

Prime Minister .2A

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Duty Clerk.
11.1.80.

Ref. A01129

MR. WHITMORE

I attach notes, in question and answer form, about the various "spy" cases that might be raised with the Prime Minister in supplementary questions when the House resumes.

2. The three names most publicised are those of John CAIRNCROSS, Tomas HARRIS and Guy LIDDELL. Notes on these are attached.

3. John Cairncross was tracked down in Italy by Barry Penrose, who has been commissioned by the Sunday Times to do an investigative job on the whole surroundings of the Blunt affair. Penrose was enabled by a lead from Sir John Colville to identify Cairncross as someone who had given information to Guy Burgess. When interviewed by Penrose, Cairncross admitted to having been a Communist before the war and having given Burgess certain information at that time, and to having been asked to resign from the public service in the aftermath of Burgess's defection. As the Security Service note makes clear, there was a good deal more to his activities than that. He later admitted spying for the Russians from 1936 to 1951. For part of his career, during the war, he was at Bletchley Park in the GC and CS, and subsequently in the SIS. But his admissions were made abroad, and he refused to return to this country and repeat his statement under caution to a police officer. I am told that it would not be possible to get him extradited, and it is thought to be doubtful whether he could be prosecuted if he came back to this country. As the Security Service says, the case was considered by Ministers, including the then Prime Minister (Sir Alec Douglas-Home) in February and March 1964. It has been covered in successive reports to Ministers on Professor Blunt on every occasion since 1972.

4. The case of Cairncross differs from that of Blunt, in that the admissions obtained from Cairncross were not made in return for a promise of no prosecution. He remains liable to prosecution, should he return to this country. It is, as I say, doubtful whether he could be prosecuted, but he does not know that, and it is not desirable that he should. The Prime Minister cannot deny that he was

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required to resign in 1952, nor that he was not prosecuted; but she should in my judgment say no more about the case than is necessary to account for those facts, and should refuse to be drawn on developments in the case since he was required to resign.

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6. Tomas Harris was a painter, a friend of Blunt^{and of Philby}, who had a distinguished career in SOE^{and in MI5} during the war. There is no evidence whatever that he was a Soviet spy, and no reason to suspect his loyalty to his country. He was killed in a road accident in February 1964, and it has been suggested in the Press that it was his death that released Blunt from the obligations to friends which, he claims, had hitherto prevented him from confessing. Blunt has stated categorically, and as we know truthfully, that Tomas Harris' death had nothing to do with his confession. The Prime Minister will remember that Mr. Ewen Montagu wrote to the Attorney General and to me, and Sir Brandon Rhys-Williams MP wrote to her, about this matter, because of the distress caused to Tomas Harris's sisters by the allegations.

7. Guy Liddell was a Deputy Director of the Security Service at the time of the defection of Burgess and Maclean. He was a personal friend of Blunt, but there is no evidence that he was a Soviet agent, and no reason whatever to suspect his loyalty. He is now dead, but the allegations that he was a spy has much angered and distressed former friends and colleagues.

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8. The Prime Minister is sufficiently familiar with the case of Miss Pamela Lamble. She may be asked why she was treated differently from Blunt - "one law for the Establishment, another for the rest". The salient differences are that there was no evidence which could be used to substantiate charges against Blunt (whereas there was such evidence in the case of Lamble), and it was desirable to secure Blunt's co-operation in providing information to assist the pursuit of other inquiries (whereas the Lamble case stood on its own). Answers to these and other questions that may be put to the Prime Minister on the Lamble case are included in the Q. and A. notes attached.



Robert Armstrong

11th January 1980

Q. Has the Prime Minister seen the accounts in the Press of a number of people believed to have been associated with the espionage activities of Burgess, Maclean, Philby and Blunt? Will she now take action to set up a full public inquiry to allay public disquiet about these matters? Will she make a further statement?

A. I have seen references to one case where a man was required to resign from the public service because he had given material he should not have given to Guy Burgess, but was not prosecuted. I have also seen, and much deplore, references to a number of people who served their country well and loyally and are no longer alive to defend themselves against the unsubstantiated allegations and innuendos being published about them. I have seen nothing to cause me to change my view that there is no need or justification for a public inquiry.

Q. Will the Prime Minister make a statement about the espionage activities of John Cairncross.

A. Mr. John Cairncross entered the public service in 1936 ^{from Cambridge,} ~~After the~~ ^{where he joined the Communist Party in 1935.} After the defection of Guy Burgess it was discovered that Mr. Cairncross had passed certain material to him in 1939. Mr. Cairncross was interviewed. He admitted responsibility for the material in question, but made no other admissions. The material was not prejudicial to national security, but it was material which Mr. Cairncross had no business to pass to Burgess. The Director of Public Prosecutions decided that no prosecution was justified, but it was considered that Mr. Cairncross's conduct was not consistent with continued membership of the public service, and in April 1952 he was required to resign. He has since lived and worked abroad.

Q. Why has no attempt been made to seek the extradition of Mr. Cairncross to stand trial in this country?

A. Whether his extradition could be sought would depend on whether he could be charged with an offence which was extraditable under the law of the country in which he was living. This has so far not been the case.

Q. Was Mr. Cairncross granted immunity from prosecution?

Has Mr. Cairncross been interviewed since 1952?

A. I do not think I can add to what I have said. Though Mr. Cairncross was not prosecuted in 1952, ^{his admissions were not made in return for a promise of} ~~he has never been granted~~ immunity from prosecution. I have therefore to be very careful what I say.

Q. Will the Prime Minister make a statement on the allegations that Tomas Harris/Guy Liddell etc. was a Russian spy?

A. I have already made it clear to the House that I am not prepared to comment on unsubstantiated allegations of this kind about individuals. If any hon. Member or any one else has any evidence to support such allegations, then it is his duty to make it available to the authorities for investigation. I deplore the way in which some newspapers have, apparently without regard to the distress that they may be causing to surviving relatives, published unsupported allegations and innuendoes about people who served their country well and loyally and are no longer alive to defend themselves.

Q. Why was LAMBLE treated differently from Blunt?

Q. Please explain the difference in the treatment of Blunt and Lamble.

A. The two cases involved quite different kinds of considerations. Blunt, suspected of espionage on behalf of the Russian Intelligence Service, had been interrogated on numerous occasions and had consistently refused to make any admissions. As I explained in my speech in the House on 21st November, it was desirable to secure his co-operation in the provision of information which could assist the pursuit of other inquiries by the security authorities. It was in these circumstances that the Attorney General of the day authorised the grant of an immunity from prosecution. No such considerations applied to Lamble. In her case it was possible to adopt the normal course. She was interrogated by the police, her home was searched under warrant, and she made a statement to them. This police operation produced evidence which was thought to justify charges under the Official Secrets Acts.

Q. Why was Lamble kept in custody for four weeks?

A. The police investigations established a prima facie case against her. However, her statements indicated that she might not have intended to act in a manner prejudicial to the safety or interests of the State. This necessitated further enquiries. When these had been completed the Attorney General decided that it was not a case in which he should consent to prosecution.

Q. Is there any truth in reports that the prosecution was unable to proceed because of the sensitivity of the information involved?

A. It is for the Attorney General to decide whether or not a prosecution should proceed in such cases. He does not, and is not required to, give reasons for his decisions. It is certainly not for me to do so.

Q. What steps have been taken to investigate and remedy Miss Lamble's allegations about deficiencies in the security of the Security Services?

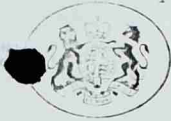
A. I do not propose to comment on the allegations attributed to Miss Lamble on these matters, but I can assure the House that the security of the agencies is kept under constant and vigilant review. For obvious reasons I could not disclose what steps are taken at any particular time.

Q. Is it true that Miss Lamble was arrested because she had complained about working conditions in her employment?

A. No, that is nonsense. She was arrested because there was reason to believe that she had committed offences under the Official Secrets Acts.

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John CAIRNCROSS

CAIRNCROSS was born 27 July 1913 in Lesmahagow, Lanarkshire, Scotland. He was educated at Hamilton Academy, Glasgow University, The Sorbonne and, from 1934 to 1936 at Trinity, Cambridge. He was a brilliant student and passed top into the Civil Service in 1936 being accepted for the Foreign Office. He did not make a success of his time in the Foreign Office as he was deemed 'unsuitable for representation' and, despite his academic record, he was unable to cope with the administrative work demanded of him. In 1938 he was transferred to the Treasury and while there acted as Private Secretary to Lord Hankey.

2. In 1942 CAIRNCROSS enlisted and was posted to GC and CS at Bletchley where he remained until he joined Section V of SIS in June 1943. In SIS he worked on Analysis, Collation and circulation of intelligence reports, particularly those dealing with Germany. Later he transferred to Section I of SIS dealing with political intelligence.

3. In 1945 he returned to the Treasury and worked in the Defence Material Division. In 1948 he submitted his resignation, as he wanted to take up a position with a business firm, but this fell through and he withdrew his resignation. In 1950 he was appointed UK representative on Western Union and NATO Finance and Economic Division and in August 1950 was transferred to the Exchange Control Division of the Treasury. In 1951 he went for a short time to the Ministry of Supply, but returned to the Treasury later that year.

4. In June 1951 his address and telephone number were found in the office diary of Donald MACLEAN and he was interviewed about this in August of that year. He volunteered information about a casual acquaintanceship with Guy BURGESS but made no other admissions of significance.

5. A document was found amongst BURGESS's possessions soon after his defection in 1951 recording conversations with Government officials in the aftermath of the German invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1939. Enquiries

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established that the author was CAIRNCROSS and he was interviewed by the Security Service on 31 March 1952 and made a written statement on 2 April. He admitted authorship of the document and claimed that it had been prepared after a discussion with BURGESS in 1939 about Chamberlain's intentions. He had lent it to BURGESS who had promised to return it but had subsequently said that he had accidentally destroyed it. He made no other admissions.

6. The Director of Public Prosecutions, who had been consulted before the interview, was informed of CAIRNCROSS' statement and decided that no prosecution was justified. CAIRNCROSS was suspended from duty on 31 March and resigned in April 1952. He thereafter lived and worked abroad.

7. In 1962 information was obtained from a Russian defector about a British spy network known as the Ring of Five, of which BURGESS, MACLEAN and PHILBY were believed to be members. The Security Service suspected that CAIRNCROSS might also have been a member.

8. In February 1964 CAIRNCROSS obtained a post with a university in the United States. The appropriate United States intelligence authorities were informed of the full facts of his security record and did not object to the grant of a visa.

a senior Security Service

officer should interview CAIRNCROSS on his arrival in the United States.

9. This interview took place on 16 February 1964

It was agreed that the officer could offer to intercede with the United States authorities if CAIRNCROSS was frank but it was stipulated that he should make no promises to him that he would be allowed to stay in the United States. CAIRNCROSS then made a statement admitting spying for the Russians from 1936 to 1951.

10. On 19 February 1964 the Secretary of the Cabinet informed the Prime Minister of these developments. At a meeting held by the Prime Minister on 21 February 1964 the Attorney General advised that none of the information provided by CAIRNCROSS was admissible in evidence (presumably upon the ground that it might be tainted by inducement) and said that he could only

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consider a prosecution if CAIRNCROSS made a statement under caution to a police officer. He also expressed some doubts about whether it would be right to prosecute for things which had occurred at least twelve years previously. In an interview in the United States on 1 March with a Security Service officer, CAIRNCROSS formally declined to return to this country (and under US law he could not be compelled to return) or to make such a statement. After a further submission about the case, the Prime Minister ruled on 9 March 1964 that there was no sufficient reason to justify taking further action.

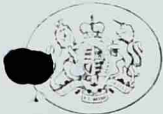
11. CAIRNCROSS' confession in 1964 is not now believed to have been entirely frank and subsequent interviews have not completely clarified the position. He claimed to have been recruited in October 1936 (after he had joined the Foreign Office) by James KLUGMAN who he had known at Cambridge and he has admitted that he worked to some five Russian controllers. He has been interviewed by the Security Service on twenty-three separate occasions but has said that he is a man who only speaks the truth when he feels the consequences of doing so are better than continuing to lie. Even then the record shows that he has only told as much of the truth as seemed necessary in the circumstances.

12. After 1964 he was seen by the Security Service on a number of occasions up to 1974 in order to try to establish how he was recruited and what he had passed to the Russians when he was active as a spy. Although he gave some information about how he was rewarded by the Russians it was never established precisely how he was recruited, how he was controlled and what information he passed to them. It was decided in 1974 not to interview him further unless new intelligence became available that might make it possible to prize further admissions from him.

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10 January 1980

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Press Exposure of CAIRNCROSS

1. The public exposure of CAIRNCROSS as a spy stems from a report in the Sunday Times of 18 November 1979 based on information supplied by Sir John Colville. Colville did not name CAIRNCROSS but gave a clue to his identity. He said that character sketches of senior civil servants had been found amongst BURGESS' possessions after his defection. One of these had been written by a man who had lunched with Colville in March 1939. In 1952 Colville had helped security officials identify the handwriting as that of a FO official - "one of the best brains in the FO". According to Colville, the man who was subsequently given the sack was working for the Communist Party in 1938/1939.
2. A report in the Sunday People of the same date claimed that the man had worked in British intelligence. Other papers carried similar stories over the next few days, still not mentioning CAIRNCROSS by name.
3. The 23 December 1979 issue of the Sunday Times carried a report by David LEITCH and Barry PENROSE headed "I was spy for Soviets". In this article CAIRNCROSS made a seemingly frank confession that in the 1930s he had belonged to the Cambridge University communist cell and that later he had given BURGESS information on Britain's diplomatic strategy and political options. He claimed that he had stopped giving information to BURGESS after the outbreak of the Second World War.
4. The same day (23 December 1979) the Observer quoted Andrew BOYLE as saying that CAIRNCROSS was one of six diplomats who were investigated by MI5 during the enquiry following the BURGESS/MACLEAN defections. CAIRNCROSS, a minor conspirator, had not been prosecuted as his trial would have smacked of a witch-hunt.
5. Other newspapers carried similar stories. The Scotsman of 24 December 1979 quoted Dennis Canavan (Lab MP W Stirlingshire) as saying the case was "another cover-up" about which he would question the PM. The Daily Telegraph of 27 December 1979 reported that Canavan and Bob Cryer (Lab MP Keighly) would raise the case by PQ. The MPs said

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that de facto immunity had been given; an enquiry was needed into the security services generally and that in the case of prosecutions there was one rule for the Establishment, another for the general run of cases. The Sunday Times of 30 December 1979 carried another article by LEITCH and PENROSE forecasting a parliamentary "double standards" attack by the Opposition in relation to OSA prosecutions, that there would be a call for an enquiry and demands to know whether CAIRNCROSS would be extradited and prosecuted.

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Guy Maynard LIDDELL

LIDDELL was born on 8 November 1892 and educated at St George's Windsor and Repton. He then spent a year at the University of Angers in France and a further year in Germany studying the cello before going to a crammer to prepare for the Civil Service examination. The War then intervened and he joined the Royal Artillery in 1914 serving in France and winning the M.C. On being demobilised in 1919 he joined the Counter Espionage/Counter Subversion department at New Scotland Yard where he remained until that department was absorbed into the Security Service in 1931. He retired from the Service in 1953 at the age of 61 having become DDG in 1946. He then joined the Atomic Energy Department and served as Chief Security Officer at Harwell until his death in December 1958. He was married in 1926 and had four children, but divorced his wife in 1942. He was awarded the CBE in 1944 and the CB in 1953.

2. In 1978/79 there were two published suggestions that LIDDELL might not have been wholly trustworthy. In April 1978 Encounter published an article by Robert Cecil who spoke about LIDDELL's friendship with BURGESS and claimed that a few days after BURGESS's disappearance LIDDELL was demoted to Chief Security Officer at Harwell. Two extracts from Richard DEACON's book "The British Connection", which was subsequently withdrawn because of its many inaccuracies, were published in The Guardian

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on 29 and 30 May 1979, and in the second of these there was a reference to LIDDELL's friendship with BURGESS and PHILBY and his consequent early removal from MI5. More recent reports in the Press - in particular an article in the Daily Mirror of 30 December 1979 -, based on a yet unpublished book called "Master of Deception" by David Mure have alleged that LIDDELL was a spy. The basis of these allegations seems to be that LIDDELL was a friend of BLUNT, BURGESS and PHILBY, that he deliberately misrouted intelligence about the Japanese intention to attack Pearl Harbour in 1941, and that LIDDELL was prematurely retired in 1953 because the Americans refused to continue to work with him.

3. It is true that LIDDELL was friendly with BLUNT, BURGESS and PHILBY even though they were much younger than he. He was a particularly close friend of BLUNT with whom he shared artistic interests, and he had a close working relationship with PHILBY during the War. There is no evidence of a close friendship with BURGESS but he certainly knew him well. One or two acquaintances of LIDDELL have suggested, without any evidence, that he might have been a homosexual, but a number of friends, including BLUNT, have denied this.

4. There is no evidence whatsoever that LIDDELL deliberately misrouted intelligence about Pearl Harbour, and the allegation that LIDDELL was prematurely retired in 1953 because the Americans refused to work with him is false. He was, in fact,

asked to extend his service by one year in 1952 when he reached the retirement age of 60. Furthermore, on leaving the Security Service in 1953, he went on to serve for five years as Chief Security Officer at Harwell. LIDDELL had many friends at management level in the American intelligence and security organisations, and there is no evidence of any American representations for his early retirement.

5. In view of his position as DDG of the Security Service LIDDELL was undoubtedly unwise in continuing to associate with BLUNT and PHILBY after the defection of BURGESS and MACLEAN when he knew them to be under suspicion and when he himself had serious doubts about PHILBY in particular. There are, however, no reasons to doubt LIDDELL's loyalty. The number of independent reports from past members of the Security Service that, both during and after the War, LIDDELL was almost obsessively concerned about Russian Intelligence Service penetration of our Intelligence and Security Services does not suggest that he was engaged in espionage himself. The Security Service has never received any information that would warrant his investigation as an espionage suspect. A number of former close colleagues including Sir Dick White have recently testified in public to their faith in his integrity.

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SECURITY SERVICE

10 January 1980

Thomas HARRIS

HARRIS was born in 1908 of a British father and a Spanish mother. He was educated at University College School and University College, London. He spent the year 1925 - 1926 at the British Academy in Rome. He was a talented artist and musician and became a successful art-dealer running an art gallery in Conduit Street. He died in a car crash in 1964 in Majorca where he was then living.

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3. HARRIS is said to have met BLUNT through their common artistic interests in about 1932 and BURGESS, probably through BLUNT, in 1935. He may have met PHILBY through BURGESS at the time of the Spanish Civil War in 1936.

4. Richard DEACON, in his book "The British Connection" accused HARRIS of having been recruited by the Russians when in Rome in 1926 (when he was aged 18), but as DEACON has mis-identified the agent GARBO, and his book has had to be withdrawn

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because of its many other inaccuracies, there is little ground for confidence in anything he has said about HARRIS. Since the recent publicity about the BLUNT case following the publication of Andrew BOYLE's "Climate of Treason" there has been some Press speculation that HARRIS also might have been a spy.

5. There is nothing in our records to support DEACON's theory of a recruitment in Rome. HARRIS was interviewed twice in 1951 to find out what he knew, if anything, about the defection of BURGESS and MACLEAN. He proved entirely co-operative, and no evidence was discovered then or thereafter to connect him with espionage. BLUNT has always maintained that HARRIS never worked for the Russians.

6. HARRIS was devoted to PHILBY, lending him money which was never repaid, paying for the education of one of PHILBY's children and standing by him throughout the wilderness years of 1951 - 1963. After PHILBY's disappearance from Beirut he is reported to have said he would never speak to PHILBY again if PHILBY had been deceiving him. HARRIS died before PHILBY re-appeared in Moscow.

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