



SECRET

PRIME MINISTER

*Prime Minister -*

*Yes: Ann! Announcing more with that my at liberty, if he agrees? the House to say that are 6: my predecessor?*

A little over two years ago there was a proposal for the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party to set up a Study Group "to examine the policy issues related to the Security Services". The National Executive Committee was informed, on your predecessor's authority, that the Study Group could not look for any help or information from official sources beyond what had already been published.

2. No more was heard about the Study Group at that time, perhaps because those concerned (who included Mr. Benn) were caught up in more urgent political business. Evidently, however, the proposal did not die. It has been revived, and the Director General of the Security Service, 'C', the Director General of Intelligence (Ministry of Defence), and the Intelligence Co-ordinator have all received letters within the last week inviting them to talk to the Study Group.

3. The response to these invitations can, I think, only be negative; and since the names of three of the recipients are not officially disclosed, and the existence of two of them not admitted, it would seem sensible for a general reply to be sent. I therefore propose to write in the terms of the attached draft.

4. Since, under the new management, the Opposition may seek to make political points out of this, I should be grateful for your approval of this course of action; and I should like to write in terms which make it clear that the reply is written on your authority.

*REA*

Robert Armstrong

6th February 1981



DRAFT LETTER FROM SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG TO  
MR. R. HAYWARD

At the end of last month you wrote to certain senior officials inviting them to talk to the Study Group set up by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party to examine the policy issues related to the Security Services.

The Prime Minister has authorised me to let you know that, while she will be ready to arrange for you (if you so wish) to be provided with references to sources of published official material relating to the Security Services, it will not be possible for officials to respond to invitations that they should come and talk to the Study Group.

I should be grateful if you would regard this letter as being in effect the reply to the letters of invitation which you have sent.

conqueror

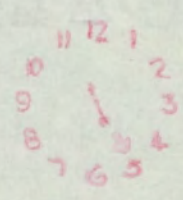


SECRET  
M. I. I. I.

... and I think you wish to continue  
... to the Study Group ...  
... of the Labour Party to examine  
... the policy issues related to the Security Services.  
... The Prime Minister has not asked me to let you know  
... that while she will be ready to answer for you (if you wish)  
... to be provided with references to sources of published information  
... material relating to the Security Services, it will not be  
... possible for officers to respond to inquiries that they should  
... come and talk to the Study Group.  
... I should be grateful if you would return this letter as  
... being in effect the reply to the letter of invitation which you

have sent.

-6 FEB 1981



Ref: A04228



SECRET

*Sec 3*  
*Prime Minister*  
*To note x/ [initials]*

*(on advice you asked  
for advice).*

*KMI*

*10ii*

MR. WHITMORE

Thank you for your minute of 9th February.

2. I enclose a copy of the letter which I have now sent to Mr. Hayward.

X

3. I can see no objection to the Prime Minister saying in the House of Commons, if she is asked, that she understands that under the previous Administration the National Executive Committee was informed, on Mr. Callaghan's authority, that the Study Group could not look for any help or information from official sources beyond what has already been published.

*RA*

(Robert Armstrong)

10th February 1981

SECRET



SECRET



(Name: Minister)

To: Mr. X

(In: ...)

(By: ...)

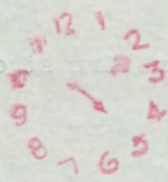
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SECRET

Faint, mostly illegible typed text, possibly containing a list or report.

10 FEB 1981



SECRET

SECRET



CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 8319

*From the Secretary of the Cabinet: Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO*

Ref: A04233

10th February 1981

At the end of last month you wrote to certain senior officials inviting them to talk to the Study Group set up by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party to examine the policy issues related to the Security Services.

The Prime Minister has authorised me to let you know that, while she will be ready to arrange for you (if you so wish) to be provided with references to sources of published official material relating to the Security Services, it will not be possible for officials to respond to invitations that they should come and talk to the Study Group.

I should be grateful if you would regard this letter as being in effect the reply to the letters of invitation which you have sent.

Ron Hayward, Esq., CBE

SECRET



file

BK

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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

The Prime Minister has seen your minute A04210 of 6 February 1981 about the invitation which the Study Group set up by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party to examine the policy issues related to the Security Services has sent to a number of leading figures in the Intelligence world asking them to talk to the Group.

She is content for you to reply to Mr. Ron Hayward in the terms of the draft attached to your minute.

The Prime Minister has asked whether she is at liberty, if questioned in the House, to say that her decision in respect of the Study Group's approach to officials is the same as her predecessor's. I should have thought that it was open to the Prime Minister to say this since, for all practical purposes, Mr. Callaghan's decision, once conveyed to the NEC, was in the public domain, but I should be grateful for your advice.

C. A. WHITMORE

9 February 1981

SECRET

RE