

Ref: A0659



CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister.

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14/11

MR. WHITMORE

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Sir Anthony Blunt

I saw Sir Anthony Blunt's legal adviser, Mr. Michael Rubinstein, and Lord Rothschild this morning and spoke to them as agreed.

2. Mr. Rubinstein was not greatly surprised, and said "speaking as a citizen" that he thought it was right to make the statement, as things had now turned out. He accepted that the annulment of the knighthood was inevitable. He did not seem to expect any dramatic reaction from Sir Anthony Blunt: indeed, he surmised that it might be something of a relief to Sir Anthony that it was now all coming out into the open.

3. Lord Rothschild showed rather more anxiety. He was surprised to hear that the Prime Minister was disclosing the offer of immunity from prosecution. I explained why it was thought necessary to tell the complete story, if anything was to be said at all - as in present circumstances it was inevitable.

4. Lord Rothschild said that he himself had had no contact with Sir Anthony Blunt "since this thing broke"; though Blunt had from time to time rung up Lady Rothschild for "solace", she had been very careful in what she said to him. Neither Lord Rothschild nor Lady Rothschild had had any approach from journalists in recent days. If they were approached following the Prime Minister's statement, they would both say that they knew nothing about Blunt's spying activities until they saw the Prime Minister's statement; they would say that both had known Blunt before and during the war; Lord Rothschild had known that Blunt had held Marxist views while at Cambridge, but neither of them had any reason to doubt his loyalty to his country.

RA

Robert Armstrong

14th November 1979