

1) Who is looking
and whether
we sanction?
no

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Prime Minister

18

Agree that Mr. Parkinson should
speak to Mr. Allason?
and that Sir Robert Armstrong
should put in hand a study of
possible legislation to deter this sort of
publication?
REB 24.6.

Ref. A083/1755

MR BUTLER

Wentley

You will remember that Mr Rupert Allason, under his pen name Nigel West, wrote two books on the Security Service, as a result of which he has become a "recognised expert" on the subject.

2. Mr West is now writing a book on the work of the Secret Intelligence Service. He has submitted the first part of the book, covering the period 1909-40, to the Secretary of the D Notice Committee.

3.

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

4. But I fear that this may not be sufficient to deter Mr West or his publishers. We have been advised that it would be fruitless to contemplate legal action under the law as it now stands. The question is whether there is any other kind of action open to us to discourage Mr West.

5. As the Prime Minister will know, Mr West has political ambitions to be a Conservative Member of Parliament, and was a candidate in the recent General Election. He presumably has not abandoned these ambitions. This leads me to wonder whether an approach made to him through political channels, asking him to abandon his plans to publish books on the SIS, might have some effect upon him. Such an approach could be made by the Prime Minister herself, as Leader of

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the Conservative Party; but perhaps that is flying too high, particularly given the risk that Mr West will defy the approach. If the Prime Minister preferred, I should be very happy to discuss with Mr Cecil Parkinson, as Chairman of the Conservative Party, whether an approach might be made by him.

6. This new book, together with the Bloch book, raises the question whether we ought to consider the possibility of fresh legislation to deter publications of this kind. I understand that the United States Government has recently passed legislation making it an offence to name individuals as being concerned with intelligence organisations. I should like to put in hand as a matter of urgency a study of this legislation, with a view to seeing whether we could and should introduce similar legislation in this country.

RTA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

20 June 1983

SECRET



file 19 K

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

The Prime Minister has seen your minute of 20 June (AO83/1755) about the book which Mr. Rupert Allason is writing on the work of the Secret Intelligence Service.

The Prime Minister has agreed that you should discuss with Mr. Cecil Parkinson whether an approach might be made by him to deter Mr. Allason from persevering with this book.

The Prime Minister also agreed that you should put in hand as a matter of urgency a study of the United States legislation which makes it an offence to name individuals as being concerned with intelligence organisations, with a view to seeing whether we could not introduce similar legislation in this country.

In addition, she has asked whether it can be discovered who is giving information to Mr. Allason and whether sanctions can be applied to prevent them from doing so.

FEB

22 June 1983

S E C R E T