

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister
Agree to have a word
with Mr. Nott - perhaps after
OD on Wednesday?
FERB
6.9.

Prime Minister

You discussed with
Mr. Nott today - but
may like to see the
attachments.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-930 7022 218 2111/3



MO 22/7

6th September 1982

A.F.C. 9

Dear Robin,

mf mb

MR 10/9

INTERVIEWS GIVEN BY SIR HENRY LEACH

The Defence Secretary would welcome a brief word with the Prime Minister at a suitable opportunity about the interviews which Admiral Sir Henry Leach gave at the weekend to the Sunday Times and to the BBC.

There was difficulty in June over Admiral Leach's address to the RUSI and a subsequent dinner which he gave to Mr Callaghan to speak to him about the naval programme. As a result, Sir Frank Cooper spoke to Admiral Leach and subsequently minuted the Chiefs of Staff about the general issue of relations with the media. As this is relevant to recent events I am attaching copies of these papers.

Also attached is a transcript of Admiral Leach's interview with the BBC yesterday.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Mottram

(R C MOTTRAM)

Robin Butler Esq

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

PUS/82/1121

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

Admiral Sir Henry Leach, Chief of the Naval Staff, came to see me - at my request - on Monday 12 July.

2. I told him that Ministers, including the Prime Minister, were aware that he had given dinner in his flat to Mr James Callaghan, that he had not sought permission, and that he had not reported it subsequently. I said that this information had come from Parliamentary sources and not from within the MOD.

3. I went on to say that he knew full well that this was quite wrong, was a major breach in the rules, and was disloyal. I was speaking to him at Ministerial direction, including that of the Prime Minister, and, though Ministers were conscious of the very considerable services he had performed, they were deeply distressed by what had happened. Indeed, this was putting it mildly.

4. I asked him why he acted as he had done, because he must have known that it was wrong. He said first that he was being loyal to the Royal Navy and that he did not think his case had had a fair hearing. In particular, during the Defence Review last year, the alternative of withdrawing Forces from Germany and going further towards a maritime/air strategy had not been properly considered. He went on to say that what had incensed him recently was that the Secretary of State had been making selective use of statistics about the money available for the Royal Navy and the number of ships that would be available over the next few years. The Secretary of State had used these arguments in giving advice to the Prime Minister and in answering Members of Parliament. The facts had got to be known and it was for this reason that he had seen Mr Callaghan. I told him that none of his arguments were tenable. He knew full well that if everyone in official life was allowed to brief Members of Parliament and the Press indiscriminately, then there would be no loyalty or discipline left. How would he feel if his subordinates went around arguing against his policies?

5. I concluded by saying that as far as Ministers were concerned this was the end of the matter, but clearly it was wrong to have behaved in this kind of way, particularly just before a debate in the House of Commons on Naval matters, and we could not have such a situation occurring again. I would be sending a note round almost at once to all the Chiefs of Staff reminding them of the rules and requiring them and their staffs to follow them.



FRANK COOPER
14 July 1982

E84

PUS/82/846

~~S415~~

5842/2

CDS
CNS
CGS
CAS

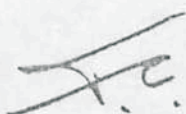
Hidden copy to:
PS/S of S
PS/2nd PUS
1

We have been suffering again recently from a good deal of heavy briefing, some of which has been in direct conflict with the Government's defence policy. This has included private meetings with Members of Parliament - including the Opposition; encouragement of lobbies; and addresses being given by senior officers with politically controversial content. All this is damaging to the Government, Ministers, and ultimately Defence as a whole.

2. It has been long established that the Services keep quiet about politically controversial issues, that relations between Service personnel and Ministers or the advice given should not be disclosed, and that the Services and the MOD should not be brought into disrepute.

3. After the Falkland Islands, Defence is a subject of great public interest. But I would ask you to ensure that senior officers and others do not indulge in lobbying or unauthorised briefings and speeches. In particular, Members of Parliament, of whatever party, should not be lobbied or entertained with the aim of influencing them against the known or published policies of the Government.

4. I would be glad if you would remind your senior people - both inside the MOD and outside - of the need to behave properly. I will make sure my own staff are reminded. The fact is that it is not possible for any organisation to perform properly if internal policy debates become a matter for external lobbying.



FRANK COOPER
13 July 1982

BBC RADIO WORLD "THIS WEEKEND - FIRST SEA LORD - SUNDAY 5 SEPTEMBER

Gordon
Clough

It is not often that serving officers are so openly dismissive of the Government's they serve particularly not First Sea Lord's and there has been much fluttering among the Whitehall doves. When William Horsley telephoned Admiral Sir Henry Leach this morning he found the First Sea Lord in no mood to retract one jot or tittle of what he had said:

1SL

"Naturally I wish to put the position of my Service straight forwardly before the audience, factually, correctly, accurately and honestly because there have been a number of implications that all is a good deal better than in fact was the case and you'll be as aware as I of the really savage cutting of the Navy that resulted from last year's Defence Review."

William
Horsley

You are quoted as saying that the idea that the Navy would be capable of mounting an operation similar to the Falklands in several years time, is a pack of lies; why do you say that?

"If the decisions of the Defence Review were implemented in full then at a point in time a few years hence, it would not have been a practical proposition for the Navy to have undertaken the Falkland Islands campaign successfully".

And what is the prospect now?

"The prospect now is of the three major errors of the Defence Review - one has been corrected, that is the salvage of INVINCIBLE, the other two remain to be considered and corrected and action has not yet been taken on that: one is the decision of the Defence Review totally to abandon the so called modernisation of ships and unless some improvement, however modest, is done to update weapon systems then we shall be on a steady slope to obsolescence, for example, we have launched a new Type 42 Destroyer THE YORK about a couple months ago fitted with the Sea Dart System, which is a good system and showed up well in the Falkland Islands campaign albeit with the shortcomings that were known to exist in it. All the improvements to that system were cancelled as part of last year's Defence Review. There is a ship which will not be in service, operational service for another two years, to me its ludicrous to suppose that that system which already has known shortcomings is not going to be touched, is

not going to be updated, is not going to be improved for what must be a minimum of fifteen years of useful life of that ship."

What is the other main area of your concern?

"The other one is the actual number of the bulk of the Fleet which is the destroyer-frigate force, stemmed from this ignorance that surface ships are intolerably vulnerable, they have a useful role to play so we had better do without them and I put it to you that if it had not been for surface ships we would have had very little chance of any success whatsoever in the Falkland Islands campaign, for a start we wouldn't have even got there."

How much more money are you saying would be necessary to make the kind of improvements that you want?

"Well I would prefer not to go into detailed figures about this but what I would like to make quite clear is that no way would I wish to claw this off the backs of either the Army or the Air Force, I'm doing the thing in a responsible light as defence overall and there is plenty of money there to do these modest things if it is allocated in the right direction."

Your remarks Admiral represent something of an unprecedented attack by the senior naval officer against policies of the Government power, do you think you speak for a very wide range of opinion within the Service?

"My remarks are not intended as attack on anybody, it is simply an exposure of the facts of the situation, an exposure if you like of the truth and I stop well short of telling even the whole truth which would be even more embarrassing in some circles. It is not in any way personal, it is nothing whatsoever to do with any attack on the Government, on the other hand there are various methods of expressing your views which have been the norm until recent times. One has appeared as a Chief of Staff before the House of Commons Defence Committee, one has communicated in a variety of ways, one has had a Service Minister who was at some pains to find out the facts as a politician of the problems concerning that Service and represent them with whatever degree of success might have been judged to be necessary and all those lines of communication if you can call them such have disappeared and therefore if you are in a position to get up in what is not at all public, it is very much a closed forum in a

well respected institution like the RUSI and talk about your Service and if you cannot then speak in perfectly normal balanced terms the truth of the situation there then I do not see very much hope for the future".

