



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

20 February 1984

*Dear John*Special Operations: Mr Julian Amery MPFlag A

You told me that, following his letter of 31 January, Mr Amery will be calling on the Prime Minister on 21 February to discuss his ideas on the need for a Special Operations organisation. Mr Amery made reference to earlier correspondence - on which, I understand, the Ministry of Defence provided briefing.

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As indicated in his letter to the Prime Minister, Mr Amery discussed this subject with the Foreign Secretary on 15 December. Sir Geoffrey spoke on the lines of the attached Points to Make, which the Prime Minister might care to draw on. These, of course, are in fairly guarded terms, as there are obvious limits as to how far Ministers would wish to go in disclosing details about the Government's capabilities and intentions on this sensitive subject to Mr Amery, even on a Privy Councillor basis.

I shall be putting a copy of this letter to the Foreign Secretary overnight, and am sending a copy to Richard Mottram and to Richard Hatfield.

(B J P Fall)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

MEETING WITH MR AMERY: SPECIAL OPERATIONS

Points to Make

1. Most interested to hear about your earlier discussions with the former Secretaries of State for Defence and Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and more recently with Sir Geoffrey Howe. Special Operations is, of course, a highly sensitive area and, even on Privy Councillor terms, it is not possible to go into great detail.
2. Circumstances changed a good deal since SOE was operating during the War. Political risks of these operations far greater in peace-time. Investigative journalists always alert for signs of such activities.
3. But capability
needs to be used with great care. Otherwise consequences could be serious and outweigh results achieved.
4. Doubtful about idea of prepositioning Special Operations' capabilities overseas. Expensive and risky way to use scarce resources.
5. Not certain of need for separate SOE-type organisation today. Inclined to think that Special Operations best left to SIS and MOD.

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

8 February 1984

Special Operations Organisation

BT
Mr. Julian Amery will be calling on the Prime Minister on 14 February to discuss his ideas about a Special Operations Organisation.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary will have received a copy of Mr. Amery's letter of 31 January to the Prime Minister. I should be most grateful if you could let me have a short brief by close of play on 13 February.

A. J. COLES

Brian Fall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

SECRET

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M. BUTLER ✓
MR. COLES ✓
MR. TURNBULL
MR. FLESHER
MR. BARCLAY
MR. ALISON
MR. SHERBOURNE

I have arranged the following meeting with the Prime Minister:-

Subject .. *Special operations*
Defence foreign affairs ..
Date .. *14 February* ..
Time .. *16.45* ..
Venue .. *H/C* ..
Person/people invited .. *Julian Aronson MP.*
+ M.A. ..
Added Ministerial attendance ..

Briefing

a) I have commissioned briefing from ..

✓ b) Could you arrange briefing if necessary

Tessa is attaching letter.

Caroline Ryder