

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

MR. HATFIELD
CABINET OFFICE

Security Commission

You will remember that early in August Mr. du Cann wrote to Lord Bridge asserting that the Security Commission was one of the "associated public bodies" on which the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee is expected to keep an eye, and inviting Lord Bridge to submit a short paper about the Commission. Sir Robert Armstrong advised (his minute, reference A09269) that the Prime Minister should write to Mr. du Cann making it clear to him that she did not regard it as appropriate for him to enquire about the Security Commission, or as appropriate for Lord Bridge to respond to his request, but that she had asked Sir Robert to let him have a factual memorandum on the Commission.

The Prime Minister accepted this advice and wrote to Mr. du Cann as suggested.

I now enclose a note from Ian Gow, in which he explains that Mr. du Cann, and the Clerk of his Select Committee, both question the Prime Minister's contention that the Security Commission is not "an associated public body". Mr. Gow suggests that the Prime Minister should withdraw her letter to Mr. du Cann, and that Lord Bridge should be asked to reply instead, simply saying that he has asked Sir Robert to send Mr. du Cann a memorandum on the Commission.

The Prime Minister would welcome Sir Robert's advice on Ian Gow's suggestions. It would be helpful if this could reach her by 9 September.

W. F. S. RICKETT

1 September 1982

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Prime Minister

BOX

Security

I will put this to Sir Robert Armstrong for his advice.

Anderson ^{was} ^{3/18}

WILLIE RICKETT

Mr Edward du Cann - Treasury and Civil Service Committee

1. I have mentioned to you, already, that Edward du Cann came to see me this morning.
2. He has discussed with the Clerk to his Select Committee, the Prime Minister's letter to him dated 11th August, which Edward returned to me today.
3. Herewith copy Memorandum dated 17th August 1982 from the Clerk to Mr du Cann, together with copies of the four documents annexed to that Memorandum.
4. I remind you that this Select Committee includes Mr Michael Meacher, Dr Jeremy Bray and Mr Michael English.
5. The Security Commission may well not be an "associated public body". However, the point is clearly arguable, and both Mr du Cann and the Clerk are in disagreement with the view expressed by the Prime Minister (on Sir Robert Armstrong's advice) in her letter to Mr du Cann dated 11th August.
6. Subject to the views of the Prime Minister and ~~of~~ those of Sir Robert Armstrong, I think that it would be better, at this stage, to send rather a different letter to Mr du Cann, to the one which he had sent to Lord Bridge.

IN REPLY

Indeed, I think it best that Lord Bridge himself should reply to the letter from Mr du Cann, saying that he has asked Sir Robert Armstrong to send to Mr du Cann "a short factual Memorandum on the composition and terms of reference of the Commission".

/Continued

That would leave the Prime Minister out of the matter at this stage (keeping her in reserve for later on if necessary); would avoid the controversial issue as to whether the Security Commission is or is not an "associated public body" (though still reserving our right to argue the point later on if necessary); and could satisfy both the Chairman and the members of the Select Committee.

Ian Gow

31st August 1982

cc ~~Prime Minister~~

Robin Butler



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TREASURY AND CIVIL SERVICE COMMITTEE

Mr. du Cann

Prime Minister's Letter about the Security Commission

I don't think the Prime Minister has written this letter on the basis of very good advice.

You will see from the attached correspondence from 1980 and 1981 that the Civil Service ^{Department} appeared to accept when approached by the Committee that the Security Commission was an "associated public body". Certainly that was the basis of the Committee's original enquiry and no attempt was made to challenge it. Indeed, the second letter bringing the information up to date came from the Secretary of the Commission himself. Even more important, the Commission is listed on page 7 of the Government's own "Facts and Figures" paper of 1980 as a body sponsored by the C.S.D. (See page 7 of the enclosed document).

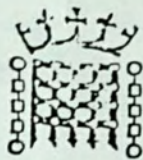
So we were on good ground in classifying the Commission as an associated public body of one of "our" Departments. Following the Government's own line, we had listed it on our own list circulated to the Committee in June 1980 (copy attached).

It may be that the Prime Minister is implicitly admitting all this, because you will notice that all she says is that the Commission is not an associated public body "of a kind which could come within the Committee's remit. If this is so, however, it was wrong of the C.S.D. and the Commission to accept enquiries from us in the past. The fact that they did will give Mr. English and others ammunition in support of their argument that our recent request was perfectly in order and should be answered by the Commission.

It just could be that the abolition of the C.S.D. brought with it a change in the Commission's status. But no public statement was made to that effect, nor were the Committee notified of any change. It therefore seemed entirely logical for you to write a letter to the Chairman of the Commission, Lord Bridge - in which, incidentally, you asked for no more than a paper setting out "the remit of the Commission, its staffing and the administrative arrangements used to enable it to carry out its work".

Having written all that, I cannot myself see any great objection to our accepting a paper from Sir Robert Armstrong. But I would expect the constitutional theorists among our Members to be slightly shocked by such advice.

I hope this will enable you to compose a suitable letter in reply to Mrs. Thatcher.



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TREASURY AND CIVIL SERVICE COMMITTEE

28th March 1980

Dear James,

The Treasury and Civil Service Committee was set up on 25th June 1979 to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Treasury, Civil Service Department, Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise and their "associated public bodies". The Security Commission and the Three Advisers are thus within the terms of reference of the Committee and I am writing to draw your attention to the Committee's interest in the Commission's and the Three Advisers' work.

The Committee would like to be put on the circulation list for any significant publications or announcements by the Commission or the Advisers. They have also asked for a brief (one side of a sheet of paper) description of how the Commission and the Three Advisers are organised and funded, and what their function is.

If I can be of any help by way of further explanation, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Crispin Poyser

C. J. Poyser
Assistant Clerk to the Committee

Mr. P. A. James,
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Room SG/90A,
Old Admiralty Building,
Whitehall,
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C J Poyser Esq
Assistant Clerk, Treasury and
Civil Service Committee
Committee Office
House of Commons
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Your reference

Our reference

Date

18 April 1980

Dear Poyser,

SECURITY COMMISSION AND THE THREE ADVISERS

Thank you for your letter of 28 March 1980.

As requested I attach brief notes on the work of the Security Commission and the Three Advisers both of which are purely advisory bodies.

You will gather from the terms of reference that neither the Security Commission or the Three Advisers is a standing body; they meet only when required and neither body has met for some years. The question of funding in the normal sense does not therefore apply but you may like to know that, where appropriate, fees and incidental expenses are paid for by this Department.

||| There is no circulation list for publications or announcements but I will, of course, keep you informed of any significant developments.

| I hope this information is of help; please contact me if there is anything else you wish to know.

Yours Sincerely
Paul Andrew James

P A James
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C J Poyser Esq
Assistant Clerk
Treasury and Civil Service
Committee
Committee Office
House of Commons
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Your reference

Our reference

Date

5 January 1981

Dear Poyser

SECURITY COMMISSION AND THE THREE ADVISERS

I promised, in my letter of 18 April last year, that I would keep you informed of any developments.

In case you had not noticed in the Christmas rush I am writing now to let you know that, following the resignation of Sir Derek Rayner, the Prime Minister has appointed Sir Alan Cottrell, Master of Jesus College, Cambridge, as a member of the Security Commission, with effect from 1 January. In fulfilment of my promise, too, I should also draw your attention to a Parliamentary Question by the Leader of the Opposition which was answered on 18 December by the Prime Minister (copy attached). Clearly, there is nothing I can add at this stage.

May I take this opportunity to wish you a happy New Year.

Yours Sincerely Paul Andrew James

P A James
Secretary, Security Commission

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TREASURY AND CIVIL SERVICE COMMITTEE

List of Associated Public Bodies

1. Bodies within the Chancellor's responsibility

Bank of England
National Debt Office/Public Works Loan Board
(these two bodies are in the process of being merged)
Royal Mint
Department for National Savings
Registry of Friendly Societies
Treasury Solicitor's Office
Exchequer Office, Scotland
Office of the Lord Lyon

2. H.M. Treasury advisory bodies

National Economic Development Office
Advisory Panel (s.482, Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1970)
Committee to Review the Functioning of the Financial Institutions*
Property Advisory Panel*
Review Board for Government Contracts
Royal Mint Advisory Committee
Advisory Panel on Treasure Trove in Scotland (see Exchequer Office)
Treasure Trove Reviewing Committee

3. H.M. Treasury executive body

Chequers Trust

4. Inland Revenue tribunals

Board of Referees*
The 488 General Commissioners of Income Tax
S. 463 (Income & Corporation Taxes Act 1970) tribunal

5. H.M. Customs & Excise tribunals

The VAT tribunals (convened ad hoc as required)

*These bodies are being wound up.

6. Bodies for which Civil Service Ministers are responsible

H.M.S.O.
Central Office of Information
Government Actuary's Department
Government Hospitality Fund

7. Civil Service Department advisory bodies

Advisory Committee on Business Appointments
Civil Service Appeal Board
Civil Service College Advisory Council
Civil Service Medical Appeal Board
Civil Service Medical Review Board
Civil Service Pay Research Unit Board
Government Hospitality Advisory Committee for the
purchase of wine

Review Body on Armed Forces Pay
Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration
Review Body on Top Salaries
Security Commission
The Three Advisers
Advisory Committee on Advertising (advises the C.O.I.)

8. Cabinet Office advisory bodies

(The Cabinet Office includes the Central Policy Review
Staff and the Central Statistical Office)

Advisory Council for Applied Research and Development
Women's National Commission

4th February 1980

C. J. Poyser
Assistant Clerk