



20 HL
cc CO

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

23 December 1982

Dear Lord Bridge,

In the light of your advice and after consulting the Leader of the Opposition, I have decided, in accordance with the arrangements announced in 1969, formally to ask the Security Commission to investigate and report upon the cases of Rhona Jane Ritchie and Lance Corporal P.L. Aldridge. The terms of reference are:

"To investigate the circumstances in which breaches of security have, or may have, occurred arising out of the case of Rhona Jane Ritchie, who was convicted on 29 November 1982 of an offence under Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911; and to advise in the light of that investigation whether any change in security arrangements is necessary or desirable".

and "To investigate the circumstances in which breaches of security have or may have, occurred arising out of the case of Lance Corporal P.L. Aldridge who has been charged with an offence under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920; and to advise in the light of the investigation whether any change in security arrangements is necessary or desirable".

It will be for the Commission to decide whether the issues raised in these cases overlap with your current investigation into the case of Geoffrey Arthur Prime and whether to report on the three together or separately. However, until the pending criminal proceedings on the Aldridge case have been completed

/ it will

AW

it will not be possible to interrogate Aldridge himself or to make any public announcement about this reference.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Thatcher

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Bridge of Harwich

From: The Right Honourable the Lord Bridge of Harwich

Security

2



MT

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

5th January, 1983.

Dear Prime Minister

Thank you very much for your letter of 23rd December giving me the terms of your references to the Security Commission in the cases of Ritchie and Aldridge. I am grateful to you for leaving it to the Commission to decide whether to report on these cases and that of Prime separately or together.

I much appreciated having the opportunity to meet you at the Law Society's dinner before Christmas and to hear your views on the task of the Commission.

*Yours sincerely
Bridge of Harwich*

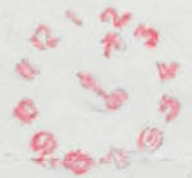
The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,
10 Downing Street,
LONDON, S.W.1.

5

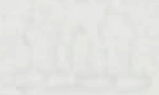
Security, Nov '82, Aldridge



177 JAN 1983



COMMUNICATIONS



LONDON



Security
2.6 AH

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

SECURITY COMMISSION : MISS RHONA RITCHIE
AND LANCE CORPORAL ALDRIDGE

Thank you for your minute of 21 December
(A082/0607).

The Prime Minister has signed letters to
Lord Bridge and Mr Foot in the terms
which you suggested, and I attach copies
of them.

F.R.B

23 December 1982

AIA

Ref. A082/0607

MR BUTLER

Prime Minister
Two letters attached for
Signature, please.

FERS

22.12.

Security Commission: Miss Rhona Ritchie and
Lance Corporal Aldridge

--- The Prime Minister wrote to the Leader of the Opposition on
15th December proposing that the Aldridge case should be referred
to the Security Commission and Mr Foot replied on 16th December
agreeing to the reference.

2. The way is now clear for the Prime Minister formally to
refer both the Ritchie case (as has already been announced to
Parliament) and the Aldridge case to the Commission. A draft letter
for the Prime Minister to send to Lord Bridge for this purpose
--- is attached.

--- 3. In his letter of 16th December Mr Foot also asked for an
explanation of why it is possible to refer the Aldridge case to
the Security Commission before criminal proceedings are completed
--- when it was not possible to do so in the Prime case. I attach
a self-explanatory draft of a letter which the Prime Minister might
send in reply.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

21st December 1982

DRAFT LETTER FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO SEND TO

The Rt Hon the Lord Bridge of Harwich
House of Lords
LONDON
SW1A OPW

SECURITY COMMISSION: MISS RHONA RITCHIE AND LANCE CORPORAL
ALDRIDGE

In the light of your advice and after consulting the Leader of the Opposition, I have decided, in accordance with the arrangements announced in 1969, formally to ask the Security Commission to investigate and report upon the cases of Rhona Jane Ritchie and Lance Corporal P L Aldridge. The terms of reference are:

"To investigate the circumstances in which breaches of security have, or may have, occurred arising out of the case of Rhona Jane Ritchie, who was convicted on 29th November 1982 of an offence under Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911; and to advise in the light of that investigation whether any change in security arrangements is necessary or desirable."

and

"To investigate the circumstances in which breaches of security have or may have, occurred arising out of the case of Lance Corporal P L Aldridge who has been charged with an offence under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920; and to advise in the light of the investigation whether any change in security arrange



ments is necessary or desirable."

It will be for the Commission to decide whether the issues raised in these cases overlap with your current investigation into the case of Geoffrey Arthur Prime and whether to report on the three together or separately. However, until the pending criminal proceedings on the Aldridge case have been completed it will not be possible to interrogate Aldridge himself or to make any public announcement about this reference.

CONQUEROR



DRAFT LETTER FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO SEND TO

The Rt Hon Michael Foot, MP

Thank you for your letter of 16th December about the Aldridge case.

On the point in your second paragraph, in both the Prime and the Aldridge cases the view was taken that the person charged with an offence should not be interrogated for the purpose of the Security Commission's investigation until criminal proceedings were complete. In Prime's case, the information available virtually all derived from Prime's confession to the police, and it would have made little sense for the Security Commission to start an investigation until there had been some interrogation of Prime. In Aldridge's case, enough information is available to enable a useful start to be made with the investigation without having to wait for further interrogation of Aldridge.

I am accordingly proceeding with the reference of the Aldridge case to the Security Commission; but, as I told you in my earlier letter, I shall not announce the reference until the criminal proceedings are complete.

Security

Question: To ask the Prime Minister whether she will make a statement on the case of Lance Corporal Aldridge.

Answer: On 18 January Lance Corporal Aldridge pleaded guilty to an offence under Section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920, and was sentenced to four years imprisonment. The details of the charge were that on various days between 18 August and 14 September 1982 in the United Kingdom he did certain acts preparatory to communicating to another person, for a purpose prejudicial to the safety or interests of the State, documents calculated to be useful to an enemy.

In accordance with the procedure outlined to the House by my predecessor on 10 May 1965, after consulting the Chairman of the Security Commission and the Rt Hon Gentleman, the Leader of the Opposition, I referred this case to the Security Commission on 23 December. The terms of reference were as follows:

"To investigate the circumstances in which breaches of security have or may have, occurred arising out of the case of Lance Corporal P L Aldridge who has been charged with an offence under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920; and to advise in the light of the investigation whether any change in security arrangements is necessary or desirable."

It will be for the Commission to decide whether to report separately on this case or together with their reports on the Prime and Ritchie cases which have already been referred to them.

Question: To ask the Prime Minister whether she will make a statement on the case of Lance Corporal Aldridge.

~~Lance Corporal Aldridge to~~

Answer: On 18 January Lance Corporal Aldridge pleaded guilty to an ~~charge~~ offence under Section 7 of the Official Secrets Act, 1920, and DRAFT ANSWER was sentenced to four years imprisonment. The details

VP In accordance with the procedure outlined to the House by my predecessor on 10 May 1965, after consulting the Chairman of the Security Commission and the Rt Hon Gentleman, the Leader of the Opposition, I referred this case to the Security Commission on 23 December. The terms of reference were as follows:

"To investigate the circumstances in which breaches of security have or may have, occurred arising out of the case of Lance Corporal P L Aldridge who has been charged with an offence under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920; and to advise in the light of the investigation whether any change in security arrangements is necessary or desirable."

It will be for the Commission to decide whether to report separately on this case or together with their reports on the Prime and Ritchie cases which have already been referred to them.



POSSIBLE SUPPLEMENTARY

Why was this case referred to the Security Commission before proceedings were complete when this was not done in the Prime case?

DRAFT ANSWER

In both cases it was decided that the person charged with an offence should not be interrogated for the purpose of a Security Commission investigation until criminal proceedings were complete. In the Prime case it would have made little sense to start a security investigation until Prime could be interrogated as virtually all the information available derived from his confession to the police. In the Aldridge case there was sufficient information available to begin the investigation without waiting for further interrogation of Aldridge.

Early today acting Lance Corporal Aldridge was charged with an offence under Section 7 of the Official Secrets Act ~~1926~~. / The details of the charge are ^{was} that on various days between 18 August and 14 September 1982 in the United Kingdom he did certain acts preparatory to communicating to another person, for a purpose prejudicial to the safety or interests of the State, documents calculating^{ed} ~~ing~~ to be useful to an enemy. //

As the matter is now sub judice I cannot comment further.