

cc NTS.

Clay - I mentioned this to you.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

MP
MP 30/11/80
Discussion with Tom McCaffrey.
Much of the difficulty in this case arose because the reference to the Security Commission was not preceded by a trial and its attendant publicity. We agree to look at the procedure again when the next case came up. In the meantime Mr McCaffrey sees no reason why Mr Fort should not table the Question which 29 December 1980 will be the vehicle for the Prime Minister's announcement about the results of the Security Commission's inquiry.

From:
The Office of the
Leader of the Opposition

PHL
1/81.

Dear Nick,

Following the Question and Answer about Mr. J. B. Wagstaff on 18 December, we agreed that there was a case for looking again at the procedure adopted in the past to make such announcements.

On the Wagstaff occasion, the first intimation to the public was the appearance on the Order Paper of a Question to the Prime Minister in the name of the Leader of the Opposition. For the whole of that day, until the Prime Minister had provided the Written Answer, this office was barraged with such questions as "who is Wagstaff?", and I felt inhibited from giving too much detail and referred people to the Ministry of Defence. You will recall the STANDARD headline and picture that day, which was an example of the kind of thing that happens when insufficient information is provided. This was embarrassing to the Leader of the Opposition's office, as I have no doubt it was to No. 10 and the Ministry of Defence.

I do not wish to challenge long-established practice, but I do think that we ought to consider whether there is a better way of telling Parliament that a case has been referred to the Security Commission.

Perhaps when you have had time to consider the whole question, we might have a word.

Yours sincerely,
Tom McCaffrey

Tom McCaffrey

Nick Sanders, Esq.,
10 Downing Street.