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From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

Ref. A085/749

12 March 1985

Dear John,

see Pt 1 attached.

Thank you for your letter of 28 February concerning the New Statesman article of 15 February entitled "Secrets of the Ponting Trial".

In view of the probability that information on the "Crown Jewels" was leaked by someone associated with Mr Ponting's defence, during the course of the trial, I agree that we should not be justified in launching a leak enquiry.

I am copying this letter to Robin Butler, Antony Acland, Cecil Shipp, Peter Marychurch and Henry Steel.

*Yours as
Robert*

J N H Belloch Esq CB

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SECURITY : Ponting : Pt 2.

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H. STEEL, CMG OBE
LEGAL SECRETARY

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Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO
Management and Personnel Office
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London SW1A 2AS

Sir Robert,

see Pt. 1 attached

I have seen John Blelloch's letter to you of 28 February about the New Statesman article entitled "Secrets of the Ponting Trial". I understand that the informed assessment is indeed that the source of the leaks from the "Crown Jewels" upon which parts of the article are based was somebody connected with Ponting's defence rather than anybody in a Government Department and I therefore agree that there would be no point in having an ordinary leak enquiry.

I add that the Attorney General had a discussion with Bernard Sheldon and me a week or so ago about the implications of all this for other proceedings where we may want to use sensitive material in reliance on the protection afforded by the relevant part of the trial taking place in camera; but no concrete conclusions emerged. In addition, Bernard Sheldon, Tony Hetherington and I have given some thought to the question whether the New Statesman article in itself provides any basis for instituting proceedings against anybody in respect of offences involved in the unauthorised disclosure of the document made available to the court in camera. The ball on that matter rests in Bernard Sheldon's court, but he has no doubt had other things to occupy him in recent days.

I am copying this letter to John Blelloch, Robin Butler, Anthony Acland, John Jones and Peter Marychurch.

James
Steel

H STEEL

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