

CONFIDENTIAL



Prime Minister

Ref. A07949

PRIME MINISTER

Yes  
not

Agree to make the statement

is proposed?

Content with the draft

I have with select  
one or two drafts  
not statement and White Paper?

Report of the Security Commission

RM 26 iii

On 5th March I submitted advice on the Security Commission's report and, following the meeting you held on 17th March, I was instructed to agree the proposed course of action and the terms of the statement with Lord Diplock and his colleagues. This I have now done. They said that they thought that the condensation of their report into the draft White Paper had been very well done, and had only very minor changes to suggest. I was able to agree revised texts on all points. They are therefore content with the attached drafts, and also content that you should say that the method of proceeding and the terms of the statement have been agreed with them. The way is now clear for you to inform the Leader of the Opposition and to make the oral statement in the House. I recommend that you should make your oral statement on Tuesday 6th April; the written statement can then be published as a White Paper on Wednesday 7th April.

2. I think that you should inform the Leader of the Opposition a few days in advance. The course of action now proposed - publishing a statement summarising the report rather than the report itself - goes back to a precedent of 1956. Both the Radcliffe Report of 1962 and all Security Commission reports (the Commission was not set up until 1964) have been published in an expurgated form, and the Leader of the Opposition has been shown the full text and invited to endorse the expurgations. The Security Commission has not previously been asked to conduct a general review of procedures, and you and your colleagues decided that on this occasion you preferred to follow the 1956 precedent, and not show the Leader of the Opposition what was to be omitted. You should give him a few days' notice of what you propose. I attach a draft of a letter for you to send to the Leader of the Opposition, which I suggest should go on Thursday 2nd April or Friday 3rd April.

3. I am copying this minute and attachments to those who attended the meeting on 17th March.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

26th March, 1982

CONFIDENTIAL



DRAFT ORAL STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER

In my statement to the House on 26th March I announced that, after consultation with the Rt. Hon. Gentleman, the Leader of the Opposition, I had asked the Security Commission to conduct a review of security procedures and practices in the public service and to consider what changes, if any, were required.

2. The Commission has completed its task and submitted its report. I am most grateful to Lord Diplock and his colleagues, Lord Bridge of Harwich and Lord Allen of Abbeydale, for their thorough and painstaking work. After careful consideration, I have concluded, albeit with some regret, that it would not be in the national interest to publish this report <sup>in full</sup> since substantial portions of it concern sensitive aspects of security procedures. [An expurgated version of the report would give a misleading impression of it.] I therefore propose to make as full a statement as is consistent with national security about the Commission's findings. ~~I am authorised to say that Lord Diplock and his colleagues are content with this course, and believe it to be the right~~ course to follow in the circumstances. They have approved the statement, which is being published tomorrow as a Command paper.

Further  
I share the  
view of Lord  
Diplock and  
his colleagues  
but an  
expurgated  
version

3. This is the first comprehensive review of security procedures which has taken place since the Report of the Committee on Security Procedures in the Public Service, known as the Radcliffe Report, was published in April 1962. Like Radcliffe, the Commission has taken "security" in its terms of reference to mean the safeguarding of such information in the possession of the Government as would by its unauthorised disclosure cause injury to the interests of the country. Its report does not cover the protection of Government buildings or their contents or vital installations against sabotage or terrorist attack, although it does cover physical precautions for denying access to classified information by unauthorised persons.

4. The Report is generally reassuring. Subject to the Commission's views about the need for an urgent evaluation of the risks involved in electronic information processing and the means of countering them, Lord Diplock and his colleagues conclude that the security procedures, as they have been



is this a  
draft note?

applied since Radcliffe and considerably modified and updated since, have worked well and can be relied upon to prevent infiltration of any of those bodies dealing with particularly sensitive security issues of the kind which took place in the 1930s and 1940s. Nevertheless they make a number of recommendations which the Government accepts (subject in a few instances to further necessary inquiries) and will implement as soon as possible.

## DRAFT WRITTEN STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER

### INTRODUCTION

1. In my statement to the House on 26 March 1981 I announced that, after consultation with the Rt Hon Gentleman, the Leader of the Opposition, I had asked the Security Commission to review the security procedures and practices currently followed in the public service and to consider what, if any, changes are required. After investigations involving 32 meetings over a period of 9 months, a considerable volume of written and oral evidence and interviews with 36 witnesses, the Commission has submitted its report. The Commission's report is generally reassuring: Lord Diplock and his colleagues take the view that the procedures, as they have been applied since the Committee under Lord Radcliffe reported in April 1962 (Cmnd 1681), have worked well. The Commission has nevertheless recommended a number of changes, both to improve existing procedures and to meet certain changes which it identifies in the threats to security. These recommendations, and the Government's response to them, are set out in summary form in the Annex to this Statement, except for those recommendations which the Government consider that it would be against the interests of security to publish.
2. The Government have considered whether to publish the text of the report, omitting those passages and recommendations which it would be contrary to security to publish. They have come to the conclusion that an expurgated text would inevitably give a seriously misleading impression of the report. None the less they think it desirable to give an account of the considerations which informed the Commission's thinking and lie behind the specific recommendations that are being published. That is the purpose of the remainder of this Statement. This course of action, and the terms of this Statement, have been agreed with Lord Diplock and his colleagues in the inquiry.
3. The Commission makes it clear that, though the occasion of this reference to it was the publication of a book which dealt with a number of cases of proven or suspected disclosure of sensitive information

to Soviet bloc intelligence services, those cases occurred many years before the improvements in security procedures recommended in the report of the Radcliffe Committee (Cmnd 1681) in 1962 had been put into effect and for the most part before any form of positive vetting had been introduced. It was not within the Security Commission's terms of reference to examine once again allegations against individuals who are now either dead or have long ago been publicly exposed. Those cases had all been the subject of intensive examination and re-examination in the utmost detail, and in the Commission's view, as well as that of the Government, no useful purpose could be served by the Commission going yet again over the same well-trodden ground.

4. Twenty years after Radcliffe, the Commission considers that the external threat from Soviet bloc intelligence services, although it has been contained with greater success than before 1961, remains undiminished. On the other hand, the Commission believes that the internal threat has altered considerably since Radcliffe. It has become more varied and viewed as a whole has grown more serious. The threat offered by the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), upon which Radcliffe concentrated, has probably diminished as a result of the fall in the number of its members and the disillusionment of many of them with Soviet policy since 1961 in invading Czechoslovakia and, more recently, Afghanistan. The fall in CPGB membership, however, has been accompanied by the proliferation of new subversive groups of the extreme Left and extreme Right (mainly the former) whose aim is to overthrow democratic parliamentary government in this country by violent or other unconstitutional means, not shrinking in the case of the most extreme groups from terrorism to achieve their aims. Membership of individual groups is small but, for the most part, active and conspiratorial. They might well seek to make public information injurious to the interests of this country, not at the behest or for the benefit of any foreign power, but simply to harm this country itself, whether by causing a rift between it and its allies or otherwise, and by these means to weaken its defences against the overthrow of democratic government here by force.

5. The Commission's greatest disquiet arises from a different change in the nature of the threat to security. The use of computers in the public service for the storage and retrieval of classified

information is not mentioned in Radcliffe; if it occurred at all then it can have been no more than minimally. Since that time, however, and particularly over the last ten years, it has progressed rapidly and so has the use of word-processors and other forms of office automation. The Commission does not doubt that this trend will continue and indeed accelerate with continuing developments in computer technology and will bring in its train new security problems, which themselves will not stay static, in the safeguarding of classified information made accessible at the terminals of large central computers or stored in mini-computers or on floppy discs or other forms of storage used for word-processing machines.

#### CLASSIFICATION

6. The aim of both physical and personnel security is to prevent the disclosure of information acquired by public servants in the course of their official duties to anyone who would be likely to use it to the injury of this country. The methods used are, on the one hand, physical protection and, on the other, denial of access to classified information by persons whose loyalty and reliability have not been confirmed by previous investigation. The degree of protection depends upon the security classification accorded to the information in question. The system of classification thus lies at the root of security procedures in the public service.

7. The principal current classifications in use in the United Kingdom, together with their definitions, are:-

TOP SECRET	Information and material the unauthorised disclosure of which would cause exceptionally grave damage to the nation.
SECRET	Information and material the unauthorised disclosure of which would cause serious injury to the interests of the nation.
CONFIDENTIAL	Information and material the unauthorised disclosure of which would be prejudicial to the interests of the nation.

RESTRICTED

Information and material the unauthorised disclosure of which would be undesirable in the interests of the nation.

8. In the Commission's view, over-classification is the error that is most commonly committed in carrying out current security procedures. This is not only objectionable upon grounds of managerial efficiency and economy; it adds considerably to the expense of the security procedures and the manpower needed to carry them out; even more important, it is liable to undermine the effectiveness of the procedures themselves. The Commission therefore recommends (a) that there should be a thorough review of the classification system, designed both to limit the number of newly created papers with a high security classification and to attempt to bring about early reduction in the classification of papers, once they have been created. More generally, the Commission recommends (b) that the manuals providing security guidance in Departments should be revised so as to make the instructions they contain clearer and easier to consult.

#### PERSONNEL SECURITY MEASURES

##### The Positive Vetting System

9. The system used to investigate the reliability of those who are expected to have regular access to highly classified information is known as positive vetting (PV). The PV system has now been in operation for thirty years. The Commission has no hesitation in recommending (c) that it be continued, on the grounds that, properly carried out, it exposes "character defects" which render uncertain the subject's trustworthiness or discretion, and his ability to resist pecuniary temptation or exposure to blackmail. The Commission observes that character defects rather than disloyalty for ideological reasons or subversive tendencies have been the cause of all known cases of disclosure of information to hostile intelligence services that have occurred since Radcliffe. At the same time it notes that there are currently about 68000 posts for which PV clearance is required, of which 16600 are in the Home Civil Service, all but 3500 of these being in the Ministry of Defence (including the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment). The Commission has the impression

that Home Civil Service Departments have been too ready to classify posts as requiring PV clearance, although it recognises that, in the case of the Ministry of Defence, the need to meet the requirements of our allies accounts for the existence of a considerable number of them. The Commission comments that there are three main drawbacks to the PV system.

- i. it is expensive, particularly in the use of manpower in the field-work undertaken by investigating officers in interviewing the subject of the PV check and his referees;
- ii. the PV process involves considerable time, its completion averaging three months or more in ordinary cases, though in cases of urgency the process can be carried through much more quickly than that. In those departments or services where, with relatively minor exceptions, all candidates for recruitment have to be positively vetted, the delay may result in the loss of valuable recruits especially those with specialised qualifications who accept other offers of employment during the waiting period; and
- iii. in a department in which there are many PV posts, the failure of a member of the staff of the department to obtain PV clearance upon transfer to a PV post may block his chances of promotion and, under the existing rules, would prevent his reaching the grade of Under-Secretary or above. In any event it may well affect adversely the prospects of his career in lower grades of the public service, although the Commission notes that, in the majority of cases in the Home Civil Service, it has been found possible by good management to avoid this result.

10. Against this background, the Commission recommends (d) that departments should review each of their existing PV posts with a view to seeing whether the number of them could be reduced; and notes with approval that a scrutiny of all PV posts in the Ministry of Defence and the armed services is already being undertaken. The Commission also questions the arrangements whereby certain categories of post, for example officials of Under-Secretary rank or above, or those of



whatever rank in Ministerial Private Offices, are automatically held to require PV clearance. In the case of Under-Secretaries the Commission accepts that present practice is based on the theory that, in order to make most effective use of their abilities, Civil Servants in the higher echelons should be fully transferable within and between Departments, but does not think that this consideration is over-riding. It therefore recommends (e) and (f) that PV should no longer be an automatic requirement for these two categories.

11. The Commission examines the requirement that all members of the Diplomatic Service should be subject to PV clearance. The fact that members of the Diplomatic Service spend much of their service career in posts abroad makes them obvious targets for the intelligence service of foreign powers. Whether at home or overseas they frequently handle or have access to information relating to external affairs which merits high security classification and which they may be inveigled into disclosing through indiscretion; while the introduction into the Diplomatic Service of a recruit willing to betray this country for ideological reasons must continue to be treated as an ever-present danger. The Commission therefore regards maintenance of the present PV requirement as essential on security grounds. It notes that, because of the time taken for completion of PV clearance, recruits other than those to post in the administrative grades, research officers, economists, security officers and NATO staff, are engaged provisionally pending completion of PV. The Commission regards this as acceptable provided that the recruit is not posted overseas until PV is complete and that care is taken to limit his access to the most sensitive material. It so recommends (g).

12. The Commission also examines the requirement that all members of police special branches should have PV clearance. It concludes that this requirement is justified by virtue of the role which special branches play in countering terrorist and other subversive activities. At the same time the Commission recommends (h) arrangements for appeal in the event of refusal of PV clearance to a member of a police force.

13. Positive vetting is not confined to government departments and the police. It is used as a personnel security measure in both the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) and in those firms

which have contracts involving access to classified material. The Commission considers the scope for reducing the number of PV posts in both.

14. The UKAEA is not a government department. It is responsible for recruiting its own staff; it does not use the Civil Service Commission. It is also responsible for its own security and that of British Nuclear Fuels Ltd (BNFL) a company incorporated under the Companies Act, whose capital is wholly government owned. The threat in the case of UKAEA and BNFL is not only from the intelligence services of the Soviet bloc but also from nations anxious to acquire know-how to enable them to enter the nuclear weapons field. In accord with an undertaking given to the United States all employees of UKAEA (except those at Culham Laboratory) and BNFL are subject to a form of vetting known as full record check under which the employee has to fill in a written questionnaire; but although they are concerned with the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and have but little access to TOP SECRET information, an agreement with the United States requires that persons with actual or potential access to SECRET ATOMIC information must hold PV clearances: any reduction in the extent of PV would therefore need to be negotiated with the United States Government.

15. The Radcliffe Report described the arrangements for positive vetting of employees of firms engaged in classified government contracts. Security advice is given to these firms by the Security Service whose team of advisers has, as Radcliffe recommended, been substantially increased. The PV procedure is the responsibility of the contracting department, generally the Ministry of Defence, and interviews and field investigations are usually carried out by Ministry of Defence investigating officers. Although noting that the risk of unauthorised disclosure of classified information would appear on the face of it to be greater in those firms than in the public service itself, the Commission sees no necessity to recommend any change in the existing procedure.

#### Criteria for PV Clearance

16. In addition to considering the basis for requiring staff to be positively vetted, the Commission examines the criteria used to

determine whether PV clearance should be given. Under the present rules, there is a presumption that an individual should not be given PV clearance if one or more carefully defined indicators of unreliability appear to be applicable. Apart from the obvious indications of untrustworthiness, such as involvement with treasonable, seditious, espionage, sabotage or terrorist activities against the State, the criteria fall broadly into three categories:-

- a. membership of or sympathy with a subversive organisation;
- b. "character defects": these are factors relating to character or conduct tending to make a person unreliable or which may expose him to blackmail or other influence by a foreign intelligence service;
- c. defects of circumstance, such as communist country origin, which involve no reproach at all in respect of character or conduct, but which may have to be taken into account because they may impose a strain on a person's loyalty or make him vulnerable to pressure by a foreign intelligence service.

17. The Commission confines its comments to what it considers to be the most controversial of the "character defects": male homosexuality. It notes the claim that, in view of the change of English and Scottish law and of public opinion which has taken place since the Radcliffe Committee reported, an unconcealed, acknowledged and stable relationship in Great Britain with another consenting adult of the same sex in which no homosexual acts take place in public no longer involves a party to such a relationship in any vulnerability to blackmail and thus does not constitute a security risk in officers whose service is confined to England, Scotland and Wales. The Commission comments that homosexual tendencies may remain latent only or may manifest themselves in a broader gamut of forms from inconspicuous stable relationships through promiscuity or exhibitionism to paederasty. It therefore recommends (i) that, in the Home Civil Service, male homosexual inclinations or relationships should not necessarily be treated as an absolute bar to PV clearance, but should be dealt with on a case by case basis, paying particular attention to whether the way in which the individual has indulged his homosexual tendencies

casts any doubt upon his discretion or reliability.

18. At the same time, the Commission observes that homosexual relationships between consenting male adults are still offences against the criminal law of a number of foreign states to which persons serving in the Diplomatic Service are liable to be posted, and these include the USSR and other states in the Soviet bloc. The Commission therefore recommends (j) that homosexuality, even if acknowledged, should continue to be a bar to employment in the Diplomatic Service and in any PV post elsewhere which might involve the officer being posted outside Great Britain. In the Armed Forces, homosexual acts, even between consenting male adults, are disciplinary offences rendering the perpetrator liable to compulsory discharge. Here too the Commission recommends (k) that homosexuality should, on security grounds, remain a bar to appointment to a PV post.

#### Appeals when PV clearance is refused

19. The decision to refuse PV is taken by the Department in which the officer is serving. From this decision, if it is based on character defect, there is a right of appeal to the permanent head of the department. Where refusal of PV is for other security reasons there is a right of appeal to the Three Advisers (the tribunal appointed by the Government to advise Ministers in such cases) who currently consist of two retired Permanent Secretaries of departments of the Home Civil Service and a former Secretary-General of the Civil Service National Whitley Council Staff Side. The Advisers have not in fact sat on an appeal since 1969; which reflects the fact that character defects rather than security reasons have provided the grounds on which PV has been refused. The Commission recommends (l)(m) that these procedures be maintained, with modifications.

20. In the case of firms involved in classified work there exists a provision, which has never needed to be used, for an employee refused PV clearance on grounds of character defects to appeal to the Three Advisers. A similar provision, also never exercised, exists in respect of British subjects seconded to International Defence Organisations. The Commission finds these provisions anomalous and recommends (n) that they be abolished.

#### Review of PV Clearance

21. The procedure for PV provides for a review of PV clearance at regular intervals, generally quinquennial but in some departments the review is undertaken at ten year intervals only. The Commission agrees that such reviews should continue to be undertaken at regular intervals of never more than ten years, but normally of five, and recommends (o) that there should be greater uniformity in departments' review procedures.

#### Political Appointments

22. The Commission notes the possibility that a Minister may himself be a security risk. Indeed the Commission in 1973 (Cmnd 5367) was driven to that conclusion in the case of a junior Minister on the grounds of character defects. The Commission recognises, however,

that the way in which ministerial posts are filled upon a change of Government makes it impracticable to subject Ministers to PV clearance before appointment and probably politically unacceptable to invite them to co-operate in PV clearance procedures in respect of themselves after appointment; although, following the recommendation of the Security Commission in Cmnd 5367, Ministers on appointment to a department are given specific instructions upon security problems and procedures. The Commission repeats and re-emphasises that recommendation. (p)

23. The Commission also endorses the Positive Vetting of special advisers to Ministers where they have regular access to highly classified information. It recommends (q) that all advisers should comply with the requirements needed for the authorisation of access to classified information.

24. As the Commission notes, if the Select Committee system is to work effectively, it is desirable that access to classified information in the possession of Government should not be entirely barred. This presents special problems of its own. The Commission is emphatically of the opinion that no specialist adviser should be given regular and constant access to TOP SECRET information or any access at all to information which by agreement with any of our allies is confined exclusively to persons with PV clearance. Further, the Commission considers that the security risks which apply to less highly classified information would be reduced if a record check, akin to that adopted in respect of all employees of the UKAEA and BNFL, were adopted for those specialist advisers who need access to it. The information provided by the specialist adviser in filling up the vetting form would, if true, provide the material to justify denying him access to classified material if this should be necessary on security grounds. If, however, it were untrue in any relevant respect that could be demonstrated without revealing delicate sources of information, the unreliability of the proposed specialist adviser, justifying refusal of access to classified information, would have been made manifest. The Commission accordingly recommends (r) that consideration be given to the feasibility of introducing a record check on these lines.

## SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE

25. Because of the circumstances which led to the Prime Minister's statement on 26 March 1981, the Commission pays particularly close attention to the recruitment and personnel security procedures for those engaged in the security and intelligence services, and makes a number of recommendations for modifications in those procedures. It would not be appropriate to describe these modifications in this statement, but they are being implemented.

## COMPUTERS AND OFFICE AUTOMATION

26. The use of computers in the public service for the storage and retrieval of classified information is the area of physical security which causes the Security Commission the greatest disquiet. The amount of data that is capable of being stored upon a single disc or magnetic tape and the rapidity approaching instantaneity with which the data can be retrieved means that any vulnerability to access by hostile intelligence services of material stored in computers or word processors could be a major disaster to this country and in particular to the efficacy of those involved in secret intelligence work. The problems of dealing with security in this field are highly technical and are unlikely to remain static since they are liable to be affected by the rapid changes that will continue to take place in computer and micro-chip technology.

27. The Commission is impressed by the thoroughness of the physical precautions taken to deny unauthorised access to computer installations and discs and tapes upon which information is stored, and also to prevent the use of terminals by unauthorised persons; but it does not feel qualified to express an informed view as to whether such installations are entirely free from other forms of vulnerability or on whether the system of code-words and personal keys for preventing unauthorised access to particular mini-computers or word-processors are entirely adequate.

28. The Commission notes that there is a great demand outside the public service for trained computer staff, particularly those capable of undertaking those tasks which require the highest forms of expertise.

In the private sector of industry and commerce, persons with these qualifications have been able to command salaries substantially higher than those paid to civil servants. In consequence the public service has experienced a comparatively rapid turnover of computer staff after they have acquired the skill and experience that enables them to earn higher salaries elsewhere. The Commission thinks that this tendency will continue. Compared with other civil servants computer staff should be regarded from the security point of view as birds of passage. This means that in the case of classified information stored in computers there are likely to be outside the public service persons with intimate knowledge of the programming and the hardware and software of the computers in which the information is stored. This cannot but increase the risk of such knowledge being passed on to hostile intelligence services. The Commission draws particular attention to this but makes no specific recommendation as to the way in which the risk might be eliminated.

29. In its Report in May 1981 (Cmnd 8235), the Commission recommended that responsible officials should institute a study of the special problems involved in the storage of information in the various types of magnetic media. In its present report the Commission draws attention to the much broader and more technical aspects of the security risks involved in electronic information processing. It considers that the present arrangements at official level for dealing with these matters do not adequately reflect what it considers may well present today and in the foreseeable future the greatest potential threat to classified information, and recommends (s) that appropriate improvements be made.

#### CONCLUSION

30. When I announced that the present inquiry was to take place, I referred to the difficult balances to be struck between the need to protect national security, the nature and cost of the measures required to do so effectively, the need for efficiency and economy in the public service and the individual rights of members of the public service to personal freedom and privacy. The account given in this Statement of the reasoning, conclusions and recommendations of Lord Diplock and his colleagues shows, in the Government's view, how



carefully the Security Commission has weighed these often conflicting considerations. The Government agree with the three main themes which emerge from the Commission's analysis: that the present system of security procedures is well conceived and operates effectively; that, while the threat from Soviet bloc intelligence remains undiminished, this country's democratic institutions are now also under challenge from a range of new subversive groups, whose readiness to inflict deliberate harm on the country is also considerable; and that the growth in the use of electronic devices for processing and storing highly classified information presents a new and continuing challenge to those responsible for its protection. As this statement and its Annex also make clear, the Government agree too with the substance of the Commission's detailed recommendations. They therefore welcome the report and are acting upon it.

(a) Recommendation

There should be a thorough review of the classification system. This should include a rigorous revision of the examples which are given to government departments and those included in the additional guidance given to their own staff by individual departments, with a view to down-grading information to RESTRICTED or to privacy markings, where the reason for its being classified is the political or administrative embarrassment that its disclosure to the public would cause. As regards material still meriting classification as CONFIDENTIAL or above after the removal of politically or administratively embarrassing information to the RESTRICTED security category or to privacy markings only, consideration could usefully be given once again in each department to the grade within the service at which an officer should have the power to originate material in each of the three higher classifications. Where the need to prevent an unauthorised disclosure is only temporary, as may often be the case outside the fields of defence and secret intelligence work, consideration could also be given to the possible advantage in the originator of such classified material recommending a period after which de-classification would be automatic.

Government Response

A review covering all these points ~~has~~ been put in hand.

(b) Recommendation

The handbooks providing central guidance on security matters to Government departments should be re-arranged, re-edited and, in many parts, re-written so that the instructions they contain can more readily be found and understood by those who have to comply with them.

Government Response

The Government accept this recommendation and this work is in train.

(c) Recommendation

Positive vetting for the holders of posts involving regular access to very highly classified information should be maintained.

Government Response

The Government welcome this recommendation.

(d) Recommendation

Home Civil Service Departments should review each of their existing PV posts with a view to seeing whether the number of them could be reduced.

Government Response

The Government have instituted a review in those departments where such action is not already being taken.

(e) Recommendation

The rule should be abolished whereby all officials of the rank of Under Secretary or above are automatically subject to PV clearance.

Government Response

This recommendation is being implemented.

(f) Recommendation

Officials in the Private Offices of Ministers other than Cabinet Ministers should not be subject to PV clearance other than in cases where the job requires regular and constant access to highly classified information.

Government Response

The Government accept this recommendation, and have asked Departments to pay particular attention to this aspect in their general review of PV posts.

(g) Recommendation

All Diplomatic Service posts should remain subject to PV clearance; and as at present, no recruit be posted overseas until PV clearance has been completed.

Government Response

The Government welcome this endorsement of existing practice.

(h) Recommendation

Rights of appeal should be clearly laid down in the case where a member of a police force is refused PV clearance.

Government Response

The Government accept this recommendation.

(i) Recommendation

In the Home Civil Service, male homosexual inclinations or relationships should not necessarily be treated as an absolute bar to PV clearance, but should be dealt with on a case by case basis, paying particular attention to whether the way in which the individual has indulged his homosexual tendencies casts any doubt upon his discretion or reliability.

Government Response

The Government accept this recommendation which generally accords with current practice.

(j)(k) Recommendation

The change in Recommendation (i) should not apply to the Diplomatic Service, to the holders of other PV posts involving service outside Great Britain, or to the Armed Forces (in which homosexual acts remain a disciplinary offence).

Government Response

The Government agree.

(l) Recommendation

When an official wishes to exercise his right of appeal against refusal of PV clearance on grounds of character defect, he should, if he so requests (except perhaps where the defect consists of mental instability of which it might be harmful to the subject's own mental health to inform him), be given a written statement of the allegations made against him, though not the sources of the information on which the allegations are based.

Government Response

The Government are sympathetic to this recommendation, which corresponds to the practice already followed in some departments, but need to consider further whether, as framed, it can be implemented consistently.

(m) Recommendation

The Chairman of the Three Advisers, an appellate body, should in future be a member of the judiciary.

Government Response

The Government accept this recommendation and will be guided by it when the time comes to appoint a successor to the present Chairman.

(n) Recommendation

The right of appeal to the Three Advisers by employees of firms engaged on classified work against refusal of PV clearance on the grounds of character defect, and by British subjects employed by International Defence Organisations against withdrawal of PV clearance on the same grounds, should be abolished as being anomalous.

Government Response

The Government accept these recommendations.

(o) Recommendation

Reviews of PV clearance should take place at not more than ten-yearly intervals, and normally every five years; and should include certain detailed checks as a minimum. The practice in the Royal Air Force regarding interviews with the subject himself should be brought into line with that obtaining in the other two Services.

Government Response

The Government accept this recommendation, much of which accords with present practice, subject only to further consideration of the practicality of implementing the checks involved.

(p) Recommendation

As at present, Ministers should not be subject to PV clearance, but should on appointment to a Department be given specific instructions upon security problems and procedures.

Government Response

The Government agree with this recommendation, and will maintain existing practice in the matter.

(q) Recommendation

The present arrangement, whereby special advisers to Cabinet Ministers are required to be positively vetted, should be retained, and, in addition, when special advisers may be appointed by other Ministers, they should be required to submit to a form of vetting commensurate with their access to classified information.

Government Response

The Government accept this recommendation.

(r) Recommendation

Consideration should be given to the feasibility of introducing a record check, akin to that used by the UKAEA, for specialist advisers to the Select Committee on Defence and Foreign Affairs and to certain other Select Committees where they would have access to CONFIDENTIAL information; unless they have been previously Positively Vetted, as may well be the case with some of them. But no specialist adviser should be given regular and constant access to TOP SECRET information or any access at all to information which by agreement with any of our allies is confined exclusively to persons with PV clearance.

Government Response

The Government agree with this recommendation and will explore the possibility of implementing it with the Parliamentary authorities.

(s) Recommendation

Responsibility for evaluating the various forms which the threat to information stored or processed electronically may take should be placed upon a senior Committee reporting directly to those responsible

for formulating policy on all aspects of security and for coordinating its application; and the closest possible liaison should be maintained with experts in this field including those in the United States of America.

Government Response

The Government accept this recommendation.

CONFIDENTIAL

DRAFT OF A LETTER FOR THE PRIME MINISTER  
TO SEND TO THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION ON  
2nd OR 3rd APRIL 1982

In my statement to the House on 26th March 1981 I announced, after consulting you, that I had asked the Security Commission to conduct a review of security procedures and practices in the public service and to consider what changes, if any, were required.

As you know, the Commission has now completed its inquiry and submitted its report. After careful consideration I have accepted the view of Lord Diplock and his colleagues that it would not be in the national interest to publish their report in its entirety, since substantial portions of it concern the most sensitive details of procedures in the security agencies.

I have also considered Lord Diplock's advice that any published version of the report would need to be edited to such an extent that it would present a misleading picture, and I have decided to follow the precedent of the statement on the findings of the conference of Privy Counsellors on security in March 1956, and to publish in the form of a White Paper as many of the Commission's recommendations as is consistent with the needs of national security, with as full as possible an account of the thinking of the Commission which lies behind them, together with the Government's comments on them. This procedure, and the terms of the White Paper, have been agreed with Lord Diplock and his colleagues.

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I will send you next week an advance copy of the White Paper, which we propose to publish on Wednesday 7th April, and of an oral statement which I propose to make in the House on 6th April.

I also propose to announce on 7th April the resignation of Lord Diplock as Chairman of the Security Commission and the consequential appointments of Lord Bridge as his successor and Lord Justice Griffiths, about which I consulted you on 28th February.

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