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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

27 March 1984

Dear Mr. Kinoshita,

In my statement to the House on 20 January 1983, I announced, after consulting your predecessor, that I had asked the Security Commission to investigate the circumstances in which breaches of security had, or might have, occurred arising out of the case of Lance Corporal P. L. Aldridge who had been charged, and later convicted, of an offence under Section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920, and to advise in the light of the investigation whether any changes in security arrangements were necessary or desirable.

The Commission have now completed their task and submitted their Report to me. I should like to proceed with its publication as soon as possible. I therefore propose to publish on 29 March, as a Command Paper, the full text, save for an Appendix containing highly classified information which it would not be in the public interest to publish. This has been agreed with Lord Bridge and his colleagues. I am enclosing with this letter, for the present on Privy Counsellor terms, the text of the proposed Command Paper.

/ I would

I would like to announce publication of the Report by way of a Written Answer to a Parliamentary Question. I hope that you would agree to follow the practice of your predecessors, and to put down on 28 March a Question for Written Answer on the following lines:-

"To ask the Prime Minister, whether the Security Commission has reported on the case of Lance Corporal Aldridge, and when the Commission's report will be published."

Yours sincerely
Raymond Sheller

The Rt. Hon. Neil Kinnock, M.P.

DRAFT LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO
THE RT HON NEIL KINNOCK MP, HOUSE OF COMMONS

In my statement to the House on 20 January 1983, I announced, after consulting your predecessor, that I had asked the Security Commission to investigate the circumstances in which breaches of security had, or might have, occurred arising out of the case of Lance Corporal P L Aldridge who had been charged, and later convicted, of an offence under Section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920, and to advise in the light of the investigation whether any changes in security arrangements was necessary or desirable.

The Commission have now completed their task and submitted their Report to me. I should like to proceed with its publication as soon as possible. I therefore propose to publish on 29 March, as a Command Paper, the full text, save for an Appendix containing highly classified information which it would not be in the public interest to publish. This has been agreed with

Lord Bridge and his colleagues. *I am enclosing with this letter, for the present on Privy Counsellor terms, the text of the Report proposed Command Paper.*

on 29th March I would like to announce publication of the Report by way of a Written Answer to a Parliamentary Question, ~~and I should be grateful if you could let me know, whether you are content for me to proceed in this manner.~~ If so, I hope that you would agree to follow the practice of your predecessors, and to put down on 28 March a Question for Written Answer on the following

lines -

"To ask the Prime Minister, whether the Security Commission has reported on the case of Lance Corporal Aldridge, and when the Commission's report will be published."



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

The Aldridge Report

Thank you for your minute of 26 March. The Prime Minister has written to Mr Kinnock in the attached terms. By agreement with your office, I arranged for the Prime Minister to enclose a proof copy of the Security Commission Report for Mr Kinnock's information.

FEB 27

27 March 1984

Ref. A084/948

MR BUTLER

The Aldridge Report

____ Thank you for your minute of 7 March.

- 2. I now submit for the Prime Minister's consideration the draft Written Answer, announcing publication of the Security Commission Report on the Aldridge case. I have cleared the draft Answer with colleagues. If the Prime Minister is content, the Parliamentary Question might be tabled on 28 March, for Answer on 29 March.
- 3. I also attach a draft letter for the Prime Minister to send to the Leader of the Opposition.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

26 March 1984

DRAFTRevised Prime Minister's Statement

To ask the Prime Minister, whether the Security Commission has yet reported on the case of Lance Corporal Aldridge, and when the Commission's report will be published.

DRAFT ANSWER

I announced on 20 January 1983 that, after consultation with the Rt Hon Gentleman the then Leader of the Opposition, I had asked the Security Commission to investigate and report on the circumstances in which breaches of security had, or might have, occurred, arising out of the case of Lance Corporal P L Aldridge, who had 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 was necessary or desirable.

2. The Security Commission's findings are being published this afternoon as a Command Paper which comprises the full text of the Commission's report, save for an Appendix containing highly classified information which it would not be in the public interest to publish.

3. Section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920 makes it an offence to do an act preparatory to the commission of an offence under the Official Secrets Act 1911. Aldridge's preparatory act was the setting up of arrangements to communicate with the Russians, and the

relevant offence he was preparing to commit was the communication, to the Russians, by means of those arrangements, of a classified document. As a result of their enquiries the Commission conclude that no classified information was in fact passed on. Aldridge's attempts to sell this country's secrets were frustrated and he was in due course identified and brought to justice by the co-operation of the Security Service and the Army.

4. An undoubted breach of security gave Aldridge the opportunity to remove a highly classified document and the Commission directed their attention to specific breaches of prescribed procedures or shortcomings in the procedures themselves which could be considered of some direct relevance as having facilitated Aldridge's removal of the document. They have made the following recommendations for improving security procedures:

- a. consideration should be given to the circumstances in which persons under 21 should be allowed access to TOP SECRET material and the degree of supervision to which they should be subject, with a view to issuing general guidance on the employment of holders of restricted Positive Vetting (PV) certificates;
- b. responsibility for supervision of the holder of a restricted PV certificate appointed to a PV post should always be allocated to a named person;

c. the rules governing the destruction of highly classified documents, in particular the need for two persons to witness the destruction, should now be reviewed;

d. local security instructions should be issued and written in clear and unambiguous terms.

5. They have also recommended that protective security in the DIS should be the subject of a full review by the Security Service which should aim at a comprehensive overhaul of the existing security arrangements.

6. All these recommendations have been accepted in principle by the Government, and once the precise method of implementation has been decided they will be put into effect as soon as possible. The general recommendations will apply equally to Government Departments, the security and intelligence agencies and the Armed Forces.

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THE RT HON NEIL KINNOCK MP, HOUSE OF COMMONS

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The Commission have now completed their task and submitted their Report to me. I should like to proceed with its publication as soon as possible. I therefore propose to publish on 29 March, as a Command Paper, the full text, save for an Appendix containing highly classified information which it would not be in the public interest to publish. This has been agreed with Lord Bridge and his colleagues.

I would like to announce publication of the Report by way of a Written Answer to a Parliamentary Question, and I should be grateful if you could let me know whether you are content for me to proceed in this manner. If so, I hope that you would agree to follow the practice of your predecessors, and to put down on 28 March a Question for Written Answer on the following

lines -

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

BF | Thank you for your minute of 6 March (A084/736) about the Security Commission's Report on the Aldridge case. I agree that we should recommend the Prime Minister to follow the same procedure as in the Prime case and will await the draft letter which you are kindly preparing.

A. E. R. BUTLER

7 March, 1984

CONFIDENTIAL

WJ

Ref.A084/736

MR BUTLER

In your minute of 16 February, you told me that the Prime Minister was content for the Security Commission's Report on Aldridge to be published in the form of a White Paper and you asked about the need for consultation with the Leader of the Opposition.

2. It is indeed normal practice for the Prime Minister to consult the Leader of the Opposition before publication and for him to put down the Parliamentary Question. In the case of Prime, the Prime Minister informed Mr Foot two days before publication that she proposed to publish the full text of the Commission's Report with the exception of four of the appendices which contained classified information which it would not be in the public interest to disclose. I think it will be sufficient for the Prime Minister to follow this procedure in the present case, and I will therefore supply a draft letter to Mr Kinnock with the draft Answer as soon as possible. I am at present clearing the draft statement with colleagues.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

P1. Type a reply to Sir R. Armstrong
Similarly classified:-

6 March 1984

Thank you for your minute of 6 March (A084/736) about the Security Commission's Report on the Aldridge case. I agree that we should recommend the Prime Minister to follow the same procedure as in the Prime case and ~~to~~ ^{with await} ~~am grateful~~

CONFIDENTIAL

the draft letter which you are kindly preparing.

F.R.B.