

Prime Minister

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Ref. A08839

MR WHITMORE

On 26 June 1980 I sent you a minute (A02452) about the possibility that a self-confessed Soviet spy, Professor Hugh Hambleton, who lives and works in Canada, was to visit Britain. Professor Hambleton has dual Canadian and British nationality; he was employed by NATO in Paris from 1956 to 1961 and was resident in the United Kingdom from 1961 to 1964. His confession that he had spied for the Russian Intelligence Service for about 30 years was made to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in late 1979. Since he had not passed any Canadian classified information to the Russians, the Canadian Justice Department did not charge him, since they did not have sufficient evidence to obtain a conviction. He has, therefore, remained at liberty.

2. His visit to the United Kingdom in 1980 did not attract any Press or Parliamentary interest. It was, however, learned some days ago that Professor Hambleton had decided to visit Britain again this summer between 24 June and 1 July and again between 20 August and 31 August. The Canadian Security Service mentioned to Professor Hambleton, without any authority from our own Security Service, that we might wish to interview him during this visit. Professor Hambleton responded to this by suggesting that he should be contacted in London on 24 June.

3. The Attorney General and the Director of Public Prosecutions were consulted about this. The Attorney General decided that Professor Hambleton should be interviewed by the police on his arrival in this country or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. The interview, conducted by the Metropolitan Police Special Branch, started on 25 June and continued until the evening of 27 June. Under caution, Professor Hambleton gave an account of his work for the KGB from 1947 until 1979 in great detail. He admitted, inter alia, passing a great deal of classified NATO information to the KGB in the period 1956 to 1961. He maintained that he had not been tasked by the KGB against British interests whilst resident in the United Kingdom from 1961 to 1964, but he admitted that he had remained in contact with the KGB throughout that period, including receiving payments from them, by means of meetings on the Continent.



4. Following these disclosures and consultation with the Director of Public Prosecutions, Professor Hambleton was charged under Section I of the Official Secrets Act. This charge did not refer to NATO and was in the nature of a holding charge. Professor Hambleton appeared before Horseferry Road Magistrates yesterday morning and was remanded in custody until 6 July. The Canadian authorities have been informed of Professor Hambleton's arrest.

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REA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

29 June 1982

CONFIDENTIAL



See AH  
Security.

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

The Prime Minister has seen and noted your minute A08839 of 29 June 1982 to me about the self-confessed Soviet spy, Professor Hugh Hambleton.

AH.

30 June 1982

AH

CONFIDENTIAL

Top Copy on Security, March '82, Miss Ritchie.

This is for the



A-L's

decision. We  
can't interfere  
in any  
way

10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

not

I think that you will  
want to see this immediately.

The Russians, not  
understanding British justice, will  
no doubt believe that we have  
organised that the story about  
Andropov should come out now,  
as an unfriendly act.

I will explain tomorrow  
whether it really is inevitable  
that this story should come out  
in the evidence. If it is inevitable,  
there is no point in seeking FCO  
advice. But if it could be avoided  
the FCO may want to comment.