

Prime Minister

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Ref. A084/2252

PRIME MINISTER

Mr Peter Wright's recent activities on television and elsewhere are self-evidently in flagrant breach of his obligations under the Official Secrets Act and a flagrant breach also of confidence. He cannot be charged or prosecuted so long as he is outside the jurisdiction. I therefore suggested to the Security Service that they should at least consider discontinuing his pension. We normally do this only when somebody has been convicted of an offence. That condition cannot be met in this instance; but Peter Wright has virtually convicted himself.

2. I am afraid, however, that we are advised that Mr Wright's pension could not lawfully be withheld in the absence of a conviction and that, if we sought to withhold it, the action could and would be challenged in the courts, and the prospect of a successful defence would not be good. Any court proceedings would, of course, produce a lot of unattractive publicity, (particularly if they were unsuccessful) and Mr Wright would present himself as a aged patriot striving to do his duty and protect his country and victimised for his pains. I reluctantly conclude that, unless Mr Wright ever comes within the jurisdiction, which no doubt he will be very careful not to do, there is no way he can be penalised in his absence.

RIA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

3 August 1984

SECRET AND PERSONAL



SMH
bcPC
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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

6 August 1984

Dear Richard,

The Prime Minister has seen Sir Robert Armstrong's minute A084/2252 of 3 August about Mr Peter Wright. She notes the advice that Mr Wright's pension cannot lawfully be withheld in the absence of a conviction; and that there is no way that Mr Wright can be penalised while he remains outside our jurisdiction.

Yours sincerely,
Charles Powell

C D Powell

Richard Hatfield, Esq.,
Cabinet Office

SECRET AND PERSONAL