

CONFIDENTIAL file

SEMBEM

BM



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

I have shown the Prime Minister your minute of 27 November (A085/3069) about the possibility of publishing a Parliamentary Question and Answer recording that information provided by recent Soviet defectors has "convincingly confirmed the conclusion that Sir Roger Hollis was not an agent of either of the Soviet Intelligence Services". The Prime Minister has also seen your minute A085/3068.

The Prime Minister does not think that there should be a Parliamentary Question and Answer on these lines. She believes that the Government cleared Sir Roger Hollis in Parliament in the Written Parliamentary Question and Answer in 1981. It would not be possible to go further without exposing the Government to the sort of difficult question outlined in paragraph 3 of your minute A085/3068 and paragraph 6 of A085/3069. You ought also to note that the Prime Minister is not entirely convinced that the new information has "amply confirmed" the conclusion that Sir Roger was not a Soviet agent. She does not believe that the information was quite as decisive as that.

27 November 1985

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We cleared him
w Parliament.

i. Do you agree the PQ at
Flag?

Ref. A085/3068

MR WICKS

We cannot go
further without
answers to other
as in para 3 &
6 of this
minute

ii. I include the last sentence.

iii. Do you wish to discuss first
with R.T.A.? N.L.W.

Below-

I attach a minute proposing that the Prime Minister should, in an arranged Answer to a Written Parliamentary Question, put clearly on record that information provided by recent defectors decisively confirms the conclusion that Sir Roger Hollis (Director General of the Security Service twenty years ago) was not, as Chapman Pincher and others have alleged, an agent of the Russian Intelligence Service.

2. It would indeed be very agreeable to get this information clearly and formally on record, for the reasons stated in my minute, and on balance I favour doing so.

3.

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OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

4. On balance, therefore, the view is that this risk, such as it is, is outweighed by the advantages of getting the information on the record. The risk could be further reduced, if the Prime Minister preferred, by omitting the last sentence of the draft Answer which indicates that the publicity given to the allegations about Sir Roger Hollis served the purposes of the KGB. The sentence is true, and it is worth saying; but it is not essential to say it.

5. I should of course be ready to come and discuss all this with the Prime Minister, if she would like me to do so.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

27 November 1985