



ZFE/280

*Prime Minister is
aware of this article.
H. P. W.*

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

28 November 1979

Dear Michael,

You will wish to know that the extreme left wing French daily "Liberation" published a number of articles between 21 and 26 November about the Blunt affair and the "British Intelligence Services".

The articles were signed by Roger Faligot, the leading light of the Comité Irelande in Paris. "Liberation" is known to have links with the PIRA and with Agee and the Leveller group. It seems likely that the Russian Intelligence Service was also involved.

The articles seem to contain speculative information from sources as far apart as the Workers' Revolutionary Party and Private Eye. Among the allegations is one in an article of 24/25 November that Sir Maurice Oldfield, in briefing Philby before the latter's appointment to Washington, effectively tipped him off, albeit for reasons of inefficiency, personal advancement, or convenience to SIS, rather than because Oldfield was himself a KGB agent. Oldfield is portrayed as the outsider wanting revenge on the establishment. The article maintains that the Security Service has long been hostile to Oldfield and that this hostility came to a head over his recent appointment to Belfast. In an earlier article it had been alleged that the Security Service wanted the Belfast appointment to go to Sir Michael Hanley, a former Director-General of that Service.

The article concludes by saying that the Prime Minister, in her statement about Blunt, was preempting the CIA who had decided to publish his name in the USA. Mrs Thatcher was hoping to protect Oldfield, knowing she could count on the Opposition to help bury the affair. "Putting Oldfield on the spot would put into question the whole of the Intelligence community not to say the whole of the political class in Britain."

FCO News Department will of course refuse to be drawn if asked about the "Liberation" articles. There have been no questions so far.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Home Secretary and Sir Robert Armstrong.

G G H Walden

(G G H Walden)

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