



RTA spoke
to Sir A Duff.

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c - Mr. Mallaby.

01-233 8319

~~From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service~~

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

Ref. A085/2456

26 September 1985

My dear Tony,

Victor Rothschild came to see me on 24 September.

It had come to his notice that Peter Wright was planning to publish an autobiography. For two reasons Lord Rothschild thought that Peter Wright might not name him: because (he said) he had taken Peter Wright's part in trying to remedy the "injustice" which Peter Wright felt he had suffered in relation to his pension, and partly because, when Anthony Blunt first came under suspicion in 1963, Victor Rothschild had co-operated very fully in Peter Wright's inquiries.

Nevertheless there remained the possibility that Peter Wright would mention Lord Rothschild and his connection with the Security Service. Victor recalled that he had had an understanding that, if at any time it was decided to disclose Blunt's record, somebody would see him shortly before and would advise him on the line to take. He felt that my predecessor had failed to honour that pledge, and had treated him badly in the matter. On this occasion he wanted there to be no misunderstanding. He would like to agree with me in advance, on a contingency basis, the text of something which we were both content could be said by way of a public statement, if he was mentioned in Peter Wright's book.

I told Victor Rothschild that we were in the process of legal proceedings to try to prevent publication of such a book, both in this country and in Australia; we could not be sure, of course, that these proceedings would be successful. I said that

/I should be

The Rt Hon Sir Antony Duff GCMG CVO DSO DSC

I should be prepared to consider with him in advance a text of something which he himself might use, if his name was mentioned in such a book. I was sure that we should not wish to put out any such statement ourselves, but we could be in a position to say that we could confirm, or had no reason to dissent from, a statement issued by Victor himself.

X | Victor left with me a text, of which I attach a copy. I said that I should want to consider it and be in touch with him again. At first sight, I thought that I might want to suggest two changes, though there might well be others after the text has been considered with greater care. The two changes I immediately had in mind were to amend the third and fourth paragraphs as follows:

"When Guy Burgess defected to the USSR and, later, Anthony Blunt confessed to being a Soviet agent, Lord Rothschild was among those who knew the two men and were extensively questioned by the Security Service to obtain all possible information about them. Lord Rothschild readily co-operated in this questioning.

Lord Rothschild has had no connection with the Security Service since he was questioned about Anthony Blunt."

Perhaps we could have a word about all this next time you are here.

Yours ever

Robert