

TOP SECRET

AND PERSONAL

5



COPY NO. 6 OF 6 COPIES

10 DOWNING STREET

*Security*

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

BBC PANORAMA: PROPOSED PROGRAMME ON INTELLIGENCE SERVICES

The Prime Minister met the Home Secretary, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and you this morning to discuss the issues raised in your minutes AO2674 of 21 July 1980 and AO2712 of 24 July 1980.

It was agreed that you, acting on the Prime Minister's instructions, should see Sir Ian Trethowan in an attempt to persuade him that the Panorama programme should be dropped. In doing so, you should not say anything that might lead him to believe that the Government would not be ready to use its power of veto to prevent the transmission of the programme.

It was also agreed that while it was not desirable at this stage to make a direct approach to the Chairman of the Governors of the BBC, there would be advantage in the Home Secretary arranging for Sir Brian Cubbon to mention in a general way to Mr. George Howard, whom he was due to see for other reasons, that there were problems about the Panorama programme, in the hope that Mr. Howard would then make his own enquiries within the BBC.

The Prime Minister said that if Sir Robert Armstrong's approach to Sir Ian Trethowan was unsuccessful, Ministers would need to meet again to decide whether to use their veto.

I am sending copies of this minute to Mr. Halliday (Home Office), Mr. Walden (FCO), Mr. Norbury (MOD) and Mr. Harrington (NIO).

*ARM*

25 July 1980

TOP SECRET

AND PERSONAL