



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Office of the
Leader of The Opposition

Monday, February 3rd 1986

Dear Prime Minister,

Last Tuesday, as you would expect, I examined the Hansard record of your speech on Monday, January 27th.

Column 655, in which you set out your description of the exchanges on January 6th between the officials of the Department of Trade and Industry and those in your office, particularly interested me.

I consequently raised the matter with you at Question Time on Tuesday, January 28th. You will recall that the exchange was as follows:-

Mr. Kinnoek: If a Department of State seeks agreement from the Prime Minister's Office and gets acceptance, is not that acceptance acquiescence? There really can be no misunderstanding about that.

The Prime Minister: I made a full statement yesterday and I made a full one previously. I have nothing further to add.

Mr. Kinnoek: But if there is no dispute, if there is no disagreement, if there is no refusal and if there is no objection is not the acceptance of a request for agreement acquiescence? Will the Prime Minister give a straightforward answer to a straightforward question? Is it acquiescence—yes or no?

The Prime Minister: I do not share the right hon. Gentleman's view of a straightforward question. *[Interruption.]* My authority was neither sought nor obtained for the disclosure. I have nothing further to add.

It has since become clear that many share the view that, in the circumstances of the exchange between the Department of Trade
/.and Industry

and Industry and your office, "accept" could not mean other than acquiescence or assent.

From your own account of the findings of the Inquiry, it is clear that your office was emphatic in its refusal to make the leak from 10 Downing Street. The Department of Trade and Industry officials clearly comprehended and acted accordingly.

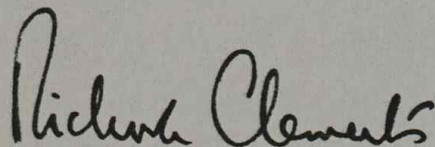
By contrast, however, no such refusal or resistance has been claimed in the very specifically and closely related matters of whether to leak the Solicitor-General's letter, whether to make the leak from the Department of Trade and Industry and whether to employ the methods that were in fact used.

The conclusion can only be drawn that such circumstances did not lead to misunderstanding but to full understanding that in the absence of dissent the Department of Trade and Industry officials could proceed with the assent of the officials in your office.

When there are such central issues left unresolved it is necessary for both the record of evidence and the papers available to the Inquiry to be made public, as well as the Inquiry report itself.

I am sure that the public interest would be served if you would make the the appropriate arrangements for publication forthwith.

Yours sincerely,



Neil Kinnock

Dictated and signed in Mr Kinnock's absence.

Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher M.P.