

SUBJECT



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10 DOWNING STREET

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MOD

m. Ingham

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG  
CABINET OFFICE

The Franks Report

This minute summarises the decisions on handling of the Franks Report which the Prime Minister made at her meeting at Chequers today attended by the Secretary of State for Defence, Lord Carrington, Sir Antony Acland, Mr. Whitmore and yourself.

The Prime Minister authorised you to consult Lord Franks on amendments which needed to be made for reasons of national security before the Report was published, and to report back to her by the end of this week. You told the Prime Minister that such amendments would be changes in wording only which would not detract from the sense or substance of the Report and would be limited to those which were essential to protecting an intelligence source. The Prime Minister hopes that Lord Franks will agree to a statement, which she can quote, that the amendments made have not affected the sense or substance of the Report in any significant way. The Prime Minister also said that she would be willing, if necessary, to show the Leader of the Opposition the Report in its original form on a Privy Counsellor basis.

The Prime Minister agreed that publication should be planned for Tuesday 18 January accompanied by a short oral statement by her in the House of Commons. She asked you to prepare a draft of such a statement, which she would like to consider on Thursday 13 January. The statement should quote verbatim the final paragraph of the Report. The Prime Minister instructed that advance copies of the Report should be made available to Sir Harold Wilson, Mr. Heath, Mr. Callaghan, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leaders of the Liberal and Social Democratic Parties, Mr. Atkins, Mr. Luce and Mr. Nicholas Ridley at 9 a.m. on Tuesday 18 January. Lord Lewin, Sir Michael Palliser and Sir Frank Cooper should also be given access to the Report on the morning of publication. The Ambassador to Washington should be instructed to make an appointment at 9 a.m. local time in Washington on Tuesday 18 January to tell the American Government about the references to them in the Report.

Passage deleted and retained under Section 3(4)  
M. Dayland. 7 February 2013

On Press handling on Tuesday 18 January, the Prime Minister decided that no advance copies should be made available to the Press before publication. No Press Summary needed to be issued

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apart from the Prime Minister's own statement. Lord Carrington and Mr Nott would accept invitations to give radio and television interviews. The arrangements for handling the Lobby should be discussed further with the Chief Press Secretary at No 10.

The Prime Minister has considered further whether, in view of the imminent publication of the Franks Report, she should go ahead with the projected interview on "Weekend World" on Sunday 16 January: her present inclination is to do so.

The Prime Minister also asked you, in consultation with Sir Antony Acland and Mr Whitmore, to prepare a full list of criticisms in the Report, together with a reasoned reply to each. The Prime Minister would be grateful if Sir Antony Acland could prepare an historical note on which major episodes in our international relations in the present century have and have not been the subject of subsequent inquiries.

The Prime Minister asked you, drawing on this material, to start preparing an outline for her speeches in the House of Commons debate. She will want in her opening speech to bring out the point that the composition and terms of reference of the Franks Inquiry were agreed with the Leaders of the other major parties and then to go through the area covered by the Report, following the Report's structure. The timing and length of the debate on the Report will need to be discussed with the Opposition through the usual channels: the Prime Minister was inclined to think that, if the Opposition wanted a two day debate, they might be asked to contribute a Supply Day for the second day.

I am copying this minute to Sir Antony Acland, Mr Whitmore and Mr Ingham.

F.R.B.

4 January 1983



Ref. A083/0128

~~MR BUTLER~~The Franks Report

--- As requested in your minute of 4th January, I attach the following material -

- i. a full list of observations (I suggest that from now on we use this word rather than "criticisms") in the Franks Report, together with a reasoned reply to each (Annex A);
- ii. points in chapter 4 of the Franks Report affecting Labour Governments as well as (or rather than) Conservative Governments (Annex B).

2. Annex A has been prepared by Mr Goodall's working group which included representatives of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Ministry of Defence and Joint Intelligence Organisation. The observations are set out in their order of appearance in the report, not in any order of importance. If Sir Antony Acland or Mr Whitmore have any further comments, perhaps they would let you have them direct. Annex A might also, I suggest, serve three other purposes. First, as a quarry for the Prime Minister's opening speech during the Parliamentary Debate. Second, by Mr Ingham and the press spokesmen of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence as defensive briefing material. And third, as the basis for replying to any Parliamentary Questions which may be tabled in the period between the Prime Minister's statement on publication and the debate. Annex B contains material that might be suitable for the Prime Minister's closing speech during the debate.

3. I am sending copies of this minute to Sir Antony Acland, Mr Whitmore and Mr Ingham.



ROBERT ARMSTRONG

14th January 1983