

RESTRICTED

abt



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LONDON SW1P 3EB
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My ref:

Your ref:

1 October 1984

Dear Home Secretary

TIME LIMITS IN CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 17 September to Willie Whitelaw, together with your memorandum on time limits in criminal proceedings.

I share your view over the need to reduce excessive delay in bringing cases to trial where the accused is in custody. However, I believe that there would be genuine public concern if people who could be charged with serious offences were acquitted simply because a time limit had been exceeded.

I agree with the Lord Chancellor that we should await the views of the Attorney General and the Lord Chief Justice before any final decision is taken.

I am copying this letter, with the paper, to the Prime Minister, the Lord President, other members of "H", the Attorney General and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours sincerely

Atkin

" PATRICK JENKIN

Approved by the SAs
and signed in his absence