



cc CO

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

3 August 1984

Confidential
Dear Mr. Kinosh

Thank you for your letter of 30 July about security matters.

I do not believe that names mentioned in recent press reports emanate from the present Security Services. The recent stories began with a television programme in which a former member of the Security Service, Mr. Peter Wright, revived allegations about Sir Roger Hollis, a former Director General of that Service; and Mr. Wright appears to be a source for a good deal of what has been written recently. I made a statement in the House on those matters on 26 March 1981, of which I enclose a copy. Nothing of what has recently been said on the television or reported in the press would cause me to depart from or modify that statement. None of it contains any new evidence, and there are a number of distortions and misinterpretations of fact.

I expect you will have seen that Mr. Wright has sent a dossier to Sir Anthony Kershaw, who has made it available to me for inspection. I am having it thoroughly examined, to see whether it contains any new evidence, and I shall be writing to Sir Anthony about it in due course, when that examination is completed.

It seems that Mr. Wright has changed his mind over the years. It is on record that thirteen years ago, when he was closer to these matters than he is now, Mr. Wright agreed with the Security Services' conclusions that the

Hollis case should not be pursued further and that no damage assessment was necessary, thereby implying that he agreed that the investigations had not found that Sir Roger Hollis had been a Russian spy.

Nothing that has appeared in the media in recent weeks calls for the institution of a further inquiry or further statement by me. I do not propose to comment upon the allegations about particular individuals, for the reasons given in my statement in 1981. I greatly deplore the publication of such allegations, often based on little or no evidence, about people who have died and are not able to defend themselves.

I do not see any connection between these unsubstantiated allegations and rumours and the system of accountability for the Security Services. The tradition in this country, accepted by successive governments of both Parties, is that the Security Services are accountable to Ministers, and that Parliament trusts Ministers to discharge that responsibility faithfully. The arrangements for that accountability are kept under review: in the debate on the Blunt case on 21 November 1979 I explained to the House in detail how we expected the principles governing the relationships between the Security Services and Ministers to be applied. The conventions governing the Secret Vote conform with this tradition, which seems to me appropriate and indeed necessary when we are dealing with operations and activities whose effectiveness depends on their being conducted in secrecy. It remains my view, as I have more than once told the House of Commons, that it would not be appropriate or in the national interest to bring the affairs of the Security Services under the sort of Parliamentary scrutiny that you mention.

Yours sincerely
Raymond Storer

The Rt. Hon. Neil Kinnock, MP.



JWR
ADH

CABINET OFFICE

Robin

An Advance copy of the draft
letter to Mr Kinnock

With the compliments of
The Private Secretary to the
Secretary of the Cabinet

Carl.

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS

Telephone 01-233 8319

DRAFT LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO

The Rt Hon Neil Kinnock MP

DGSS

I attach a copy of a letter that the Prime Minister has received from the leader of the Opposition and a draft reply in which Sir Robert Armstrong would welcome your comments. The Prime Minister would like to reply tomorrow, so I would welcome comments as soon as possible.

I am copying the papers to Sir Anthony Duff and to Howard Walker in Sir Brian Callaghan's office.



1/8.

Thank you for your letter of 30 July.

I think that you are overrating the impact of the recent flurry of media programmes and stories about security matters, and I certainly do not accept your assumption that information and names are emanating from the security services themselves.

This recent flurry began with a television programme in which a former member of the Security Service, Mr Peter Wright, revived allegations about Sir Roger Hollis, a former Director General of that Service; and Mr Wright appears to be a source for a good deal of what has been written subsequently. I made a statement in the House on those matters on 26 March 1981. Nothing of what has recently been said on the television or reported in the press would cause me to depart from or modify that statement. Mr Wright's statements and allegations have been thoroughly and carefully reviewed. Neither they nor subsequent press reports contain any new evidence, and there are a number of distortions and misinterpretations of fact.

It seems that Mr Wright has changed his mind over the years. It is on record that 13 years ago, when he was closer to these matters than he is now, Mr Wright agreed with the Security Service's conclusions that the Hollis case should not be pursued further and that no damage assessment was necessary, thereby implying that he agreed that the investigations had not found that Sir Roger Hollis had been a Russian spy.

I am satisfied that nothing that has appeared in the media in recent weeks calls for the institution of a further inquiry or for any further statement by me. I certainly do not propose to confirm or deny or otherwise comment upon the various allegations about particular individuals to which currency has been given, for the reasons given in my statement in 1981. I can only say that I greatly deplore the publication of allegations, often based on little or no firm evidence, about people who have died and are not able to defend themselves.

I am afraid that I cannot follow you in seeing a connection between the growth of unsubstantiated allegation and rumour, the damaging consequences of which I deplore as strongly as you do, and the system of accountability for the security services. The tradition in this country, which has been accepted by Governments of your party and mine alike, is that the Security Service is accountable to Ministers, and that Parliament accepts that the accountability must be to Ministers rather than to Parliament, and trusts Ministers to discharge that responsibility faithfully. The arrangements for ensuring that accountability are kept under review; in the debate on the Blunt case on 21 November 1979 I explained to the House in detail how we expected the principles governing the relationships between the Security Services and Ministers to be applied. The conventions governing the handling of the Secret Vote respect our tradition in these matters. That tradition of these conventions and the arrangements which embody them, seem to me to be appropriate and indeed necessary, where we are dealing with operations and activities whose effectiveness depends on their being conducted in secrecy. It remains my view, as I have more than once told the House of Commons, that it would not be appropriate or conducive to greater effectiveness to bring the affairs of the security services under the sort of Parliamentary scrutiny that you envisage.



10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER

The letter to Mr. Kinnock has been revised to take account of your amendment and also to include a reference to the dossier compiled by Mr. Wright which Sir Anthony Kershaw has handed over. References to this have appeared in the Press.

P.F.R.B.

2 August, 1984.

JCC VC

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

I enclose a copy of a letter which the Prime Minister has received from the Leader of the Opposition about the current spate of newspaper stories about the security service. I am sure that the Prime Minister will want to send an early reply, in particular dealing firmly with the suggestion of a Select Committee of Privy Counsellors to scrutinise the secret Vote. Could you please provide a draft.

I doubt whether the Prime Minister will wish to reply before her Questions and the debate tomorrow, but I expect that she will want to reply shortly after that.

FRB

30 July 1984



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Office of the Leader of
the Opposition

30 July 1984

Dear Prime Minister,

I am sure that you will agree that the current controversies resulting from various allegations of breaches - past and present - in Britain's security services must be demoralising to the general public and to the people involved in the security services themselves. In particular, the 'McCarthyite' manner in which some people have been 'named' as probable suspects leads to the assumption that information must still be emanating from the security organisations.

Although there have been a number of stories appearing in the newspapers about your apparent attitude to these events I am sure you will agree that some formal, public statement on your part is now necessary. While I naturally understand the need for the maintenance of maximum secrecy in these matters, it is now becoming clear that the House of Commons must have some way in which it is able to ensure that the Vote for the Security Services is brought under more thorough scrutiny. A select committee of Privy Councillors could be the way of dealing with this.

Parliamentary accountability is now almost non-existent and the result of this can be seen in the growth of unsubstantiated allegation and rumour, which can do the most serious damage to individuals who get caught up in what can only be described as 'vendettas' as well as undermine public confidence in our security organisations. I have to say that the situation has deteriorated so sharply in recent weeks that urgent action is now needed before further damage is done. I am not at this stage releasing this letter to the press since I believe that in the very nature of the matter you should have an opportunity to respond before public consideration is taken that stage further.

Margaret Thatcher
Margaret Thatcher

Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP