

PRIME MINISTER

cc. Mr. Wicks
Mr. Powell
Mr. Ingham
Mr. Addison

The Politics of the Peter Wright case

I have not been involved in any discussions on this matter and therefore know only what I read in the newspapers. The Government is clearly constrained from saying anything about the case. It is still before the courts and it may still be similarly constrained afterwards for reasons of national security. The result of this is to leave the ground free for our opponents to attack the Government but with no Minister putting the Government's case. The following points, which are blindingly simple, are not therefore being made:

- (1) Peter Wright is a former member of the Secret Service who wishes to publish a book. If the Government did not try to stop him, there would be nothing to stop other people going into print once they leave the Service.
- (2) The reason we want to stop ex-Secret Service members writing books is to stop them giving information to our enemies. We are therefore acting in defence of national security.
- (3) Those, including those Labour members, who want Secret Service ex-employees to go public want to help the enemy rather than Britain.
- (4) The difference between Peter Wright and others such as Chapman Pincher and Nigel West is that the former had worked for the Secret Service and the latter had not.

The questions therefore are:

- (i) How can we get these points across?
- (ii) Who can talk to the press?
- (iii) Who can we gear up in Parliament?
- (iv) Who can we get on television or radio?

S.S.
STEPHEN SHERBOURNE

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