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DEFENCE COMMITTEE

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**DC 31 35/86**



DC 31  
of Session 1985-86

The Committee have received the attached letter from Sir Robert Armstrong, accompanying his corrections to the transcript of his evidence given last week. Sir Robert requests that a footnote should be added to his evidence, clarifying his reply to Question 1196. This would be perfectly normal practice.

As Sir Robert's evidence was given in public and received much media attention, the Chairman considers that it would be appropriate for the text of this footnote to be released to the press and public today, rather than in several weeks time when the printed version of the evidence becomes available.

The Chairman therefore proposes that, unless any Member raises an objection with the Committee staff before 4 pm today, the text of the footnote, together with the original question and answer, should then be made publicly available.

ROBIN JAMES  
Assistant Clerk to the Committee

12 February 1986



*By Lowell  
As agreed with  
PM.  
NW  
12/2*

70 WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AS

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

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

Ref. A086/480

12 February 1986

*Dear Mr Rogers,*

--- I return herewith the transcript of the evidence which I gave to the Defence Committee on 5 February.

The transcript has been seen by the officials whom I interviewed in the course of my inquiry and they do not wish to comment on any matters contained in it.

As you will see, I have made a number of corrections of inaccuracies in the printing or reporting of the evidence and certain other corrections which clarify the record without altering the sense. There was one answer (the answer to Q.1196) which, as I read through the transcript, did not seem to make entirely clear what I intended to convey, and I have therefore submitted a footnote to make the meaning clear.

--- I attach a copy of the answer and the footnote herewith.

*Yours sincerely  
Robert Armstrong*

Robert Rogers Esq  
Clerk of the Select Committee on Defence  
House of Commons

Answer to Q.1196

I do not think he used the words "subject to the agreement of" in the telephone conversation which took place on 6 January which is the relevant telephone conversation. I think he used words which were taken to mean that\*, but as far as I can discover he did not use those exact words.

\* Note by Witness

That that is what his officials took him to mean is clear from the fact that, as the Prime Minister told the House of Commons on 27 January:

"Officials of the Department of Trade and Industry told the inquiry that they regarded the purpose of their approach to my officials as being to seek agreement to the disclosure as well as to the method. They believed that they had the agreement of my office, and acted in good faith in the knowledge that they had authority from their Secretary of State and cover from my office." (Official Report 27 January 1986, col 655).

