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Ref. A04364

MR. SANDERS

Panorama Programme on Privacy

I understand that the Home Office is providing notes for supplementaries this afternoon.

2. I can understand that, if this is raised, the Prime Minister will not want to be negative or show unconcern. But I hope, for her own sake, that she will be able to confine her substantive answers to generalities, and I should like to offer the following suggestions:

- (1) if there are questions about individual cases (e.g. the Jan Martin case) or the work of the police, she should refer the questioner to the Home Secretary (there is statutory machinery for investigating complaints against the police, and it may be right to refer some of these matters to them; if there is to be an investigation, Ministers will not want to prejudice it by comments in Parliament);
- (2) if there are questions about the work or operations of the Security Service, the Prime Minister should either stick to the line of "no comment on matters of intelligence or security", or (if the issue is relationships between the Security Service and police Special Branches) invite the questioner to put down a question to the Home Secretary, who is of course the Minister responsible both for the police and for the Security Service.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

3rd March, 1981

THE GUARDIAN 30 JANUARY 1981

## Film dropped after Trethowan intervenes

By David Leigh

Large portions of a special edition of Panorama about the security services have been suppressed on the intervention of the BBC director-general, Sir Ian Trethowan. The film, although approved by senior BBC executives, will not now be shown.

Sir Ian took an unusual step two weeks ago which has puzzled BBC staff. He ordered a video cassette to be made of the 100-minute film, along with the transcript, which he took away for 15 days.

He then ordered portions to be struck out which BBC executives describe as covering 50-75 per cent of the material.

This included a sequence describing how the Special Branch passed false inform-

ation to a women's employer; and another sequence in which a former agent claimed to have arranged hundreds of illegal telephone taps for MI6—an activity which the Government denies takes place.

Another excised passage consisted of an interview with a named former MI5 agent, Anthony Motton.

The programme, called MI5/MI6—the need to know, also covers claims of MI5 involvement in the downfall of Lord Lambton, whose activities with prostitutes were made known to the News of the World.

It deals with the Profumo affair, another ministerial sex scandal; MI6 recruitment of criminals in the Littlejohn affair; and MI6 plots to liqui-

date Prime Minister Mossadeq of Iran and Colonel Nasser in Egypt.

There were interviews with Mr Merlyn Rees, the former Home Secretary who was in charge of domestic MI5 phone-tapping, David Owen, former Foreign Secretary, and other MPs.

The Special Branch episode described how inaccurate political information was collected about a young woman, and subsequently made available to her employer. It said that Scotland Yard subsequently apologised.

The interviewees who discussed phone-taps said he had conducted "500 black bag jobs"—illegal phone taps sub-contracted by MI6 while ministers assured Parliament no such thing occurred.

The Panorama programme has been made openly. Many Fleet Street writers and special-ists were consulted during its research, and Sir Arthur Franks and Sir Howard Smith, Callaghan appointees to head MI6 and MI5 were notified.

BBC staff believe that Mrs Thatcher expressed disquiet about the programme as long ago as last summer, and at one point the programme-makers received a directive from Sir Ian Trethowan which made it difficult to continue the programme: he banned them from contacting any agent or former agent of the security services.

The final programme was approved, before Sir Ian's intervention, by the then head of BBC-1, Mr Bill Cotton, and the head of current affairs, Mr

Dick Francis, who is also a member of the Whitehall-Fleet Street D-Notice Committee which exists to protect national security.

The BBC last night denied that Sir Ian had shown the cassette to anyone in the Government. It said the status of the programme was still uncertain and the alterations presented by Sir Ian were "suggestions" because he was editor-in-chief concerned with such a sensitive matter.

The Prime Minister's office declined to comment last night on whether consultations had taken place either between the BBC and Mrs Thatcher, or officials of the BBC and officials of the security services. The security services themselves do not admit that they have any official existence.

# Blunt's Oxford spy foray is revealed in vetoed film

by Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman

NEW LIGHT on the activities of Anthony Blunt, the former Soviet spy, is one of the items which have fallen under the editorial veto of Sir Ian Trethowan, the BBC's director-general. Trethowan has told the Panorama team that he is not happy about the evidence they have produced to back up allegations in an interview with Anthony Motion, an ex-MIS agent.

After learning of the interview, Trethowan told the programme team that they must not contact any other former agents.

Reporters and researchers who worked on the film are this week-end mounting an attempt to convince Trethowan that the film should go out, although he has already made it clear that the 100-minute programme cannot be shown in its present form. He has strongly denied suggestions that his views have been influenced by Whitehall security chiefs, and says that his objections are purely on editorial grounds.

Motion's interview suggests that Blunt's spying activities extended further than has hitherto been revealed. The Sunday Times traced Motion yesterday at his home in Australia. He alleges that Blunt was active not only in Cambridge, but in Oxford as well.

He also claims that MIS, during inquiries about Blunt at Oxford, uncovered other Soviet agents who were "turned" by the British but not exposed; and that several "minor spies" were left alone because they were not important.

During the making of the programme, Motion, 49, described how MIS learned finally of Blunt's treachery in 1964—15 years before he was publicly exposed. At that time Motion was a section chief with the security services and said he was asked to examine

Blunt's recruiting activities at Oxford. Up to now it has been thought that Blunt was only really active at Cambridge, where he had been an undergraduate and later a tutor. It was at Cambridge that he had met Maclean, Philby and Burgess—the latter, according to Blunt, recruiting him as a Soviet "talent spotter."

Motion said yesterday that he was a loyal British and Australian subject. "If the Home Office have decided that the BBC cannot screen that segment they must have good reason," he said. "I would oppose it only if such a move was a political decision."

Motion joined MIS after a career with the Hussars and the Foreign Office. He was asked to investigate Blunt's Oxford connections because it was feared he had also recruited Soviet spies there. He said: "I first heard about Blunt in the early Sixties and was as mad as hell about it. But now I realise there was more to gain by not sending him to jail at the time."

Motion, now a restaurant owner and chairman of a regional tourist commission, said that he had not managed to pinpoint any obvious Blunt figures at Oxford. He added, however, that "several people had been discovered by MIS at the time of Blunt's private con-

session in 1964, but few came under public scrutiny because they did not hold important positions.

Motion says some "exposed" spies continued working with the knowledge of MIS to help provide "counter-intelligence information"—a hallmark of the security services following their successful "double-cross" operations in the last war. Much of Motion's testimony is supported by the recollections of the poet Louis MacNeice, who died in 1963. In his book *The Strings are False*, published posthumously in 1965, MacNeice recalled in detail how Blunt, while at Cambridge, regularly visited Oxford left-wing students.

The Panorama row had been simmering for weeks when it finally became public last week. Although senior BBC executives in news and current affairs had approved the programme, Trethowan said that it was "unsuitable" for transmission. He told the Panorama team that parts of it were "speculative" and demanded a number of cuts, including the Motion revelations. But his decision led to claims, both from within the BBC and from outside, that he was trying to suppress the documentary simply because he did not want to risk offending Whitehall.

The Panorama team began on the programme last summer, with the full knowledge of Trethowan. Senior BBC executives say that they were aware that Trethowan had serious reservations.

Dr David Owen, the former foreign secretary, who was also interviewed by Panorama, told The Sunday Times yesterday that he had argued strongly for greater accountability of MIS and MI6.



Motion: ex-agent talks

Additional reporting by  
Denis Reinhardt

THE GUARDIAN  
3 FEBRUARY 1981

## BBC's security film cuts anger staff

By Stephen Cook

The anger of BBC staff over Sir Ian Trethowan's drastic cutting of a Panorama programme on the security services was confirmed yesterday by a meeting of leaders of all the corporation's National Union of Journalists' chapels.

More than 50 chapel fathers from radio and television stations in London and the country passed a resolution expressing alarm at the director-general's action. They took "the greatest exception to any form of censorship or improper pressure placed on any BBC journalist," they said.

Mr Ken Ashton, the NUJ general secretary, and Mr Tony Hearn, general secretary of the Association of Broadcasting Staff, are seeking a meeting with Sir Ian to ask why the cuts were made.

Yesterday's meeting made it clear that if the two general secretaries were denied access to Sir Ian or if he could give no satisfactory explanation, the NUJ would take "appropriate action" in consultation with other BBC unions.

The meeting heard that an article in the Guardian last week detailing the circumstances and nature of the cuts was accurate and that the extent of the cuts meant the programme was no longer worth transmitting.

The article described the involvement of the security services and police Special Branch in illegal phone tapping, sex scandals involving politicians, attempts to remove foreign rulers, and the passing on of false information.

The programme had been approved by the head of BBC-1 and of Current Affairs before Sir Ian apparently called for a cassette of the programme and insisted on the cuts. He has denied that he showed it to anyone from the Government.

The meeting, called to discuss the next BBC pay claim, apparently felt that Sir Ian should be pressed to allow the film to go ahead as approved by the immediate programme bosses.

© Reform Sir Ian Trethowan

NOTES FOR SUPPLEMENTARIES

Q1. Has the BBC's attention been drawn to 'D' Notices?

A1. That is not necessary. The BBC is represented (by the Director of News and Current Affairs, Mr. Richard Francis) on the Defence, Press and Broadcasting Committee, which is responsible for 'D' Notices, and can be assumed to be well aware of their contents.

Q2. Does the Government propose to use has the Government considered using its power of veto to stop the showing of this programme?

A2. No, I do not think that it would be appropriate to use the power of veto. It is much better to put the onus on the BBC to exercise their editorial freedom with a sense of responsibility.

Q3. How was the Government's decision to refuse co-operation conveyed to the BBC?

A3. I do not propose to add to what I have already said.

Q4. Any questions about the contents of the programme?

A4. That is entirely a matter for the BBC.

B.B.C. Security  
Panorama

Did the Government bring pressure to bear on the BBC not to show a Panorama programme on security and intelligence?

DRAFT ANSWER

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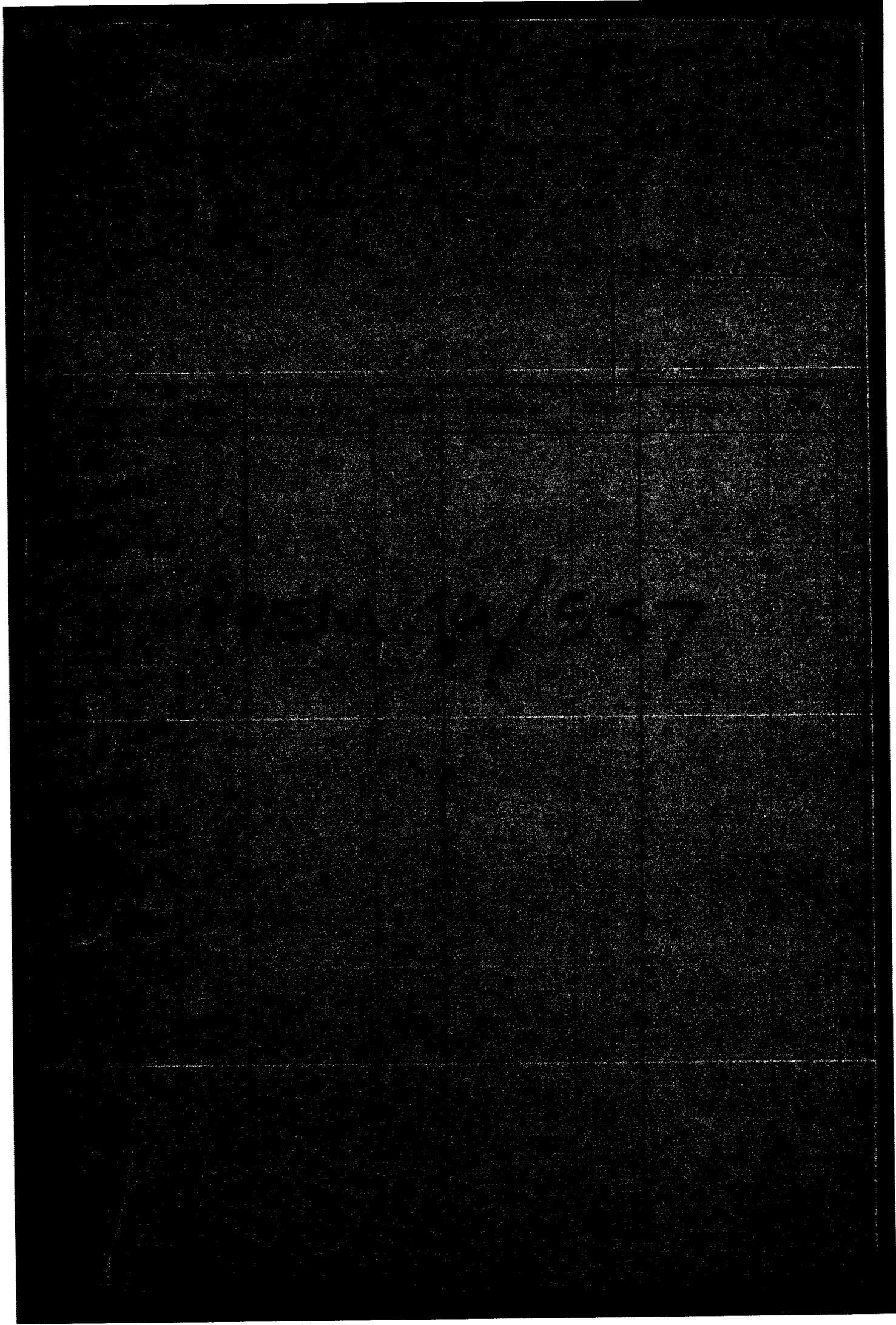
In July we learned that the BBC were approaching a number of people concerned with security matters to give interviews for a proposed Panorama programme on intelligence and security. The BBC were told that, in view of the potential risks to national security, people in Government service would be instructed not to give interviews or co-operate with those making the programme. But the BBC has, under its Charter, complete editorial freedom, and it was, and is, entirely within the responsibility of the BBC to decide whether to show such a programme and what to put in it.

Made my views known openly on  
a number of occasions - on "Intelligence and Security".

The decision on any particular programme rests  
with the BBC.

Canadian - Burgess

No facilities are available to foreign  
journalists in their attempts to interview U.K.  
officials in their services.



Ref: A02381

SECRET

MR. WHITMORE

Prime Minister

Hopeful

18th

18th

I mentioned at a meeting with the Prime Minister the other day that BBC Panorama were showing signs of wanting to do a programme on British intelligence.

2. Since then there have been informal contacts with the BBC at high level, though nothing has been put in writing. It emerges from these contacts that:-

- (a) A decision has not yet been taken to make the programme; it is no more than a "gleam in the eye".
- (b) If the programme goes ahead: considerations of national security will not be overlooked; the BBC will not allow it to be used as a platform for "knockers" of British intelligence; it would be about the political control of intelligence services and would not be confined to British services.

3. Our general impression is that it is doubtful whether any programme will be transmitted; and if it is it will not be for some considerable time.

RA

(Robert Armstrong)

18th June 1980

SECRET

Security 2



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

I have shown the Prime Minister your minute A02381 of 18 June 1980 and she has taken note of where matters stand on the possibility of BBC Panorama doing a programme on British intelligence.

C. A. WHITMORE

20 June 1980

WHM

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PRIME MINISTER

BBC Panorama: Proposed Programme on  
Intelligence Services

*I should like to discuss this briefly with W.W. APC. I am against any programme being shown. I would be prepared to vote the vote. Mr.*

At your meeting early in June on the Official Histories of Intelligence I mentioned that the Panorama team were engaged in preparing material for one or two programmes on the intelligence services. You thought that this might be a matter for the Home Secretary to take up with the Chairman of the Governors of the BBC. I sent Mr. Whitmore a minute on this on 18th June; he replied on 20th June.

2. Developments since then can be summarised as follows:-

- (a) There have been continuing contacts between the Legal Adviser to the Security Service (Mr. Bernard Sheldon) and the Director General of the BBC. The Director General's present view seems to be:-
- (i) he does not think he can reasonably prevent some programme on the accountability of the intelligence services; he recognises that this is not a matter on which present or past members of the Services should be asked to comment, and would hope to achieve balance by seeking the views of an appropriately experienced politician (he mentioned Mr. Merlyn Rees and Mr. William Deedes);
  - (ii) he understands the dangers of lending respectability to a campaign by Duncan Campbell, Robin Cook, Robert Cryer and others, and the possible need to expose their motives and associations;
  - (iii) he is minded to say that the programme cannot examine the functions and working of the Services.

Sir Ian Trethowan has told Mr. Sheldon that the fact that a good deal of money is being spent on research will not significantly affect the likelihood of any programme being transmitted. It would not in any event be transmitted before the autumn (it seems to be scheduled for October).

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- (b) The Panorama team, led by Tom Mangold, has approached a great many people for interviews or briefing for these programmes, including Sir Dick White, Sir Leonard Hooper, Sir Brooks Richards (all former Intelligence Co-ordinators), the Head of the FCO News Department, the Director General of the Security Service, the Head of the SIS, and the Director of Public Relations for the Army (for help in connection with Northern Ireland). It is also making inquiries in the United States, Australia and Western Germany about the accountability of the intelligence services in those countries.
- (c) In his approach to the FCO News Department, Tom Mangold asked for non-attributable briefing with a representative of the SIS. When this was refused, he said that we should not delude ourselves into believing that the team would be dissuaded from its intention of making a programme by lack of official briefing: such an attitude could not stop the films, but it would distort them, since it would give disproportionate space to partisan lobbies. He said that the team intended to explore the Anglo-American intelligence relationship; and intended to invite the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to be interviewed on the subject of accountability.
- (d) Panorama's interest in the subject clearly stems from the activities of Duncan Campbell. It is not clear whether Campbell is in any sense behind the idea of a Panorama programme. Panorama is believed to have approached one of Campbell's associates in connection with this programme; and Mangold has in the past worked with Steve Weissman, a collaborator of Agee and an associate of Campbell. Weissman is employed on a contract basis by Panorama, but is believed to have been given notice.

3. The Director General says that the commitment of money and effort to research does not significantly affect the likelihood of any programme being transmitted. None the less it must be assumed that, the further the preparation of the programmes progresses, the less likely it is that they will not in due course be shown, or that the contents can be significantly changed. These

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preparations will continue through what remains of the summer if no steps are taken to halt or curtail them. The question is whether the time has come for an approach to the BBC at a higher level than the Legal Adviser to the Security Service; and, if so, what that approach should be.

4. I am to discuss these issues in more detail with senior officials of the Departments and Agencies concerned on 23rd July. But time is running short - the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary goes to Latin America at the end of the week - and I thought that I should send you this preliminary minute, in case you might like to consult the other Ministers concerned immediately, or to express a preliminary view.

5. My own view, ahead of my meeting, is that the time has come to approach the BBC from a higher level. If the approach is to have any effect, it will have to be made either by or with the express authority of Ministers. It would be possible for you or the Home Secretary (or both) to summon the new Chairman of the Board of Governors. But I am doubtful about that for two reasons:-

- (i) If at this stage we go over Sir Ian Trethowan's head, we may forfeit the goodwill and readiness to co-operate with Mr. Sheldon that he has been showing.
- (ii) This would be the first brush between Ministers and the new Chairman, and he might feel it necessary to demonstrate that he was not the creature of the Government (or swayed by personal friendships with members of the Government).

I believe, therefore, that if there is to be an approach at this stage, it should be from me, acting with your authority and on your instructions, to Sir Ian Trethowan. That would have the additional advantage of keeping open the possibility of a later intervention by you with the Chairman.

6. Before making such an approach, we should need to define the objectives:
- (a) Do we want to stop the BBC from showing any programme about the intelligence services?

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(b) No Should we be prepared to see go forward a programme dealing strictly with the accountability of the Services and not extending to their functions and working?

7. The Government would be wholly justified in seeking to prevent a programme about the functions and working of the Services, but it is less clear that we should be justified in seeking to prevent a programme genuinely confined to the question of that accountability. This is a matter of which there is bound to be some discussion in Parliament, because of Mr. Cook's Bill on the Security Services; and though the issue of accountability may have come to public notice because of the activities and articles of Duncan Campbell, it is arguably a matter of legitimate public interest. If we were minded not to object to a programme on accountability, however, the difficulty would be to make sure that it was confined to that: on its own it would be a pretty boring and unvisual subject. And its conclusion can be taken as foregone: how can it fail to conclude that the intelligence services ought to be more publicly accountable?

8. It must not be forgotten - the BBC will be acutely sensitive to the point - that the Government has the power to ban any programme. This power is conferred on the Home Secretary by the BBC Charter. It has been used to prevent the BBC from broadcasting certain types of programmes at certain times, (e. g. political programmes in the two weeks before an election), but it has never been used to ban a particular programme. Its use, or the threat of its use, to ban a programme about the intelligence services would of course produce a tremendous hoo-ha, inside the BBC, in the Press and in Parliament, about censorship. But, if we were convinced that the programme was likely to cause grave damage to the intelligence services, it might be right to risk the hoo-ha and use the power.

9. The threat of its use would be an element in the tactics of handling the BBC. They will believe - rightly - that the Government will be very reluctant to use the power. They may even calculate that the Government would not in the last resort bring itself to do so. If they believe that, the threat to use it may

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simply lead them to call the Government's bluff. Even if they believe that the threat is for real, the effect of making it may be to make them feel that they can simply shuffle the responsibility off on to the Government. But the BBC will not want the Government to exercise the power, if they can avoid it: they would see it as the first step down a slippery slope of Government exercise of veto on programme content; once the Government had banned a programme on the intelligence services, it would (they would calculate) be easier next time to ban a programme on - say - the Provisional IRA; and the BBC would know that, whatever hoo-ha is aroused, no Government was going to deny itself the power of veto which successive BBC Charters have given successive Governments.

10. So for both parties - the Government and the BBC - the power of veto has many of the qualities of the nuclear deterrent.

11. If Ministers want to try to prevent the BBC from showing any programme about the intelligence services, it will be helpful to know, before any meeting with Sir Ian Trethowan, whether they are ready to exercise the power of veto, if necessary.

12. If we are content to settle for a programme about accountability only, it should not come to the point of having to decide whether to exercise the power, but the BBC ought to be given the clear impression that we have not excluded the use of the power.

13. If there is to be a higher-level approach to the BBC now, it might take one of the following possible courses:-

Either

- (a) The activities of Duncan Campbell, and the interest and activity they are generating (particularly in circles whose political motivation is suspect) have some effect on the morale and effectiveness of the intelligence services. But they are very much minority stuff, and so long as all this is confined to the columns of the New Statesman, The Leveller and left-wing papers of that kind, and to a small group of left-wing MPs, the damage is containable. A BBC Panorama

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programme would be a very different kettle of fish. It would give respectability to the activities of Campbell; it would spark a much wider curiosity about the intelligence services; other MPs and other newspapers would feel obliged to jump on the bandwagon; and the resulting damage to the morale and effectiveness of the Services could be very serious indeed. That of course is what Campbell and others are aiming at; and it is very much in the national interest that they should not succeed. Please give up any idea of any programme about the intelligence services.

Or

- (b) We know that the Director General is conscious of the potential dangers of showing programmes about the intelligence services, and recognises the limits within which any such programmes should be confined, if damage to the effectiveness of the Services is to be avoided. . But the activities and attitudes of Tom Mangold and his team strongly suggest that they do not see themselves as bound by any such limits. We see very considerable dangers in his team being allowed to pursue the sort of inquiries in which they appear at present to be set. We recognise that the accountability of the intelligence services is a matter of legitimate public interest; but could the BBC produce a programme which was interesting enough to be worth showing if it was really confined to the question of accountability? What guarantees could the Director General give us that it would be so confined? If the BBC were minded to go ahead with such a programme, it would clearly not be a matter on which present or past members of the Services could be asked to comment; but we should like to discuss with the Director General how it could be made a balanced presentation. We might be able to help in the selection of people who would balance the campaigners for much greater public accountability.

14. \* I should like to discuss the matter with the heads of the agencies at my meeting on 23rd July: they may feel that even a programme confined to the question of accountability would be damaging, and if that is their view Ministers

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ought to know it before taking a final decision. But it would be helpful before then to know if you and your colleagues have any preliminary view; and, if you think that we should try to prevent any programme from being shown, Ministers would be ready to use the power of veto if necessary.

15. If we eventually decided to follow the second line - paragraph 13(b) - either as the preferred choice or as a fall-back to complete prevention, there would be further questions for consideration; whether the Government could or should co-operate by giving interviews (the Home Secretary or the Foreign Secretary) and by background briefing; and whom we might suggest as people to approach as possible contributors (Lord Carr, Lord Dacre and Professor Howard come to mind; and Lord Carr could certainly be given discreet support and briefing).

16. We should also have to consider the Government's position on the unavailability of certain of the Services.

17. I am sending copies of this minute to the Secretaries of State for the Home Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Defence and Northern Ireland.

RA

(Robert Armstrong)

Prime Minister.

21st July, 1980

Are you ready to take a preliminary view on how things can be taken into account at Sir Robert Armstrong's meeting tomorrow?

If so, do you want to prevent any programme being shown? Or would you be ready to enter for a programme confined to the accountability of the intelligence services, provided it could be guaranteed that the limits set would be fully observed?

Are you prepared to use the veto, if necessary; and for the veto to be made known of the Government?

Do you have any further questions to be raised with Sir Robert Armstrong to the best of your knowledge?

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full  
22/7/80



10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister.

There will now be a  
further submission in due course  
from Sir Robert Armstrong  
reporting the conclusions of the  
meeting he held today. But  
I am putting the attached  
minutes to you again so that  
you are aware of the background.

THH

23iii'

TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL

PRIME MINISTERBBC Panorama: Proposed Programme on  
Intelligence Services

I sent you a minute about this (A02674) on 21<sup>st</sup> July. I was able to discuss that minute with Permanent Secretaries from the Home Office, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Defence and the Northern Ireland Office and the Heads of the three Agencies concerned yesterday afternoon.

2. The conclusions can be summarised as follows:-

- (i) If it is possible by the exercise of sweet reason to persuade the BBC to drop the idea of the programme completely, that would be much the best outcome.
- (ii) The Heads of the Agencies are doubtful whether it would be prudent actually to use the power of veto to prevent the programme: they fear that the resulting row, with all the attention which it would focus on the intelligence services in the media, could do the intelligence services more damage than a Panorama programme limited to whatever extent it might be possible to limit it. They agree that in discussion with the BBC at this stage the possibility that the veto might be used should not be foreclosed.
- (iii) If it is not possible to persuade the BBC to drop the programme, then as fall-back we should do our best to limit its scope and in particular to persuade the BBC to stop pursuing its inquiries into the functions and working of the intelligence services.
- (iv) A programme limited to accountability would in theory limit the damage, and that might have to be accepted, if that was as far as the BBC could be persuaded. But there was considerable scepticism at my meeting as to whether a worthwhile programme could be produced on that basis, or whether the BBC would in fact stick to the limitation.

010

Prime Minister. 6

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Trethowan's committee response.

Ref. A02749

MR. WHITMORE

*Handwritten notes:*  
Thank you for the letter that has been put to the BBC. I am sure you will be satisfied with the answer.

Copy No. 1 of 15 Copies  
31 vii

BBC Panorama: Proposed Programme on Intelligence Services

I saw Sir Ian Trethowan this morning.

2. I said that I was speaking to him with the knowledge and approval of the Prime Minister.

3. I spoke on the lines of paragraph 13(a) of my minute of 21st July. I said that the activities of Duncan Campbell and those associated with him were doing the effectiveness of the intelligence services no good. The damage was containable so long as the activities were confined to the columns of the New Statesman, Time Out and other papers of that kind; but a BBC Panorama programme would reach a very large audience, and could run the risk of very much greater damage to the effectiveness of the services. That of course was what Campbell and his associates were aiming at. I said that I recognised that there would be some aspects of the matter - particularly accountability - which could be regarded as matters of legitimate public interest; but, even if the programme was confined to that, it would not be possible for any present or former member of the intelligence services or of the public service to take any part, and I doubted whether present Ministers could do so either. It seemed to me that in the circumstances it would be very difficult to produce a balanced programme. I said that all that I had heard about the activities of the Panorama team preparing the programme suggested that they were aiming for something going much wider than accountability, and looking at the functions and operation of the intelligence services, and I instanced a number of examples of the activities of Tom Mangold and his team to illustrate this point. I felt bound to draw Sir Ian Trethowan's attention to this, and to the risks it entailed for the work of the intelligence services.

4. Sir Ian Trethowan said that the BBC would produce nothing that was not authoritative and balanced. He recognised, and the Panorama team now recognised, that there was no possibility of co-operation from within the services

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or within the public service on the functions and operations of the intelligence services, and that it would not therefore be possible to produce a programme on that subject which would be authoritative and balanced. I should rest assured that nothing on those lines would be shown. It was already clear and accepted that there would not be two programmes. There remained the question of accountability. This was a matter which was being pursued by a Member of Parliament (Mr. Robert Cook), who was proposing to introduce a Bill. It was difficult to argue that this was not a matter of public interest which could be presented on the BBC. He recognised the difficulties which prevented anybody from inside the services or Government from taking part, but he hoped that it would be possible to provide a measure of balance by inviting former Ministers to take part: he referred to Mr. Merlyn Rees, Lord Carr, Lord Butler and "former Prime Ministers, but not Sir Harold Wilson".

5. I reiterated that the activities of the team, as I was hearing of them from a number of sources, were by no means consistent with a programme confined to the question of accountability, and were not merely disagreeable but in some cases positively discreditable. My fear was that the preparation of the programmes would go forward, that the Director General would find himself, near the time for broadcasting, with programmes on which there had been a considerable investment and which it would be difficult then to cancel and replace. Sir Ian Trethowan assured me that considerations of cost would not prevent him from disallowing a programme which in his view ought not to be shown, as he had done on previous occasions. I said that this seemed a cavalier approach to costs from an institution which was complaining of being very short of money.

6. I then reverted to the question of accountability. I said that I could understand why he might think that it was difficult to object to a programme confined to that issue. But he should have regard to the motives of those who were promoting the interest in this subject. It was not a matter of widespread public interest, and the arrangements for accountability, both on expenditure and on activities, were good. Parliament had always accepted that

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parliamentary control in these areas was entrusted to Ministers, and there were no indications of general dissatisfaction with that position. Mr. Cook was exploiting this issue as a vehicle for promoting the campaign, in which he was associated with Duncan Campbell, to discredit the intelligence services and damage their effectiveness. The BBC had to consider very seriously whether it should lend its authority to this campaign. The BBC should guard against the possibility that it was being exploited by Mr. Campbell and others. This did not mean that I regarded Tom Mangold as anything other than an over-enthusiastic investigative journalist, though there were contacts between Tom Mangold and Campbell and his associates which were worrying, and it was possible that Mangold might be being unconsciously exploited. But that was not the point: the point for the Director General was whether the BBC should lend its authority, even by putting out a programme on accountability, to a campaign whose motivation was to discredit and damage the intelligence services.

7. Sir Ian Trethowan promised to reflect on what I had said and to be in touch again later.

8. Sir Ian Trethowan said that he had informed the new Chairman of the BBC about the preparation of this programme, and Mr. Howard had discussed the matter with the Panorama team in the course of a visit to Lime Grove. Sir Ian Trethowan did not tell me what Mr. Howard's view was.

9. I am sending copies of this minute to Mr. Halliday (Home Office), Mr. Walden (FCO), Mr. Norbury (MOD) and Mr. Harrington (NIO).

REA

(Robert Armstrong)

29th July, 1980

**TOP SECRET**  
**AND PERSONAL**



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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

BBC PANORAMA: PROPOSED PROGRAMME ON  
INTELLIGENCE SERVICES

I have shown the Prime Minister your minute A02749 of 29 July 1980 reporting your meeting with Sir Ian Trethowan about the proposed Panorama programme on the Intelligence Services.

The Prime Minister was grateful for this account. She commented:-

"The matter has been put to the BBC in no uncertain terms".

She looks forward to hearing further from you when Sir Ian Trethowan gets in touch with you again to let you have his considered response.

I am sending copies of this minute to Mr. Halliday (Home Office), Mr. Walden (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Mr. Norbury (Ministry of Defence) and Mr. Harrington (Northern Ireland Office).

**A. WHITMORE**

4 August 1980

**TOP SECRET**  
**AND PERSONAL**

*This is a copy. The original has been extracted and retained under S.3(4). Minister content to leave matters as reported, without asking Home Sec to veto the programme?*

Ian Trethowan being as weak as I expected.

**TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL**

Ref. A02844

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PRIME MINISTER

*I hope George Howard will visit on seeing the programme before voting any resolution*

*MAD 8/6*

BBC Panorama Programme on the Intelligence Services

*It is being broadcast - not!*  
I have now had a further talk with Sir Ian Trethowan.

2. Sir Ian Trethowan said that he was acutely conscious of the risk that the BBC might be, or be thought to be, exploited by Mr. Duncan Campbell and others of that kind, and that the BBC was determined to avoid that risk. On the other hand, since we last spoke, he had been strengthened in his opinion that it would be difficult to argue that accountability for the intelligence services was not a matter of legitimate public interest. He pointed out that Mr. Robin Cook's Bill, which had now been published for some time, was backed not only by left-wing Members of Parliament but also by one or two Government backbenchers, including Mr. Jonathan Aitken. He also said that the Panorama team had a number of interviews recorded in the United States and other foreign countries with such people as Mr. Richard Helms. Many of these interviews drew attention to the damage which had been done to the intelligence services in the United States and expressed the view that we had managed our affairs in these respects much better. The publication of such interviews would not be damaging to the interests of the services.

3. Sir Ian Trethowan said that he had therefore agreed that the Panorama team should continue to pursue its activities on the foreign side and on the Parliamentary side - by which I take him to mean the question of accountability. On the other hand he had told them that they were not to pursue their attempts to get material from present or former members of the intelligence services \* ~~~~~ \*

4. I understand that the new Chairman of the BBC, Mr. George Howard, has also had a word with the Home Secretary on these matters. The reports which I have heard of that are consistent with what Sir Ian Trethowan said to me.

\*~\* Passage deleted and retained under Section 3(4).

*Edwayland, 8/7/66* **TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL**

**TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL**

I understand that Mr. Howard also told the Home Secretary that he had asked Sir Ian Trethowan to exercise personal responsibility and oversight over this programme, and to make sure that he himself saw and vetted the material before the programme was put out.

5. I think that we have now done as much as we can to limit the damage that is liable to ensue from a BBC Panorama programme on the intelligence services. It is still possible that Sir Ian Trethowan may decide at the end of the day that there should be no programme; but I am afraid that I do not think that that is very likely.

6. If we wanted to make sure that the programme would not take place, the Home Secretary would have to use his power of veto. We have to balance the damage that might be caused by the showing of the programme against the damage that would be caused by using the veto to prevent it. Even solely in terms of damage to the intelligence services, I think that the effects of using the veto might be more damaging - and that is the view of the Heads of the services themselves. There are also wider considerations of censorship: the veto has never been used to ban the showing of a particular programme to which the Government had objections, and its use, even to protect the intelligence services, would undoubtedly lead to a major political row.

7. There will no doubt be other opportunities nearer the time to reconsider this, but I judge that for the time being we have taken things as far as we can.

8. I am sending copies of this minute to the Secretaries of State for the Home Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Defence and Northern Ireland.

REA

(Robert Armstrong)

8th August, 1980

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**TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL**

TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL

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Copy No. 6 of 6 copies



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

MR. WRIGHT

The Prime Minister has seen Sir Robert Armstrong's minute reference A20844 about the proposed BBC Panorama programme on the intelligence services.

She has commented that Sir Ian Trethowan's response is much as she would have expected, and that she hopes the new Chairman of the Governors would insist on seeing the programme before there is any question of its being broadcast.

I am sending copies of this minute to John Halliday (Home Office), George Walden (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Brian Norbury (Ministry of Defence) and Roy Harrington (Northern Ireland Office).

M. A. PATTISON

11 August 1980

TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL

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DEFENCE, PRESS AND BROADCASTING COMMITTEE

50 NOTICE NO 10

BRITISH INTELLIGENCE SERVICES

This Notice should be read in conjunction with

1. The named functions of the Security Service and Security Intelligence Branch are referred to as MIS and Security Intelligence respectively. The Security Service is responsible for recruitment, training, control, discipline, administration and supervision of the personnel of the Security Service and Security Intelligence Branch. The Security Service and Security Intelligence Branch are to be kept secret in all circumstances as far as possible.
2. Attempts are made to obtain information about the activities of foreign intelligence services, their personnel, their methods, their equipment, their communications, their activities in newspapers or other publications, their activities in intelligence matters with the exception of those which are intended to establish the story but do not disclose the source.
3. You are requested not to publish information about the following activities of the Security Service and Security Intelligence Branch:
  - a. activities undertaken inside or outside the UK for the purpose of national security;
  - b. identities, whereabouts and tasks of persons of whatever status or rank who are or have been employed by either Service;
  - c. addresses and telephone numbers used by either Service;
  - d. organizational structure, communications network, numerical strength, secret methods and training arrangements of either Service;
  - e. details of assistance given by the police forces in Security Service operations;
  - f. details of the manner in which well-known intelligence methods (eg telephone-tapping) are actually applied or of their targets and purposes where these concern national security. Reference in general terms to well-known intelligence methods is not precluded by this sub-paragraph;
  - g. technical advances by the British Services in relation to their intelligence and counter-intelligence methods within the limits of what is published or not.

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5. You are also requested to use extreme discretion in reporting any apparent disclosures of information published abroad purporting to come from members or former employees of either Service. If you are in any doubt please consult the Secretary.
6. You are also requested not to elaborate on any information which may be published abroad about British intelligence.
7. On all these limitations some relaxation may be possible: please consult the Secretary.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS PRESS AND BROADCASTING COMMITTEE

D NOTICE NO 11

CYPHERS AND COMMUNICATIONS

This Notice should be read in conjunction with D Notice No 1.

2. The object of this Notice is to draw attention to the need for careful handling of information about HMG's own communications arrangements and its interception of communications as a means of obtaining secret intelligence concerning foreign powers. Secure communications are essential for our defence and for our conduct of foreign affairs; publication of details about secure communications systems can assist potential enemies to penetrate them. Similarly, publication of any information about our interception arrangements tends to stimulate other countries into taking measures which could make the work of our security and intelligence services more difficult. In these respects the security interests of our allies are identical with our own.

3. You are requested not to publish anything about:
  - a. HM Government's codes and cyphers;
  - b. details of duties and numbers of employees in defence and diplomatic communications establishments (in personal identification the place of work and grade may be given; but this information should not be enlarged upon without first consulting the Secretary);
  - c. the nature and extent of interception by HMG of any form of communications, or of transmissions such as radar, for the purposes of national security: this includes the establishments and the personnel, methods and arrangements involved.
4. Bearing in mind the points in paragraph 2 above and the specific requests in paragraph 3, discussion of the subject in general terms is not precluded.
5. You are also requested to use extreme discretion in reporting any apparent disclosures of information published abroad purporting to come from individuals who are or were employed on British codes and cyphers or in interception activities. If you are in any doubt please consult the Secretary.
6. You are also requested not to elaborate on any information which may be published abroad about British codes and cyphers or interception activities.

Date of issue 16 August 1971

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