

Ref. A082/0325

MR BUTLER

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Lance Corporal Aldridge

The facts of this case briefly are as follows.

2.

Inquiries

narrowed the range of suspects to a group which included Aldridge. The discovery in his wastepaper basket of a diary containing Soviet contact numbers was sufficient to enable his commanding officer to summon him. He admitted that he had been in touch with the Soviet Embassy with the intention of passing secret information, but claims not actually to have passed any such information.

3. He was arrested and detained under a charge under the Army Act. On 26th November it was decided to put the case in the hands of the civil authorities. The Director of Public Prosecutions is considering whether to recommend charges under the Official Secrets Act. On what is at present known, the charges would be under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1911, of committing acts preparatory to the commission of espionage acts governed by section 1.

4. It may be that, by the time the Prime Minister answers questions tomorrow afternoon, Aldridge will have been charged. In that event I will submit further advice: it should be possible for the Prime Minister then to say that Lance Corporal Aldridge has been charged with offences under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act, and the latter will be in effect sub-judice.

5. If Aldridge has not by then been charged, and the Prime Minister is questioned I suggest that she should follow the line in the attached note.

6. The press have leapt to the conclusion that because the Headquarters of 5 Brigade is at Aldershot, Lance Corporal Aldridge may have been leaking (or preparing to leak) information about Falklands operations. Aldridge did not approach the Soviet Embassy until well after the end of the Falklands campaign. So far as we know he passed no actual information. Investigations to what he might have been



intending to pass continue.

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ROBERT ARMSTRONG

29.12.82



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I confirm that a Lance Corporal has been charged under Section 69 of the Army Act with conduct or neglect of the breaches of good order and military discipline.

The matter has now been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions, who is considering whether to recommend ~~the~~ other charges and the institution of proceedings. The House will understand that I cannot say any more than this at the present time.

CONQUEROR

CONFIDENTIAL



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

Mr. Rockett wh

To see

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Thank you for your minute of 26 November (A082/0303) about the arrest of a Lance Corporal in the Intelligence Corps at Aldershot. The Prime Minister has seen and noted your minute.

In view of the prominence given to this story in the weekend's newspapers, and the further details which are emerging, I should be grateful if you could arrange briefing for the Prime Minister for her Questions tomorrow afternoon.

F.R.B.

29 November 1982

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AH