

*This is very worrying*



*Prime Minister.*

*Any number of problems ahead, I am afraid, but you need only take note at this stage.*

*AKW  
3xii*

Ref. A06191

MR. WHITMORE

I understand that the Prime Minister is likely to receive during the course of this month a report from the Security Commission on the reference which she announced in her statement in the House of Commons on 26th March on the Hollis affair.

2. On security procedures the main recommendation seems likely to be a review of classification procedures designed to ensure that Departments do not over-classify documents, and thus to reduce the number of posts whose occupants need to be positively vetted. The need for the positive vetting and normal vetting procedures will be confirmed, and the procedures adopted in the security and intelligence services broadly approved, with some minor changes proposed.

3. As an example of over-classification, the Security Commission will, I understand, suggest that it is not necessary to classify a document as Confidential merely because it contains a reference to the existence of a Cabinet Committee.

4. Perhaps the most difficult recommendation is likely to be that the Government should discontinue the policy of non-avowal of the SIS (and of the SIGINT activities of GCHQ).

5. The report will be classified Secret, and the first thing we shall have to do will be to decide whether it is to be published, unexpurgated or expurgated, or whether the Government should publish simply a list of its findings and recommendations. The previous report of this kind - the Radcliffe Report in 1961 - was published in<sup>an</sup> expurgated version. I understand that the Security Commission are critical of that procedure, and would not be likely willingly to agree to go along with the publication of an expurgated version. Normal procedures would require the Prime Minister to inform the Leader of the Opposition as well as the Chairman of the Security Commission of any expurgations the Government proposed to make. Publication may cause some



embarrassment; but nonetheless I am sure that the aim should be if at all possible to publish in full.

6. I am making arrangements for the preparation of considered advice to Ministers on the question of publication and on the responses to the Commission's recommendations. I think that the aim should be to make a statement on the Government's decisions at the time when the report (or a summary of its findings, if that is the way things go) is published.

7. I fear that the publication of the report may be the occasion which leads to the exposure of FOLIO. Mr. Chapman Pincher gave evidence to the Security Commission which showed that he was well aware of the FOLIO case. He claimed to be a friend of FOLIO, and indeed went to see FOLIO shortly before he died. If (as I suspect) the Security Commission's report ignores Mr. Pincher's evidence, I fear that he may not scruple to support criticism of the report with a reference to the FOLIO case and his evidence to the Commission about it - despite his protestations of friendship for FOLIO. An article on these lines would not do the sales of the paperback version of his book, which is to be published shortly, any harm. I have, quite independently, had reports that the buzz in Fleet Street is that the next "spy" to be "exposed" in the press will be FOLIO.

cc to old

REA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

3rd December, 1981

DEC 3 1981



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Faint, mostly illegible text, likely a letter or official document, containing several paragraphs of text.



~~SECRET~~ AND PERSONAL

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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

I have shown the Prime Minister your minute A06191 of 3 December 1981 about the forthcoming report of the Security Commission and a related matter.

She has taken note of your minute, with the comment

"This is very worrying".

*AWL.*

4 December 1981

~~SECRET~~ AND PERSONAL