as having been in some way or another involved with people known to have been agents. Though there are many inaccuracies and unjustified inferences in the book, the accounts of a number of these cases are given in such detail that they must be derived from people with direct and detailed knowledge of the matters dealt with.

We expect the book to be published on Thursday, 26 March; and it is being serialised in the Daily Mail in advance of publication.

The book is bound to attract a great deal of Parliamentary and press attention, and I may need to make a statement in the House of Commons, possibly as soon as Thursday, 26 March.

/ I send you

I send you this letter now, as you may be approached by the press and asked to comment, particularly as you are referred to by name as someone to whom Pincher has talked during the course of his inquiries. I dare say that you will prefer to make no comment, at any rate before I have made my statement. If in the meantime you would like to refresh your memory of your own involvement in these affairs, or indeed to look at the papers you saw while you were Prime Minister, would you like to get in touch with Robert Armstrong in the Cabinet Office, who will give whatever help he can.

Yours sincerely,

Raymond Delisle

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The Rt. Hon. Sir Harold Wilson, KG, OBE, FRS, MP.

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