



*Prime Minister*

*Very interesting indeed.*

*But really to do, I think.*

*N.L.U. 17-2*

Ref. A086/530

MR WICKS

*FILED ON SECURITY  
Westland leak to the  
Observer*

In your letter of 30 December 1985, you conveyed the Prime Minister's approval for an inquiry to be undertaken into the apparent disclosure to The Observer of information in the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry's minute of 4 October 1985 to the Prime Minister relating to Westlands, and for Ministers to be interviewed if that should prove necessary.

2. The investigator has now completed his inquiries into both The Observer disclosure and into a subsequent disclosure to the BBC "Panorama" programme of Mr Brittan's Private Secretary's letter of 18 October 1985 recording Mr Brittan's meeting with Sir John Cuckney on 17 October. The investigator has been unable to identify the person (or persons) responsible for the leaks. The inquiry has thus ended inconclusively, though the investigator believes that it is clear beyond reasonable doubt that the leaks came from the Ministry of Defence, and that "of all those who might be responsible Mr Heseltine certainly had the strongest motive and possibly the best opportunity".

3. There was a further "leak" of different extracts of the minute of 4 October 1985 to the Sunday Times a week later than the leak to The Observer. The inquiry has established that this disclosure was made to the Sunday Times by an official of the Department of Trade and Industry (not the one who disclosed the Solicitor General's letter of 6 January) on the instructions and with the authority of the then Secretary of State. The minute was of course one signed by the Secretary of State himself: it was thus "his" to disclose in a sense in which the Solicitor General's letter was not.

*REA*

17 February 1986

ROBERT ARMSTRONG



