

S  
3000  
3000

PREM 19/1901

D

CONFIDENTIAL FILING

Mr Dalyell's motion on the  
conduct of the Prime Minister

PRIME MINISTER

June 1986

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
<del>4.6.86</del> 5.6.86							
PREM 19/1901 <span style="float: right; margin-right: 50px;">keep MSS 4/2/15</span>							



M.L. SAUNDERS  
LEGAL SECRETARY

LAW OFFICERS' DEPARTMENT  
ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE  
LONDON, WC2A 2LL

J F M Tesh Esq.  
Private Secretary to Minister of State  
for the Armed Forces  
Ministry of Defence  
Main Building  
Whitehall  
London SW1

5 June 1986

*Dear John,*

DEBATE OF MR DALYELL'S MOTION -  
FRIDAY 6 JUNE

*ATTACHED*

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter to Tim Flesher of 4 June enclosing a copy of the draft of the notes from which your Minister proposes to speak in answer to Mr Dalyell's motion concerning the conduct of the Prime Minister.

I have seen a copy of Nigel Wicks's letter to you of 4 June in which he suggests that as far as Westlands is concerned it would be best to avoid a paraphrase of the Prime Minister's speech in the debate on 27 January. In so far as the Solicitor General is concerned, I entirely agree with that approach. Should your Minister decide, however, to speak on the lines attached to your letter, may I suggest the following re-draft of the paragraph commencing "On 4 January" to ensure consistency with the Prime Minister's speech:

"On 4 January, the Prime Minister saw the correspondence of the previous day between the then Secretary of State for Defence and Mr Horne of Lloyds Merchant Bank. The letter from the Defence Secretary had not been cleared by the Department of Trade and Industry or by the Law Officers.

.../Mindful

- page two -

Mindful of the need for accuracy and consistency in the Government's statements on this subject, my Rt Hon Friend suggested that the Solicitor General be asked to give his opinion of the accuracy of the Defence Secretary's letter and its consistency with her letter to Sir J Cuckney. The Solicitor General on the basis of the evidence then available to him, formed the provisional opinion that the Defence Secretary's letter contained material inaccuracies which needed to be corrected. My Rt Hon Friend, through her office, asked the Solicitor General to consider writing to the Defence Secretary, to draw that opinion to his attention. After further consideration, the Solicitor General did indeed write to the then Secretary of State for Defence, on 6 January, advising him to write again to Mr Horne correcting the inaccuracies." (Suggested amendments underlined).

I am copying this letter to Nigel Wicks and to the Private Secretaries to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours faithfully,  
Richard Samuel

M L SAUNDERS





MINISTER OF STATE  
FOR  
THE ARMED FORCES

As promised,  
Mr. Stanley's  
notes for tomorrow  
(2 copies).

John Jess  
(Private  
Secretary).

5.6.86.

CONDUCT OF THE PRIME MINISTER

The Hon Member for Linlithgow's motion is concerned with three issues - Westland, the use of F111's based in the UK for the attack on terrorist targets in Libya on the night of 14-15 April, and the conduct of the Falklands conflict in 1982.

Each of these three issues have already been debated at length - some would say in relation to the Belgrano at interminable length.

As far as Westland is concerned we have had my Rt Hon Friend the former S of S for Trade and Industry's Statement on 13 January, a debate on 15 January, a further statement by my Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister on 23 January and a further debate on the 27 January.



The use of UK based F111s against terrorist targets in Libya was the subject of a statement by my Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister on 15 April and a full day's debate on 16 April.

The recovery of the Falklands must surely now hold the record for the largest volume of parliamentary discussion in relation to the scale of the conflict of any military action in British history.

It has been the subject of a detailed inquiry by a special constituted Committee of Privy Counsellors, under the Chairmanship of Lord Franks.

Aspects of the conflict have been studied in depth by both the Defence Select Committee and the Foreign Affairs Select Committee.

During the conflict and subsequently it has been the subject of some 30 statements and debates in this House, and it has been the subject of hundreds of Parliamentary Questions.

Neither I nor any other member of the Government makes any complaint about the process of parliamentary scrutiny of the Falklands conflict. But one thing seems quite certain. However many inquiries are held; however many Select Committee reports are produced; however many parliamentary debates take place, and however many parliamentary questions are answered the Hon Member for Linlithgow will find it impossible to accept any conclusions that are at variance with his own prejudices.

[If needed]

Nothing illustrates this more clearly than the way in which the Hon Member for Linlithgow has gone on repeating his allegations that my Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister wanted a military solution to the Falklands conflict for domestic political reasons - and ordered the sinking of the Belgrano so as to scupper the Peruvian peace initiative.

These unsubstantiated allegations have no foundation of truth or fact whatsoever.

I am not aware of a single serious and non-partisan academic, journalist or researcher who is prepared to subscribe to the view that my Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister either went to war for political reasons or sunk the Belgrano for political reasons.

To make such very serious accusations against the Prime Minister or against any Member of the House, without being able to substantiate them is frankly disgraceful.

It is particularly disgraceful to go on repeating them when they have been shown again and again to be wholly baseless.

I now turn to the three issues that are the subject of the hon Member's Motion.

The Westland Affair

Starting with Westland, the Hon Member's motion invites my Rt Hon Friend to explain in detail her role in the Westland affair including the disclosure of the Solicitor-General's letter of 6 January to the then Secretary of State for Defence.

My Rt Hon Friend has indeed already given a full account of her role in these matters in the Statement she made to the House on 23 January and in the speech she made to the House in the Westland debate on 27 January. Both were checked for accuracy with everyone concerned.

The Westland Affair

Starting with Westland, the Hon Member's motion invites my Rt Hon Friend to explain in detail her role in the Westland affair and the decision to leak selectively a Law Officer's letter to a Minister of the Crown.

My Rt Hon Friend has indeed already given a full account of her role in the Westland controversy in the Statement she made to the House on 23 January and in the speech she made to the House in the Westland debate on 27 January. Both were checked for accuracy with everyone concerned.]



My Rt Hon Friend has made it clear that she did not give her consent to the disclosure of the Solicitor-General's letter (Jan 27 Col 656) nor was she consulted (Jan 23 Col 456).

She has made it clear that she deeply regrets the manner in which the disclosure was made (Jan 27 Col 656) and that had she been consulted, she would have said that a different way must be found of making the relevant facts known (Jan 23 Col 450).

[And my Rt Hon Friend has also made it clear that though she was told in general terms that there had been contacts between her office and the Department of Trade and Industry, she did not know about the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry's own role in the matter of the disclosure until the inquiry had reported (Jan 27 Col 657).]

My Rt Hon Friend has already dealt in detail with her role in the Westland affair and she has nothing further to add to what she had already said.

Use of UK-Based F111s

Turning now to the use of the UK-based F111s on the night of 14-15 April, the Hon Member has asked for the evidence as to why these aircraft represented the safest means of achieving particular objectives with the lowest possible risk both of civilian casualties in Libya and of casualties among United States personnel.

Since the hon Member tabled his motion, my Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister has answered his oral Question on this very point in the House on Tuesday of this week, June 3.

For the convenience of the House, I repeat what my Rt Hon Friend said:

"The F111 aircraft based in the United Kingdom provided the best equipped means of carrying out the United States operation against specific terrorist targets in Libya with the lowest possible risk of Libyan civilian and United States Service casualties. As the United States has indicated, the F111 possesses advanced avionics and other capabilities which made it particularly suitable for such a mission."

[If Dalyell repeats his supplementary:

"Will the Prime Minister name the senior American or Americans who told her that the F111s were more precise than the carrier-based aircraft?"

The Prime Minister's answer was (on Tuesday)

"That was the advice we received both from across the Atlantic and from home" (Col 731)]

and (on Thursday) that she had no intention of naming individuals.

The Hon Member will I hope appreciate the constraints on our detailing in public the operational performance characteristics of in-service US military aircraft.

I can however tell him that the US authorities have said that F111 aircraft have unique capabilities for conducting a high payload low-level mission at night delivering precision guided munitions, and that they attached particular importance to the F111s' Forward Looking Infra Red system combined with its relatively high attack speed.

There is nothing further that I can add to what my Rt Hon Friend has already said.

Falklands War

I now come to the Hon Member's last subject, namely his request for answers to the nine questions addressed to my Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister as printed in the Minutes of Proceedings of the Foreign Affairs Committee of 16 January 1985 on page 57.

The Motion implies that these 9 questions have already been put to my Rt Hon Friend but have not been answered. This is not the case.

In fact, the Committee itself decided not to put eight of the nine questions to my Rt Hon Friend. Only one of the original questions was put to her, in a modified form, by my Hon Friend the Member for Stroud on 26 March 1985. The Prime Minister replied on 16 April. As I am sure the Hon Member for Linlithgow knows, this exchange can be found in Appendix 15 to the Committee's Report.

It is perhaps a reflection of the relative unimportance attached not only by the Committee as a whole but by individual Hon Members as well that none of these 9 questions has been the subject of a Parliamentary Question since this report was published nearly a year ago.



What I believe is of much greater significance than these 9 questions, and what I believe the House should focus on, are the main conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee.

It is self-evident from the Committee's report that they considered the events surrounding the 1st-2nd May 1982 in the greatest depth and were given access to the relevant papers, including some of the highest sensitivity. The Committee concluded the attack on the Belgrano was authorised for legitimate military reasons, and not out of political design.

In particular, the Committee concluded, at para 4.11, on the basis of formal evidence and other information which was available, that there is no factual evidence to cast doubt on official British claims that the Argentine fleet had orders to mount a co-ordinated attack on the Task Force and that it would have been unreasonable to have reached any conclusion other than that the "Belgrano" formed part of that co-ordinated attack.

[We welcome the Committee's statement] that it is satisfied that the public explanations given to the Committee on the nature of the threat, which the "Belgrano" and her escorts were perceived to have posed, accurately conform with the assessments then available (paragraph 4.28); and that there is no evidence now that a withdrawal would have been intended to achieve anything other than a short-term tactical advantage (paragraph 4.29(iii)).

And we entirely agree with the Committee's remarks (at paragraph 4.29(iv)) that the paramount obligation of the War Cabinet was to protect the Task Force and that, in the light of the information available, it would have been a dereliction of duty for it to have taken any course of action other than to authorise a change in the Rules of Engagement to permit an attack on the "Belgrano".

The issues surrounding the sinking of the Belgrano were fully debated on 18 February 1985. At the end of that debate, the House overwhelmingly endorsed by a vote of 351 to nil the motion that the sinking of the General Belgrano was a necessary and legitimate action in the Falklands campaign; and agrees that the protection of our Armed Forces must be the prime consideration in deterring how far matters involving national security and the conduct of military operations can be disclosed.

Nothing that has been said today warrants altering the view the House took by a decisive majority on 18 February last year, and nothing whatever that has been said today justifies the disgraceful scurrilous and wholly unjustified way that the Hon Member for Linlithgow has tried to impugn the motives and the conduct of my Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister without whose resolve, leadership and moral courage the Falkland Islands would never have been recovered.

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

4 June 1986

*Dear John,*

Thank you for your letter of 4 June with which you enclosed a copy of the notes from which your Minister proposes to speak in the Debate on Friday on Mr. Dalyell's motion.

Generally we think that the approach proposed by your Minister is the right one, particularly in stressing the fact that each of the matters which Mr. Dalyell raises has been the subject of Parliamentary Debate and vote. Indeed we believe that there is possible scope for stressing this point even more in your Minister's speech.

As far as content is concerned we have some reservations on the approach suggested.

As far as Westlands is concerned we think it would be best to avoid a paraphrase of the Prime Minister's speech in the Debate on 27 January. The Prime Minister's consistent approach since the Debate is that, having given a full account of the events surrounding the disclosure of the Solicitor General's letter, checked for accuracy with everyone concerned, she refuses to put any further gloss on her own remarks or the speculation of others. This applied recently for example in the case of the "allegations" made by two journalists in a book about the subject. We therefore believe that it would be best for Mr. Stanley simply to say that the Prime Minister gave a full account in her statement on 23 January and in the Debate on 27 January; that both were checked for accuracy with everyone concerned and that she has nothing to add to what she said then. We also feel that the more your Minister says on the substance of the events of the Westland affair, the greater the scope for interventions and requests for further information.

If he feels that more is required, direct quote from the Prime Minister's speech is better than paraphrase. But on the whole we would prefer that if at all possible Mr. Stanley should stick to the line that I have described. No doubt Mr. Dalyell will say that the Prime Minister's speech and statement leave "unanswered questions": the fact is, however, that the answers are there but they did not happen to fit with his view of the world.

The second point on which we have some doubts is on

CONFIDENTIAL

whether Mr. Stanley should be drawn into answering the questions which the minority on the Foreign Affairs Select Committee wanted to address to the Prime Minister in January last year. First, the proper format for questions of this kind is that of the written question and answer rather than exchanges in a Debate. This applies particularly in the case of the answers to the two questions (8 and 9) on which you particularly wished to have clearance. Indeed it might well be extremely difficult to give accurate answers to such questions since they would need to be based on recollection of a period some 4 years ago at a time when a good deal was going on. There is in addition another point. If Mr. Stanley answers these questions in the Debate Mr. Dalyell will no doubt claim that his initiative in stimulating this debate has been a success and that he has extracted more information out of Ministers. The fact is that, as Mr. Stanley points out in the draft speech, the Government has been perfectly willing all along to answer these questions if they were put down in the proper form. The fact that Mr. Dalyell himself has failed to put them down is the clearest possible indication that his interest in them now is hardly serious.

One final point: the draft speech points out clearly that the government's position on the Belgrano was endorsed by the House of Commons by a majority of 351 votes. This was in fact a vote of 351 to nil and Mr. Dalyell did not vote against the motion. This might be worth pointing out.

If Mr. Stanley would like to discuss this further, I shall be only too happy to do so.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and the Solicitor-General, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Yours sincerely*  
*Nigel Wicks*

N. L. WICKS

John Tesh, Esq.,  
Ministry of Defence.

MR. WICKS

*or speaking note*

cc Mr. Powell

Attached is a letter /for you to send to John Tesh about John Stanley's speech in the Debate on Mr. Dalyell's motion on Friday. Mostly it is self-explanatory. I have had another look at the speech and most of it is fine. Having spoken to Michael Stark, however, I am even more convinced that we should advise Mr. Stanley very strongly to stay off Westlands altogether, other than our own standard line that the Prime Minister gave a full account, checked for accuracy, and has nothing more to add.

A similar line, for different reasons, applies to the questions on the Belgrano. Surely the strongest point here is that it was open to Mr. Dalyell over the last 18 months to put down any of the questions to which he refers on the Order paper. The fact that he has not done so clearly seems to suggest that he is not terribly interested in the answers.

Overall I think the theme to suggest to John Stanley is that there is no lack of answers to any of the matters which Tam Dalyell raises. His problem is that he would rather believe in conspiracy than truth.

*You may wish to amend to refer or  
not to send it at all: that is why I have  
amended only in manuscript*

*dr.*

TIM FLESHER

4 June 1986

CJ2ABE

From: J F M Tesh  
Private Secretary to Minister of State for the Armed Forces



MINISTER OF STATE FOR  
THE ARMED FORCES

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone 01-218 2216 (Direct Dialling)  
01-218 9000 (Switchboard)

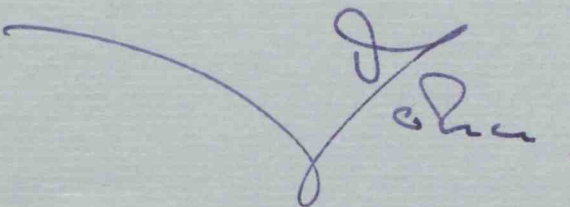
4 June 1986

Dear Tim,

DEBATE ON MR DALYELL'S MOTION - FRIDAY 6 JUNE

... I enclose a copy of the draft of the notes from which my Minister proposes to speak in answer to Mr Dalyell's motion concerning the conduct of the Prime Minister. You will see that some details remain to be provided, or confirmed, in the answers, to the 9 Falklands conflict-related questions referred to in the motion, on which Mr Stanley proposes to draw should the need arise. It would, however, be helpful to know, by noon tomorrow, of any comments you have on this material.

I am sending copies of this with appropriate extracts to the Private Secretaries to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and the Solicitor-General, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours,  


Timothy Flesher Esq  
Private Secretary  
No 10, Downing Street



CONDUCT OF THE PRIME MINISTER

The Hon Member for Linlithgow's motion is concerned with three issues - Westland's, the use of F111's based in the UK for the attack on terrorist targets in Libya on the night of 14-15 April, and the conduct of the Falklands conflict in 1982.

Each of these three issues have already been debated at length - some would say in relation to the Belgrano at interminable length - in this House.

As far as Westlands is concerned we have had my Rt Hon Friend the former S of S for Trade and Industry's Statement on 13 January, a debate on 15 January, a further statement by my Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister on 23 January and a further debate on the 27 January.

The use of UK based Fllls against terrorist targets in Libya was the subject of a statement by my Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister on 15 April and a full day's debate on 16 April.

Turning to the recovery of the Falklands, this must surely now hold the record for the largest volume of parliamentary discussion in relation to the scale of the conflict of any military action in British history.

It has been the subject of a detailed inquiry by a special constituted Committee of Privy Counsellors, under the Chairmanship of Lord Franks.

Aspects of the conflict have been studied in depth by both the Defence Select Committee and the Foreign Affairs Select Committee of this House.

During the conflict and subsequently it has been the subject of some 30 statements and debates in this House, and it has been the subject of hundreds of Parliamentary Questions.

Neither I nor any other member of the Government makes any complaint about the process of parliamentary scrutiny of the Falklands conflict. But one thing seems quite certain. However many inquiries are held; however many Select Committee reports are produced; however many parliamentary debates take place, and however many parliamentary questions are answered the Hon Member for Linlithgow will find it impossible to accept any conclusions that are at variance with his own pre-conceived notions.

[If needed]

Nothing illustrates this more clearly than the way in which the Hon Member for Linlithgow has once again repeated today his allegations that my Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister wanted a military solution to the Falklands conflict for domestic political reasons - and ordered the sinking of the Belgrano to scupper the Peruvian peace initiative.

Those allegations have been shown to be totally without foundation.

They were dismissed in the majority report of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee.

They were dismissed even by those sections of the Press - like the Observer and the Guardian - most sympathetic to the Hon Gentleman.

[Illustrate]

To make such serious accusations against any Member of the House - let alone against the Prime Minister - without being able to substantiate them is disgraceful.

It is particularly disgraceful to go on repeating them when they have been shown again and again to be wholly baseless.

I now turn to the three issues that are the subject of the hon Member's Motion.



The Westlands Affair

Starting with Westlands, the Hon Member's motion invites my Rt Hon Friend to explain in detail her role in the Westlands affair and the decision to leak selectively a Law Officer's letter to a Minister of the Crown.

My Rt Hon Friend has indeed already explained - and in detail - her role in the Westlands controversy in the Statement she made to the House on 23 January and in the speech she made to the House in the Westland debate on 27 January.

[Narrative, only if needed]

[As my Rt Hon Friend has said, she wrote to Sir John Cuckney on 1 January 1986, setting out the Government's position with regard to Westland. Her letter was cleared in advance with the Departments concerned, and with the Solicitor-General.

On 4 January, the Prime Minister saw the correspondence of the previous day between the then Secretary of State for Defence and Mr Horne of Lloyds Merchant Bank. The letter from the Defence Secretary had not been cleared by the Department of Trade and Industry or by the Law Officers. Mindful of the need for accuracy and consistency in the Government's statements on this subject, my Rt Hon Friend suggested that the Solicitor-General be asked to give his opinion of the accuracy of the Defence Secretary's letter. The Solicitor-General on the basis of the evidence then available to him, formed the provisional opinion that the Defence Secretary's letter contained material inaccuracies. My Rt Hon Friend, through her office, asked the Solicitor-General to consider writing to the Defence Secretary, to make his opinion known. After further consideration, the Solicitor-General did indeed write to the then Secretary of State for Defence, on 6 January.

As my Rt Hon Friend has stated it was a matter of duty for the Government that it should be known publicly that there were thought to be material inaccuracies in the already public letter of 3 January from the Defence Secretary, in view of the commercial judgements that might be based on such information.

Such considerations were in the mind of the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the letter from the Solicitor-General was brought to his attention, and he took the view that the Solicitor-General's opinion should be brought into the public domain as soon as possible. In order that the Solicitor-General's opinion should be public knowledge before the Westland board's press conference at 4.00 pm on 6 January he gave authority for it to be disclosed by the Department of Trade and Industry subject to the agreement of my Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister's office.

What happened subsequently has been set out in detail by my Rt Hon Friend in her statements to the House on 23 and 27 January.]

My Rt Hon Friend has made it clear that she did not give her consent to the leaking of the Solicitor-General's letter (Jan 27 Col 656) nor was she consulted on this point (Jan 27 Col 450).

She has made it clear that she deeply regrets the manner in which this letter was put into the public domain (Jan 27 Col 656) and that had she been consulted, she would have said that a different way must be found of making the relevant facts known (Jan 23 Col 450).

And my Rt Hon Friend has also made it clear that though she was told in general terms that there had been contacts between her office and the Department of Trade and Industry, she did not know about the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry's own role in the matter of the disclosure until the leak inquiry had been reported (Jan 27 Col 657).

My Rt Hon Friend has already dealt in detail with her role in the Westlands affair.

There is nothing further that I can usefully add today.

[if required:

Respond to any further accusations made in the debate regarding the Westland affair]

Use of UK-Based F111s

Turning now to the use of the UK-based F111s on the night of 14-15 April, the Hon Member has asked for the evidence as to why these aircraft represented the safest means of achieving particular objectives with the lowest possible risk both of civilian casualties in Libya and of casualties among United States personnel.

Since the hon Member tabled his motion, my Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister has answered his oral Question on this very point in the House on Tuesday of this week, June 3.

For the convenience of the House, I repeat what my Rt Hon Friend said:

"The F111 aircraft based in the United Kingdom provided the best equipped means of carrying out the United States operation against specific terrorist targets in Libya with the lowest possible risk of Libyan civilian and United States Service casualties. As the United States has indicated, the F111 possesses advanced avionics and other capabilities which made it particularly suitable for such a mission."

[If Dalyell repeats his supplementary:

"Will the Prime Minister name the senior American or Americans who told her that the F111s were more precise than the carrier-based aircraft?"

The Prime Minister's answer was:

"That was the advice we received both from across the Atlantic and from home" (Col 731)]



The Hon Member will I hope appreciate the constraints on our detailing in public the operational performance characteristics of in-service US military aircraft.

I can however tell him that the US authorities have said that F111 aircraft have unique capabilities for conducting a high payload low-level mission at night delivering precision guided munitions, and that they attached particular importance to the F111s Forward Looking Infra Red system combined with its relatively high attack speed.

There is nothing further that I can add to what my Rt Hon Fried has already said.

Falklands War

I now come to the Hon Member's last subject, namely his request for answers to the nine questions addressed to my Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister as printed in the Minutes of Proceedings of the Foreign Affairs Committee of 16 January 1985 on page 57.

The Motion implies that these 9 questions have already been put to my Rt Hon Friend but have not been answered. This is not the case.

In fact, the Committee itself decided not to put eight of the nine questions to my Rt Hon Friend. Only one of the original questions was put to her, in a modified form, by my Hon Friend the Member for Stroud on 26 March 1985. The Prime Minister replied on 16 April. As I am sure the Hon Member for Linlithgow knows, this exchange can be found in Appendix 15 to the Committee's Report.

It is perhaps a reflection of the relative unimportance attached not only by the Committee as a whole but by individual Hon Members as well that none of these 9 questions has been the subject of a Parliamentary Question since this report was published nearly a year ago.

[If needed:

I am however ready to answer these 9 questions as far as it is possible within security limitations and at this distance in time from events. On the various requests for information about the details of Cabinet and Cabinet Committee discussions it is not the practice of this Government any more than it was of our predecessors to disclose this information.]

Q1 Was the visit of Mr Pym to Washington and New York on 1 & 2 May 1982 arranged at short notice?  
Was it agreed at the War Cabinet on 30 April?  
What was the purpose of the visit?

A1 This visit was arranged at very short notice. Its purpose was to discuss with the Americans the situation following the Argentine rejection of the US peace proposals.

Q2. What full Cabinet Meetings were held between 2 April and 2 May 1982 which dealt with the Falklands and what issues relating to them were reported, endorsed, or agreed at each of the meetings?

A2. The Prime Minister has already told the Committee that there were eight meetings of the full Cabinet between 2 April and 2 May 1982 at all of which Falkland matters were discussed.

Q3.

At what date and on what grounds did the War Cabinet abandon its prime purpose of deploying and using military action in support of diplomatic initiative and economic pressure for a negotiated settlement and change to a "military solution" as the main criterion for action?

A3.

From the outset of the conflict the Government engaged in intense diplomatic activity to try to find an acceptable negotiated settlement. This diplomatic activity continued, with the help of the UN Secretary General, until 17 May 1982, but failed in the face of Argentine intransigence.

Q4.

Did the War Cabinet receive any substantive military appreciation of the hazards and risks of an attempt to re-invade the Islands and, if so, when? What attention did the War Cabinet give to the threat of Argentine air attacks on the Task Force?

A2

The War Cabinet considered the risks of an attempt to recover the Islands on a number of occasions before the Task Force landings took place on 21 May 1982. The War Cabinet received constant military advice on proposed military operations, including the landings, and it was well aware of the threat of Argentine air attacks.

Q5. When the Rules of Engagement were changed on 30 April to permit an attack on the carrier 25 MAY, what consideration was given to the diplomatic impact of the possible destruction of this vessel at that stage of the conflict?

A5. The Rules of Engagement were changed on 30 April to permit an attack, under certain circumstances, on the Argentine carrier 25 MAY because of the specific threat posed by her aircraft. Diplomatic considerations were, of course, taken into account.



Q6. Did you, or other Ministers in the War Cabinet, think fit to ask Lord Lewin for his professional appraisal of the likely consequences for Argentine action against our own ships and forces of the decision to sink the BELGRANO? If so what did he say? If not, why was this question not put by Ministers?

A6. The decision to change the Rules of Engagement to permit the sinking of the BELGRANO on 2 May was taken in the light of advice about the threat from the then Chief of Defence Staff, Lord Lewin, [who recommended that this change should be made] The paramount consideration was the protection of the Task Force; and I note that the Foreign Affairs Committee concluded that pre-emptive action was justified if attacks on the Task Force were thought to be imminent [8.2 (iv)]

Q7. What prior assessment was made by the War Cabinet of the likelihood of US support in the event of the collapse of the Haig shuttle?  
Might not the US change of approach (even without a renewed opportunity such as that provided by Peru) have influenced military thinking or opinion in Buenos Aires?

A7.

Q8. After the Chequers decision on 2 May around 1pm, did you take any further action or initiative, or were you concerned in consultation, including confirmatory action in relation to the BELGRANO, whether at Chequers, Northwood, or elsewhere? If so, what were they?

A8. After the Chequers decision, the Prime Minister took no further action or initiative, or was concerned in consultation in relation to the BELGRANO prior to its sinking.  
correct]

Q9. What telephonic or other contacts did Lord Thomas have with British and Peruvian Government authorities in the context of President Belaunde Terry's initiative in early May 1982?

A9. [I am not aware of any such contacts]

What I believe is of much greater significance, and what I believe the House should focus on, are the main conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee.

It is self-evident from the Committee's report that they considered the events surrounding the 1st-2nd May 1982 in the greatest depth and were given access to the relevant papers, including some of the highest sensitivity. The Committee concluded the attack on the Belgrano was authorised for legitimate military reasons, and not out of political design.

In particular, the Committee concluded:

that there was evidence at the time of substantial Argentine military activity on 1 May 1982 and of Argentine intentions to attack the Task force;

that the assessment of the British naval authorities and the War Cabinet that the Belgrano formed part of the attack was a reasonable one;

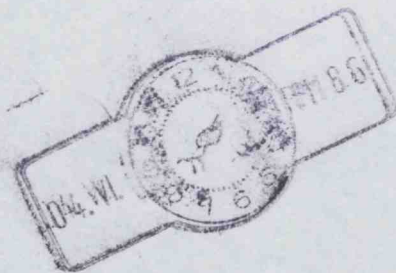
and that there was no evidence at the time of an Argentine decision to withdraw its fleet on the night of 1st-2nd May.

The Committee also concluded that there was very strong evidence of the Government's desire to avoid a purely military solution to the dispute with Argentina, and that the War Cabinet would have been failing in its duty if it had interpreted its own policy of "minimum use of force" as meaning "no use of Force".

The issues surrounding the sinking of the Belgrano were fully debated on 18 february 1985. At the end of that debate, the House overwhelmingly endorsed with a majority of 351 the motion that the sinking of the Belgrano was a necessary and legitimate action; and that the protection of the Armed Forces must be a prime consideration in deciding how far matters involving national security and the conduct of military operations can properly be disclosed.

Nothing that has been said today warrants altering the view the House took by a decisive majority on 18 February last year, and nothing whatever that has been said today justifies the disgraceful scurrilous and wholly unjustified way that the Hon Member for Linlithgow has tried to impugn the motives and the conduct of my Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister without whose resolve, leadership and moral courage the Falkland Islands would never have been recovered.





104. VI.  
1918



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

A Friday, Mr Speaker, in this House is traditionally,  
usually,  
and rightly,

a day, not for Party business,  
out for the business of the House of Commons.

To-day's business is, as far as I'm concerned, no exception.

In initiating this Debate on the Conduct of the Prime Minister,  
I do so, not as a Party politician,

which I unashamedly am,

but, on this occasion, as a Child of the House of Commons,  
who, after 24 years in this Place,  
has come to care very much,  
about the way in which the House is treated, by Ministers, however exalted.

Above all, this Debate is about Candour -

whether the Rt Hon Lady the Prime Minister has, on three crunch issues,  
been candid with the House,  
and not least with her own colleagues, Backbench and Ministerial



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Let us first of all address ourselves to a House of Commons point on the Falklands.

Four Hon Friends of mine sweated their proverbial guts out,  
without the expert assistance of Clerks of the House that is available  
to a Select Committee Chairman,

to produce a major and tightly argued Minority Report

on the Events of 1st/2nd May 1982.

Any Yone of us, from whatever side of the House,  
who has come to know any of these four Hon Friends of mine,  
knows perfectly well,  
that they care deeply about the House of Commons, and the role of the Backbencher,  
and are sceptical men, of independent judgement.

I would guess that one of the basic reasons why the Hon Members for Bow and Poplar,  
New Ham,  
Falkirk West,  
Doncaster

went to such lengths in ~~times~~ ~~the~~ terms of time and effort  
was that they perceived many unexplained inconsistencies,  
in the Government's account of 1st-2nd May 1982,  
and in subsequent information that came to them.  
from the Old Bailey Trial of Clive Ponting and elsewhere,

such as Arthur Gavshon and Desmond Rice's book on the Sinking of tghel Belgrano.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

*Evans*

This motion gives them ~~the~~ opportunity  
to try to winkle the truth out of Government.

My Hon Friends can speak for themselves, if they catch your eye :

for my part, I would like simply to confine myself to repeating their questions :

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS DESERVES AN ANSWER TO THESE QUESTIONS.

3A

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE RELATING TO THE REPORT

WEDNESDAY 16 JANUARY 1985

Members present:

Sir Anthony Kershaw, in the Chair

Mr Dennis Canavan  
Mr Robert Harvey  
Mr Ivan Lawrence  
Mr Jim Lester  
Mr Ian Mikardo

Mr Nigel Spearing  
Mr Peter Thomas  
Mr Bowen Wells  
Mr Michael Welsh

The Committee deliberated.

Motion made and Question proposed, That the following questions be put to the respective Ministers and other persons:

*To the Prime Minister*

1. Was the visit of Mr Pym to Washington and New York on 1 & 2 May 1982 arranged at short notice? Was it agreed at the War Cabinet on 30 April? What was the purpose of the visit?

2. What full Cabinet Meetings were held between 2 April and 2 May 1982 which dealt with the Falklands and what issues relating to them were reported, endorsed, or agreed at each of the meetings?

3. At what date and on what grounds did the War Cabinet abandon its prime purpose of deploying and using military action in support of diplomatic initiative and economic pressure for a negotiated settlement and change to a "military solution" as the main criterion for action?

4. Did the War Cabinet receive any substantive military appreciation of the hazards and risks of an attempt to re-invade the Islands and, if so, when? What attention did the War Cabinet give to the threat of Argentine air attacks on the Task Force?

5. When the Rules of Engagement were changed on 30 April to permit an attack on the carrier *25 May*, what consideration was given to the diplomatic impact of the possible destruction of this vessel at that stage of the conflict?

6. Did you, or other Ministers in the War Cabinet, think fit to ask Lord Lewin for his professional appraisal of the likely consequences for Argentine action against our own ships and forces of the decision to sink the *Belgrano*? If so what did he say? If not, why was this question not put by Ministers?

7. What prior assessment was made by the War Cabinet of the likelihood of US support in the event of the collapse of the Haig shuttle? Might not the US change of approach (even without a renewed opportunity such as that provided by Peru) have influenced military thinking or opinion in Buenos Aires?

8. After the Chequers decision on 2 May around 1 pm, did you take any further action or initiative, or were you concerned in consultation, including confirmatory action in relation to the *Belgrano*, whether at Chequers, Northwood, or elsewhere? If so, what were they?

9. What telephonic or other contacts did Lord Thomas have with British and Peruvian Government authorities in the context of President Belaunde Terry's initiative in early May 1982?

*To the Secretary of State for Defence*

10. Please supply a chart of the South Atlantic, similar to that published by the *New Statesman* and suitable for reproduction, to show: (1) the 200-mile TEZ; (2) the

therefore call on the House of Commons to set up its own inquiry, conducted by persons who will have the right of access to all information, including security information.

- 9.10 Amongst the matters which we recommend that this inquiry should consider are:
1. Why was no notice apparently taken of the warnings from both the Joint Intelligence Committee and Lord Carrington about the possibility of an Argentine invasion of the Islands?
  2. Why did Sir John Nott fail to respond to Lord Carrington's repeated warnings about the likely consequences of the withdrawal of *Endurance*?
  3. Why was the Prime Minister's instruction (minuted on Ambassador Williams' report of 3 March 1982) to make contingency plans not carried out?
  4. What considerations prevented the despatch of a naval force to the South Atlantic in early March 1982?
  5. Were any relevant and significant state documents withheld from the Franks Committee?
  6. After Mr Pym's statement in the House on 21 April 1982, what influences were brought to bear on him, and why, to induce him to return to the House and amend his statement?
  7. Why did it take 11 days to deposit in the Library of the House a copy of the 23 April warning? What steps were taken to publicise its terms, other than those mentioned in this Report?
  8. What communications passed between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the British Embassies in Washington and Lima during April and May 1982?
  9. In addition to official communications, what information, if any, about the Peruvian peace initiative did the Prime Minister or other Ministers receive from other sources, including the United States Embassy in Lima, or sources in Britain or elsewhere?
  10. What were the considerations which led to the decisions to escalate military activity in the South Atlantic on 1 May 1982, and when were they taken?
  11. What range of military opinion did the War Cabinet consult when considering military policy for the period after the arrival of the Task Force in the latitude of the Falklands but before the amphibious force could arrive some two weeks later?
  12. What information can be obtained from the Government of Peru about the conduct of the Peruvian peace proposals and about the information on them passed by the then Peruvian Government, officially or unofficially, to HM Government?
  13. Did HM Government ignore the report from the British Ambassador in Lima of his conversation with the Peruvian Foreign Secretary on 30 April 1982? If so, why? If it was not ignored, what action was taken, and to whom was information sent?
  14. Why was no consideration given, at the meeting of the War Cabinet on 30 April, to the significance of the United States declaration of support for the UK, and particularly to its economic and political impact on the Junta and on the political balance of power within ruling circles in Argentina?
  15. What advice did the War Cabinet receive concerning the scope of military action possible within the terms of Article 51 of the UN Charter and Resolution 502 of the Security Council?
  16. What consideration was given to the ideas contained in the Pym Memorandum of 1 May at the War Cabinet meetings of 30 April and 2 May 1982? Why were Mr Pym's proposals rejected?
  17. Why was the Foreign Secretary, on mission in Washington, not consulted about the changes in the Rules of Engagement made on 2 May 1982 to permit the sinking of the *Belgrano* and other Argentine warships outside the territorial waters?

- 30
18. Was Mr Pym right in declaring that President Belaunde's proposals were "only outlines", or was Secretary Haig right in believing that they were firm enough to form the basis of an agreement?
  19. Why did the Government ignore or defy the United Nations Resolution 502 which it had itself drafted?
  20. Why was there no meeting of the Mandarins Committee before the War Cabinet deliberations of 2 May?
  21. Was the decision to sink the *Belgrano* not taken by the War Cabinet but by an impromptu and unminuted gathering assembled by the Prime Minister or Lord Lewin? Who was present at the respective meetings? At which meeting was the decision formally made and minuted?
  22. When was the likelihood of a specific initiative from the Secretary-General of the United Nations known to the Prime Minister and the War Cabinet? When was it known that the Secretary-General and Mr Pym would be meeting on the evening of 2 May?
  23. Did Admiral Lord Lewin, before going to Chequers on 2 May, consult the Chiefs of Staff and senior naval officers on changing the Rules of Engagement; and if so (a) what was their advice, and (b) why were these consultations not revealed?
  24. What intercepts were made, and when, of orders to the Argentine fleet; which of them were decoded, and when; which of the decrypts were passed to Northwood, and when; and which were then passed to the War Cabinet, and when? Were the *Guardian* and *Observer* reports on this matter (see para 6.11 above) correct?
  25. What are the answers to the questions which we proposed the Committee should ask and which the Committee decided not to ask?<sup>189</sup>
  26. What minutes or instructions, other than the Legge minute and the Baker minute, were passed in the Department of Defence or other Departments designed to suppress or falsify information which should have been given to Parliament?
  27. How far was national security used to justify the suppression of information which had no security implications?
  28. How could it have been impracticable to translate the Rules of Engagement into lay language for the Committee when that had already been done for the War Cabinet?
  29. What are the answers to the four questions in para 6.8 above?
  30. What other untrue or misleading statements were made by Ministers to Parliament in addition to those set out in paras 7.6-7.16 above?

9.11 A confident Government, ready to account fully for its actions, would willingly submit its case before a parliamentary enquiry. This administration has refused to do so and has instead, sometimes with truculence, concealed the facts behind the easy shield of national security. The men who lost their lives in the war over the Falklands deserve a better tribute, and parliamentary democracy will not be seen to be effective unless such an inquiry takes place.

<sup>189</sup> These questions are Nos 1, 3 to 9, 11, 13 to 17, 19, 21, 22, 24 and 29, set out in the Minutes of Proceedings for 16 January 1985.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Speaker, I do not believe in innuendo,

and so let me not mince my words.

I believe that the Prime Minister misled the House of Commons in a number of ways, over the Falklands War,

but in particular over the seriousness of Peace negotiations,

and over the timing of when she had the " first indications "

of the Peruvian Peace Proposals.

After my meeting with the Prime Minister in her Room in the House at 9.30 pm on Wednesday 21st April.

I went back , alarmed, to tell my colleagues that in the absence of the humiliation of Argentina,

she wanted a fight.

This assessment is confirmed by Sarah Keays in her book, A Question of Judgement, Pages 25 and 26

" For all the public discussion of settlement proposals, it was clear from what Cecil told me that the Inner Cabinet, like most of the population, privately believed that war was unavoidable. On Sunday 16th April, Cecil came to see me very late and rather angry. It was the only time I heard him make serious criticism of the Prime Minister, for whom he had great admiration, being deeply impressed by her courage and determination. He was infuriated by an exchange he had had with her at a meeting of the Inner Cabinet with the Chiefs of Staff. When he had expressed his concern about the risks attendant on a particular course of action, one of several under consideration, she had rounded on him with words to the effect that there was no room for faint hearts in the Inner Cabinet.





HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

I thought it a very telling incident.

If the Prime Minister's closest colleagues could not feel free to express their opinions to her absolutely frankly, they could be of no use to her at all. "

Against this background,

why was the House of Commons being told <sup>7epentally</sup> that we were doing everything possible to find a peaceful solution,

and why was the Foreign Secretary, the Rt Hon Gt for Cambridgeshire, sent off to Washington in what he imagined were bona fide peace initiatives ?

Secondly, as I have argued several times,

it is simply not true that as the Prime Minister said to the Shadow Cabinet,

in her letter to my Rt Hon Friend for Llanelli,

that " the first indications of the Peruvian Peace Proposals reached London at 11.15 pm on Sunday 2nd May. "



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Before moving on from the Falklands,

may I spatchcock into my speech a point that saddens me about Select Committees?

On Wednesday 16th January 1985, it appears from the record, page lix,

that five Hon Conservative Members of the Select Committee voted against even putting questions to ~~the Prime Minister~~, the Defence Secretary, Lord Lewin, Sir John Nott, the Foreign Secretary, and the Prime Minister.

It would be hypocritical of me,  
to be critical of these five Conservatives,  
because I remember very well,

when in 1966, as a Member of the Select Committee on Science and Technology,  
doing a major Report on the British Nuclear Power Programme,

I suggested that the then Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, should come before the Committee,  
to answer questions that I thought were appropriate to the Head of Government.

Wrath descend<sup>d</sup> on my unsuspecting head,  
from all sorts of quarters, including Fred Peart the then Leader of the House,  
and the late Dick Crossman, whose PPS I was.

It was made clear to me in colourful language, that it was above my station in life,  
to suggest the hauling of the Prime Minister in front of the Select Committee.

Albeit in retrospect, I was justified and right to ask that Harold Wilson should be  
testifying on the subject of nuclear power, I caved in.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Therefore all I say to Parliamentary colleagues of all Parties is  
that if we put our trust in Select Committees  
in doing a proper investigative job, on sensitive issues,  
in cases, where the actions of a Prime Minister and Head of Government are concerned,  
we will be disappointed.

Since, as Begehot and others have pointed out,  
the House of Commons is not only a legislature, like the U.S. Congress,  
but also a " pool of talent " from which the Executive is selected,  
considerations of decorum,  
possible preferment to Ministerial Office,  
sheer honourable Party Loyalty,

make it inevitable that Select Committees

cannot by their nature

be expected to be satisfactory <sup>means</sup> instruments of investigation into Prime Ministerial conduc



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Therefore I do not apologise for using time on the Floor of the House

to consider Libya and the Flls,

which is being looked at by the Defence Select Committee,

and Westlands which is being looked at by the Select Committees on Defence,

Trade and Industry



90

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Speaker, on 14th April, at 3.30 pm. OR 579, I rose on this point of order

Though I believe your motives were honourable,  
it will be deemed a great pity that you did not grant a PNQ to Denis Healey,  
as the obvious question would have been asked about the use of British bases,  
and the House of Commons would have had some in-put into events before they took place,  
rather than a post mortem.

## Libya

3.30 pm

**Mr. Tam Dalyell** (Linlithgow): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does it arise out of questions?

**Mr. Dalyell:** Yes. Precisely because I did not put in a private notice question I feel that, on behalf of several Back Benchers, I am entitled to ask whether it is not extraordinary that, in the middle of the crisis concerning Libya and the British bases, the House of Commons is to hear nothing. Would not any visitor consider it extraordinary if we were to spend eight and a half hours debating Sunday trading and yet, as a Legislature, be told nothing about the United States or Soviet position or to have a statement on the crisis?

You will know, Mr. Speaker, that I have thought for a long time that you are a very superior Speaker to George Thomas. *[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I am enjoying this.

**Mr. Dalyell:** George Thomas made certain judgments of his own, such as that in April 1982 that the Prime Minister ought to be supported on the south Atlantic issue. We read that in his memoirs. There is no secret about it. That happened during one of the last crises, when he was Speaker, concerning those islands in the south Atlantic. Do you not think, Mr. Speaker, that it is matter of some judgment whether circumstances that are a matter of war, or potential war, outside Europe, entitle Parliament to a report from Ministers? There might be a judgment about the safety of British subjects. You know that I am one of those hon. Members who have constituents who are involved, and at risk, near Tripoli. Bearing in mind the circumstances, why does the House not have at least a Foreign Office or Prime Ministerial report on this urgent matter?

**Mr. Harry Greenway** (Ealing, North): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. I note the hon. Gentleman's well-deserved tribute to you. I am sure that you will always call him for his share, but I hope that you will not call him more often than that.

**Mr. Geoffrey Dickens** (Littleborough and Saddleworth): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have just recently left the Table Office, where I endeavoured to table a straightforward question, which any hon. Member would wish to table. If I can explain—

**Mr. Speaker:** Is this further to the point of order?

**Mr. Dickens:** No, but it is a point of order arising out of questions.

**Mr. Speaker:** Let me deal with the first point of order.

**Mr. Andrew Faulds** (Warley, East): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Briefly, please.

**Mr. Faulds:** I strongly reiterate the comments about you, Mr. Speaker. The only reason why I did not trouble your private office this morning to raise a private notice question on the dangers to peace in the middle east caused by the American President's cretinous behaviour was that I was sure that an hon. Member would have tabled, and been granted the opportunity to raise, a private notice question. I am surprised that that did not happen. Is it in order to seek leave to move the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 10, to raise the issue?

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the hon. Member. Private notice question applications are not matters that are raised in the House. Many considerations must be taken into account. I fully understand and appreciate the concern of the House about this matter, and I shall bear that in mind tomorrow and during the rest of the week.

**Mr. Tony Marlow** (Northampton, North): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. Events of great significance in the middle east may take place tonight. How can the House bring its views to bear before those events take place?

**Mr. Speaker:** It would have been possible for any hon. Member to apply before 12 o'clock to seek leave to move the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 10 to raise this subject—they did not do so. If anything has happened since 12 o'clock, it would be in order to ask leave under Standing Order No. 10 now. Mr. Dickens.

**Mr. Dickens** *rose*—

**Mr. Peter Shore** (Bethnal Green and Stepney) *rose*—

**Mr. Dickens:** I was endeavouring to explain that a short time ago I left the Table Office—

**Mr. Shore** *rose*—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Dickens:** You called me, Mr. Speaker. The right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) should sit down.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. In the interests of neatness, I shall hear the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore).

**Mr. Shore:** Further to the original point of order, Mr. Speaker. My hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) has raised a matter of the utmost importance which should be treated with appropriate seriousness by both sides of the House. This is a matter in which our national interest is involved. As the Leader of the House is present, will he assure the House that hon. Member's feelings on this important matter will be conveyed to his right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and that a statement will be made at the earliest opportunity?

**The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen):** Yes.



10

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

However, I suppose one can understand a Prime Minister's decision not to reveal the use of British bases before an attack.

What the House of Commons deserves to know is to what extent her senior colleagues were consulted.

For example, George Younger said on radio

10 A

As his Scottish Parliamentary colleague for 22 years, my judgement has to be that the Rt Hon Gt for Ayr would not have said that, unless he believed it to be true at the time he said it



(Recorded 14.4.86)

Interview with George Younger, 16th April. West Sound Radio, Ayr.

- Q How does the British government stand on the question of the use of American bases in Britain in an adventure in the Med.
- A First of all we are just about as concerned about the organisation of terrorism by Libya and other countries - there seems to be some pretty hard evidence that they have been actually organised from their own so-called Peoples Bureaux.
- Q (couldn't hear this properly) Britain .....is one of them?
- A Something has got to be done. I think that my colleagues and I are very dubious as to whether a military strike is the best way of doing this. It is liable to hit the wrong people, it creates other tensions in the area. There are a lot of other things that can be done which my colleagues are certainly looking at very hard - further withdrawals of permission for diplomats from offending countries, action like reducing trade and reducing contacts of one sort or another, with those who refuse to outlaw terrorism - I think these sort of pressures are very important.
- Q What will be the position of HMG were the Americans ~~to~~ determined to use forces mustered in the UK in the Med - F111 bombers based in Southern England.
- A Well, it is well established from many governments - I think it was originally a Labour government that worked this out - that on nuclear matters it is very clear that only with the joint permission of both countries agreeing would this ever be used, and that is clearly established. As far as other uses are concerned, there is a rather grey area. Normally we expect those American bases to be used as they are by our allies, the Americans, for normal operations. The question is whether such a strike would be counted as normal operations, or not, and all I can say is that we, if we received such a request, we would look at it very sympathetically, bearing in mind that our American allies, and they are allies, spending a lot of money defending ourselves they are having their civilians, innocent civilians, murdered, and we cannot just allow that to go on.
- Q To what degree are British forces involved, I am thinking particularly of the surveillance bases on Cyprus.
- A Well, there is no British involvement and there has been no suggestion of any British involved ... of British forces, of British weapons or British bases or anything like that. There is of course normal intelligence covering system which operates all the time of day, every day throughout the year and that information is pooled between us and the Americans to our great advantage, and that is made available and so to that extent we have an involvement.





11

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

When was the Foreign Secretary consulted ?

Was it AFTER, or BEFORE  
anything could be usefully done  
to act on the considered  
advice of the Foreign Office?

[Mr. Denis Healey]

certainly justify the Nicaraguan Government, if it had the capacity, bombing the CIA headquarters at Langley in Virginia.

I do not believe that it is possible, nor do most of those jurists who have written to the newspapers in recent days, to justify the action of the American and British Governments under international law. Those of us who oppose that action are also moved by the consideration that the actions Her Majesty's Government supported this week will be counter-productive and fail to achieve any of the objectives that the United States Administration had in mind when they ordered that action.

There is an overwhelming reason to agree with Sir Anthony Parsons, to whose advice I know the Prime Minister has in the past paid particular attention, when he said, of President Reagan, "that sort of vigilantism is more likely to provoke terrorism than prevent terrorism."

In the course of provoking terrorism such action has also destroyed the Anglo-Saxon influence in the middle east, and undermined those few friendly Governments that the west still has in the middle east. It has also divided the Commonwealth, divided Europe and divided the Atlantic alliance.

What is perplexing is that Her Majesty's Government seemed right up to late on Monday evening to share all the views that I have just expressed. On Monday afternoon, the Secretary of State for Defence told Radio Clyde:

"My colleagues and I are very dubious as to whether a military strike is the best way of doing this. It is liable to hit the wrong people. It will create other tensions in the area." He was speaking for his Cabinet colleagues and he was right. When he said that, he must have known that the broadcast would be put out by Radio Clyde on Tuesday morning.

That very afternoon the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Foreign Secretary spent many hours trying to persuade his European colleagues to draft a document which ended with an appeal for restraint to all concerned and which asked them to avoid a further escalation of military tension in the area. The right hon. and learned Gentleman was sufficiently impressed by the results of his work as to describe the communiqué as "vigorous and appropriate". Immediately after the meeting in the Hague ended his German colleague left to go to Washington to present the document to the American Government. But before Herr Genscher's plane touched down, his journey was destined to prove fruitless because a few hours after the Foreign Secretary left the Hague, and a few hours after the Defence Secretary had made his wise and prudent broadcast, F111 fighter bombers were roaring off British bases to bomb Libya, with the full support of the Prime Minister.

As I said, the Foreign Secretary described his work in the Hague as "vigorous and appropriate". Next day the Prime Minister described it as "passive" and "supine". None of us who were here yesterday afternoon will forget the icy venom with which the right hon. Lady castigated what she called Europe for its passivity and supineness.

The very bombing of Tripoli, on which the Defence Secretary had shown such doubts and which the Foreign Secretary appeared to be steering his European colleagues to oppose, was justified yesterday by the Prime Minister with that strident absolutism which we have learned to recognise as the best sign of her inner insecurity.

In the light of those facts I must ask the Foreign Secretary to answer a question: when he was negotiating with his European colleagues in the Hague on Monday did he know that the United States was about to launch the task force, with British agreement and support, a few hours later? If he did, he was deliberately deceiving his colleagues. His Belgian colleague, Mr. Tindemans, has already given warning that if that was the case, the Foreign Secretary will have a very uncomfortable afternoon with them tomorrow.

**The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Geoffrey Howe):** The right hon. Gentleman pursues this point which I must assure him is without foundation. It is important to put the matter beyond doubt. Around the table in the Hague on Monday it was common knowledge that United States military action against Libya was a possibility and, indeed, an early possibility, but that no final decision had been taken. It is impossible to say in what detail any of our Community partners were privy to United States planning. Ambassador Walters visited a number of European capitals besides London discussing United States plans, and the discussion on that day was focused almost entirely on how the 12 should respond collectively to Libyan terrorism. There was scarcely any mention of the United States intention. No evidence emerged during the discussion that any Foreign Minister was aware during the meeting of a final American decision to attack. For my part, I had no confirmation of any decision by the President, still less of any decision to authorise raids that night, until I came back to London and met the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Healey:** The House and the Foreign Secretary's colleagues will want to reflect on this important person's statement by the Foreign Secretary, and I shall require injury time for the time he took to read his carefully prepared draft to the House. He has answered the second question. Presumably the Defence Secretary did not know either. Yet Mr. Larry Speakes told the American press the other day that last week the President asked his staff, "Shall we make it Monday night?" and they replied, "Yes." If the Foreign Secretary was not deceiving his colleagues, President Reagan was deceiving the British Government.

We all want to understand a little better how much the Foreign Secretary and the Defence Secretary were involved in this affair. Most surprising to me, apparently they were not present at the meeting between General Walters and the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister told us yesterday—and this is a matter for a connoisseur of "Yes Minister"—when asked whether they were privy to a decision she replied,

"we have acted together in knowledge of one another's views". We always assume that the Prime Minister knows her colleagues' views and we usually assume that she ignores them. The Prime Minister also told us yesterday without explaining the meaning of her words:

"the Overseas and Defence Committee of the Cabinet met on Monday morning."—[*Official Report*, 15 April 1986; Vol. 95, c. 731.]

She did not tell us whether the Committee was told, apparently not, or what its members discussed. Perhaps they just sat admiring another of the manic monologues from the Prime Minister that always shed about as much light on the issue as an electric grill. The House and the



12

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

These questions are not simply Opposition mischief making.

In his remarkable speech in the Other Place, 18th April, Column 894,

Field Marshal Lord Carver recalled that the Prime Minister said that discussions with the President covered a week.

The Field Marshal asked Lady Young to tell the House who was consulted and who agreed?

To-date the Field Marshal's questions has gone unanswered.

The House of Commons deserves an answer.



13

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The House of Commons is also entitled to press the Prime Minister  
as to her real motives for agreeing to the use of British bases.

In particular, Col 726 13 A

In general, the impression was given

that the Prime Minister gave permission

because she was above all concerned to limit civilian casualties.





74

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Yet, from the Pentagon come very different reasons.

First, the attack on Libya provided a proving ground for weapons.

US News and World Report carries an article by William Broyles, Junior, 12th May 1986

on the Politics of War, in which he writes,

"The budget, in short, is the mission. ' It all comes back to the budget ',

says one ex-Pentagon analyst.

" For years we've been saying that radar, infrared, and smart bombs are the way to go.

We've spent billions on night-mission avionics, so we had to try to use them,

even if a day-light strike would have been better. "

Equally bluntly, Aviation Week of 21st April asserted that the attack on Libya " provided a good proving ground for the F 111s to be flown in the Mediterranean, and gave the Air Force a chance to demonstrate its capabilities. "

A raid of this kind

was deemed to have great value in the presentation to Congress of the case

for greater spending on the US Navy and US Airforce.

But it was not a reason given by our Prime Minister to our House of Commons.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Secondly, there was Inter-service rivalry involved between the US Navy and US Air Force

As a senior official of the Pentagon artlessly put it to Aviation Week,

page 19, April 21st,

" Understandably. after the all-Navy action in Libya last month,

the Air Force wanted a piece of the action. "

Again, this was not a reason given by our Prime Minister, to our House of Commons,  
for the use of our territory in Britain, as a base for non-Nato operations.



16

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Thirdly, there has been the formidable lobby in the Pentagon which has been championing the idea of joint service operations, particularly the use of land-based aircraft in support of naval operations.

When the joint chiefs of staff sat down in December 1985

to consider the military options against Libya,

Admiral James Watkins, and others - Watkins was Chief of Naval Operations -

saw a useful opportunity for a joint Naval-Air Force operation

to demonstrate the value of their concept to doubters

in Congress and the Pentagon.

Again, this was not a reason hinted at by our Prime Minister to our House of Commons.





HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

It is simply not true that the bomb aiming equipment on the F 111s  
was superior to the bomb-aiming equipment on the Carrier-borne A 7s.

*They both had the TRAM system.  
or its equivalent.*



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Fourthly, and possibly most important of all from the point of view of the House of Commons.

Whereas certainly the internal politics of the US military were an important reason for the attacks on Libya, the nature and timing of the raid had much wider political implications.

I quote from the April 1986 issue of Sanity.

where, page 16. Dan Pleasch asks Rear Admiral Eugene Carroll Junior, of the Center for Defence Information in Washington,

" In your experience, would it have been practical to use the F 111s, and ask the British afterwards ? "

" That was the basis " said Carroll, "on which the plan was prepared. "

Mr Speaker, the implications are chilling.

A major reason for including the F 111s in the operation was to tie in Britain, as one European country, seen to be supporting the United States.

Again, this was not a reason the Prime Minister offered to the House of Commons.

II he would make different arrangements from November, he at the same time dismantled two Poseidon submarines in accordance with SALT II. We wish SALT II still to be regarded on both sides and we hope that it will continue to be so.

**Mr. Hattersley:** Will the Prime Minister now at least attempt to answer the question? Does she believe that the President should abandon SALT II, or does she believe that what I think she calls "the Russian case to answer" is in itself justification for abrogation?

**The Prime Minister:** I notice that the right hon. Gentleman will never say anything about the Soviet Union not complying with SALT II. Never, never, never. I make it perfectly clear that I hope that SALT II will continue to be observed on both sides. President Reagan has just observed SALT II by breaking up two Poseidon submarines in accordance with SALT II. I hope that both sides will continue to comply.

**Mr. Hattersley:** The House and the country know perfectly well why the Prime Minister will not give a straight answer to that straight question. Why does she so regularly humiliate herself and this country by always dancing to President Reagan's tune? Does she not think that in the matter of world peace she has a duty to speak for this country, rather than wait to be told what to say by the President of the United States?

**The Prime Minister:** The right hon. Gentleman is talking utter nonsense. I hope that SALT II will continue to be observed. The United States is observing SALT II by dismantling two Poseidon submarines. It has left the door open for the Soviet Union to comply with SALT II. I hope that it will do so, because there is a clear opportunity for the Soviet Union to respond positively.

**Mr. Jim Spicer:** Will my right hon. Friend join me in praising the Dorset police for the firm but fair way in which they handled this so-called peace convoy at the weekend? At the same time, will she accept that most people are puzzled that such trespass and such disruption of a weekend and of our highways can be allowed to continue?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes. I share my hon. Friend's distaste for this whole matter. If by any chance the law on trespass is inadequate, we shall have to consider amending it.

**Dr. Owen:** How can President Reagan expect Mr. Gorbachev to visit him in Washington in December if in November President Reagan increases the number of cruise missiles on the B52 aeroplanes? Surely the Prime Minister ought to show her convictions at the Dispatch Box and make it clear that the abandonment of SALT II would be a disaster and that her Government would not support that?

**The Prime Minister:** I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will make it equally clear that if there is an agreement it has to be complied with by both sides. The United States is complying with it. It has given a number of details where it thinks the Soviet Union is not complying with it. The reply from the Soviet Union has not dealt with those non-compliance points. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will at least agree that both sides must comply with the agreement, and the United States is doing so.

**Mr. Andrew MacKay:** Further to the question from my hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, West (Mr. Spicer), may I say that while I am delighted that my right hon. Friend will look at the question of trespass and the law, may I ask whether she is satisfied that the law is being obeyed to the extent that benefits are being properly paid to these hippies? Is she satisfied that their children are being properly educated within the law and that the health legislation is being properly enforced by the health authorities?

**The Prime Minister:** As my hon. Friend knows, matters such as vehicle registration are wholly matters for the police. He asked about the benefits that these people receive. So that there should be no possibility of fraud or of people appearing at one benefit office having received benefit from another, there is a social security officer attached to them to see that duplication does not occur. *[Interruption.]* I had exactly the same reaction as Opposition Members when I read that, but then I was told that there was a tendency for these people to apply to one office and go on to another one and apply again. The social security authorities thought it important to take action to avoid that.

**Q2. Mr. Dobson** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 3 June.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Dobson:** What credence can the Prime Minister place in the reasons that President Reagan has given for withdrawing from the SALT treaty, when he personally misled her over the accuracy of F111 bombers on the raid on Libya?

**The Prime Minister:** I utterly reject the hon. Gentleman's assertion. He asked what credence I place in the United States agreement on SALT II. The hon. Gentleman will be aware, and I have repeated it several times, that when the President made the announcement he simultaneously acted in accordance with SALT II by dismantling and breaking up two Poseidon submarines. One could have no better evidence than that.

**Mr. Squire:** When the Cabinet discusses public expenditure in the near future, will my right hon. Friend look in particular at a number of housing aspects, including the desirability of phasing out all bed-and-breakfast accommodation for the homeless, which is both expensive and unnecessary? Will she also consider the reintroduction of improvement grants at a higher level, as they are a classic illustration of the way in which public money can stimulate greater private investment?

**The Prime Minister:** I notice that if my hon. Friend is proposing additional expenditure he carefully proposes economies equal to the additional expenditure. I hope that his example will be followed by all right hon. and hon. Members.

#### F111 Aircraft

**Q3. Mr. Dalyell** asked the Prime Minister if she will list those characteristics of F111 aircraft based in the United Kingdom which rendered their use essential for the United States' attack on Libya.

**The Prime Minister:** The F111 aircraft based in the United Kingdom provided the best equipped means of

carrying out the United States operation against specific terrorist targets in Libya, with the lowest possible risk of Libyan civilian and United States service casualties. As the United States has indicated, the F111 possesses advanced avionics and other capabilities which made it particularly suitable for such a mission.

**Mr. Dalyell:** Will the Prime Minister name the senior American, or Americans, who told her that the F111s were more precise than the carrier-based aircraft?

**The Prime Minister:** That was the advice that we received both from across the Atlantic and from home.

**Sir Anthony Buck:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that if we had not given permission for the F111s to be utilised, the Americans would have gone ahead, used less accurate aircraft and that there would have been more civilian casualties?

**The Prime Minister:** As I said when I spoke to the House on this matter, I understand that the raid would have gone ahead in any event.

**Mr. Stuart Holland:** The Prime Minister referred to the United Kingdom's aid budget to Africa.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The question is about the F111.

**Mr. Marlow:** What effect has the raid had on Colonel Gaddafi's ability to wage international terrorism?

**The Prime Minister:** I believe that the raid had a great effect. I believe that it showed that the United States was prepared to use force in self-defence against terrorism. That in itself is a salutary warning.

**Mr. Wareing:** Will the Prime Minister say what kind of self-defence should be conducted by the Nicaraguan Government against the terrorist in the White House?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. That does not relate to this question, which is about Libya. It is a definitive question.

**Mr. Wareing:** As the United States believed that it was necessary to use F111s—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. Member is wasting time.

#### Engagements

Q40. **Mr. Litherland** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 3 June.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Litherland:** Does the Prime Minister agree with Mr. Bob Geldof's vivid description of the Foreign

Secretary's speech at the United Nations? However crudely it was put, was it not a fair and just assessment of the cant and hypocrisy this Government's aid to the Third world, compared with the Live Aid events? Does the right hon. Lady realise that her Government are now branded as a Government without compassion?

**The Prime Minister:** There are 550 million reasons why that assertion is not true. I have already said that £550 million was given by the taxpayer, through this Government, to Africa in one year both in bilateral and in multilateral aid. That was a generous contribution to the problems of that troubled continent.

**Mr. Nelson:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that there will be widespread public support for her restatement this afternoon of the mutual obligations under the SALT II treaty? Does she agree that treaties lightly cast aside may be lightly entered into?

**The Prime Minister:** Treaties should not be lightly entered into. This one was not lightly entered into. It was never ratified by the United States, because in the meantime the Soviet Union went into Afghanistan, which country it still occupies. Nevertheless, the United States has continued to observe the treaty and I believe that it is anxious that both sides should continue to observe it.

Q5. **Mr. Eadie** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 3 June.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Eadie:** Since the Prime Minister has shown concern about litter in our streets when viewing from a car window, and has asked that something should be done about it, I wonder whether the right hon. Lady would consider at long last travelling by British Rail? If she looked out of the window she would see the litter of industrial devastation that the economic policies of her Government have perpetuated, and she might do something about that too.

**The Prime Minister:** With regard to the implications of the question, an initiative will shortly be announced on improving the environment with regard to litter. With regard to the greater matter, as the hon. Gentleman is aware, regional aid is now slanted towards creating more jobs in those regions, and my noble Friend the Secretary of State for Employment has taken extensive action, all of which the hon. Gentleman will find set out extensively in the new booklet "Action for Jobs".



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

18C  
—

When pressed, the Prime Minister becomes uncharacteristically vague about the question of what she was told by the Americans.

In the Scotsman, Martin Dowle asserts that President Reagan did not talk personally to the Prime Minister in the week before the Libyan raid.

What senior American, then, speaking to our Prime Minister implied that the expensive Carrier born A 6s and A 7s were so inferior to the F 111s, that they could not carry out the Libya Mission.

Any American who said that would have some awkward questions from the US Navy and US taxpayers back in Washington.

I call on the Prime Minister to let us know who exactly did tell her, if anyone did, about the F 111s being more precise, avoiding collateral damage, and cutting down civilian casualties?

The Prime Minister has got to the stage where she will invent any cock and bull story that suits her.



19

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Minister may switch ground,

and claim as the Prime Minister did in answer to the Hon Member for Thanet,

on 15th April 1986, Col 726,

" We were also influenced by the fact that the United States

has hundreds of thousands of forces in Europe

to defend the liberty of Europe.

in that capacity they have been subject to terrorist attack. "

If this is a reference to the bombing in West Berlin.

could the House of Commons be told

why the Bundeskriminalamt, the Federal Police in West Germany,

have even now refused to confirm the Libyan connection ?

why, Herr Lochte, the Chief of the Verfassungschutz, the Bureau for the Protection of the

Constitution has gone on record to say that he excludes any Libyan connection,

and why the German Intelligence, the Bundesnachrichtendienst differs substantially from the

Americans about the interpretation of Libyan messages ?



20 ●

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

I am no admirer of Mr Botha,

but Mr Botha was quite justified in making comparisons

between what our Prime Minister and President Reagan did

and the attack, so universally deplored, on ~~Nazis~~ Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana.

And, I point out Mr Speaker, that it's not just the Prime Ministers critics who think along these line -

Ferdinand Mount , writing in the Spectator 24th May 1986 Page 6

" For the comparison does throw a fascinating if rather eerie light on our confused and contradictory attitudes towards terrorism and the response to terrorism. The two ~~events~~ raids are as nearly alike as any two events in an untidy world. The Governments of Zambia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe may not sponsor terrorism in quite the same way as Colonel Gaddafi does; but the distinction is not a crucial one. "



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

21

Mr Speaker, my Parliamentary interest in Westlands began long before the company's name became a household word.

Urged to take an interest in the British helicopter industry, by Mr Clive Jenkins, Mr Stan Davidson, and Mr Robert McCusker, at our monthly working meetings of ASTMS MPs, back in June/ July,

I went on delegations to Ministers about Westlands orders, and visited the Yeovil plant on November 18th.

My interest in subsequent events was rendered sceptical by the fact, that back in November 1988, as the Hon Member for Yeovil knows, they could hardly get a Minister, including Ministers at Defence, to take any interest at all in their plight.





HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Speaker, compared to the Falklands War,  
and the F 1 111 attack on Libya,

the Westlands Affair may seem from the point of view of history,  
far less important.

Yet, it obsessed the country for 3 weeks,  
and understandably so, since it illuminated the heart of government.

Mr Speaker, in this House, we all have to make judgements about one another,  
often over a longish period of time.

I simply say that having experience of the Rt Hon Gt, the Member for Richmond,  
over some 45 Parliamentary days when he was the Opposition Spokesman on Devolution  
and having seen him in action since,

I find it hard to believe that he, a QC, a careful lawyer, a former Home Secretary  
would have been so reckless as himself to dream up the idea of  
leaking selectively a Law Officer's letter to a Minister of the Crown.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

*such a ploy*

Yet, if ~~it~~ would not occur to him,

it certainly might occur to her -

for the Prime Minister has a reckless streak,

and had she not been a gambler,

she would never have taken on the Rt Hon Gt for Bexley,

and become Leader of her Party.

But it is more than Parliamentary instinct which suggests,

to borrow the phraseology of the Rt Hon Gt the Member for Devonport,

that the strands of the Spiders Webb of the Mayhew letter

lead to Downing Street.



24

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

One should not repeat gossip

but Alan Watkins puts in print in the Observer that  
senior Conservatives have said to him,

" Poor Leon carries the can ! "

- and I must say this seems to be accepted as the received wisdom of Westminster -

but are we simply to shrug our shoulders - ?

carrying the can for whom -

only for one person,

she who told My Hon Friend the Member for Bolsover

Col 657

" I did not know about the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry's own role  
in the matter of the disclosure until the enquiry had reported. "



25

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

But not the House of Commons finds itself far beyond circumstantial gossip

- a book has been published by a major newspaper,

and award winning journalists

Magnus Linklater and David Leigh.  
Not with Honour

which has to be answered -

and this House is the place to do it

Let me say at once - there are certain inaccuracies in the book -

for example the Chairman of the 1922 Committee has been awarded by the authors

a premature knighthood - he is Mr and not Sir Cranley Onslow

But many substantial questions remain :



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Consider, first of all, the terms of the exchange of letters between the Prime Minister and Her Trade Secretary.

My dear Leon,

I am very sorry that despite all the arguments I could use I was unable to dissuade you this afternoon from resigning .....

It was my wish that you should remain as a Member of the Cabinet.....

I hope that it will not be long before you return to high office to continue your Ministerial career.

Uniquely, as far as I know,

the Prime Minister hopes for his return to High Office.

How could she say this

if the full story was of a trusted Cabinet Minister

who had deceived her, by withholding the truth, for over a fortnight ?



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Page 167

" What I minded most of all was the aura of seedy incompetence it exposed "  
said one Tory Back-Bencher.

Mr Speaker, I do not know who said this to the authors,  
but I'll vouch that a Conservative Member of Parliament,  
for whom I have considerable respect,  
used exactly the same phraseology in my hearing.

Seedy incompetence is a serious enough charge against one's own Prime Minister.

But as Linklater and Leigh put it, again Page 167

Another senior Tory was more outspoken

" It was a pack of lies " he said.

Mr Speaker, I don't want to sound

pompous, priggish, or even politically partisan

but I was not sent here <sup>by the electors of the Liberal Party as a liability</sup> meekly to accept packs of lies from Prime Ministers.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Page 168

On the morning of Brittan's ( Rt Hon Gt for Richmond's ) resignation, his "friend and mentor Geoffrey Howe called to urge him to stay. "

Mr Speaker, I understand that ~~such a call~~ Linklater and Leigh are accurate in this assertion.

But, is the House of Commons really to believe that our Foreign Secretary made such a call,

on a Minister, however close, whatever the political protegee relationship,

if he thought that the whole story was that of the Trade Secretary

withholding information from his closest colleagues for over a fortnight,

and deceiving the Prime Minister.

For the Foreign Secretary to have behaved in this way,

it is necessary to assume that the Rt Hon Gt for <sup>Leigh</sup>igate,

whatever else he thought,

did not think that the Rt Hon Gt for Richmond deserved to take the blame.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IS ENTITLED FOR AN EXPLANATION FROM THE FOREIGN SECRETARY

AS TO EXACTLY WHY, IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, HE TOOK THE TROUBLE TO TAKE AN INITIATIVE

AND URGE THE RT HON GT FOR RICHMOND TO REMAIN IN OFFICE



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Again, Linklater and Leigh, Page 168.

" Brittan telephoned Whitelaw who said the same " - that is to remain in Office.

Now, Mr Speaker, 24 years ago,

Willie Whitelaw MP, Junior Minister, and Under-Secretary at the old Ministry of Labour,  
used to answer my questions on unemployment in the West Lothian constituency.

When one went on delegation, he was helpful and courteous.

I have known him ever since,

and particularly when I was the late Richard Crossman's PPS,

and Willie Whitelaw, as he then was, was the Opposition Chief Whip.

Albeit that he is a Patron of the Rt Hon GT for Richmond,

and helped get him his North of England seat,

I do not believe that it is in the character of Willie Whitelaw,

to urge a Minister to remain in Office,

if in the Noble Lord's opinion, that Minister had behaved badly -

let alone concealed the truth from his colleagues for a fortnight.

Lord Whitelaw. by his action is asking the Trade Secretary to stay, must know

that the blame lies elsewhere - and elsewhere can only be Number 10 Downing Street.





HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Frankly, unlike the case of the Foreign Secretary's call, where I have corroborating information,

I do not have corroborating evidence of the call to Lord Whitelaw.

But, if such a call did not take place,

Lord Whitelaw must take immediate steps to deny it and ask the authors to retract.

If such a call did take place,

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS DESERVES TO KNOW FROM LORD WHITELAW,

WHO WAS OUR TRUSTED COLLEAGUE FOR A QUARTER OF A CENTURY,

HOW HE EXPLAINS HIS CALL TO A MINISTER,

WHO HAS SUPPOSEDLY BEHAVED SO BADLY,

**WAIN**  
TO REMAIN IN OFFICE.



31

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

There is then the role of Sir Gordon Reece.

My Hon Friend the Member for Warrington, ex President of ASTMS, for whom I have  
a high regard,

is forever telling me that we ought to know more about the role of Sir Gordon.

I refer to Pages

60/62 - Sir Gordon Reece hired as Consultant to Westlands unknown to Rt Hon Gt for Henley

- a man regularly invited to spend Christmas Day with the Prime Minister and her family

Page 83" From now on " that is Christmas, his intimate knowledge of the workings of  
Downing Street and his close friendship with the Prime Minister would be  
even greater assets in helping to steer Westland through the political  
manoeuvres that layt ahead. "

THE PRIME MINISTER WHO WAS KEEN ENOUGH TO SEND CLIVE PONTING TO THE OLD BAILEY  
SHOULD TELL US ABOUT SIR GORDON'S ROLE,  
AND WHETHER HE SIGNED THE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT, AND IF SO, WHEN?



31 a

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

On 27th January 1986, the Political Editor of the Financial Times, Mr Peter Riddell wrote in his newspaper :

"The story then enters murkier territory. Given Mr Brittan's admission that he consulted Sir Patrick that week-end, who suggested the writing of a letter to Mr Heseltine ? The Westland Affair also appears to have been discussed by the Prime Minister and advisers at Chequers that Sunday.

A big question about the existing official version<sup>i</sup> is raised by the fact that Sir John Cuckney knew possibly on Saturday and definitely on Sunday, 24 hours before Sir Patrick's letter was sent - that the Solicitor General had reservations about Mr Heseltine's letter of the previous Friday. Indeed, the Westland Camp was seeking, on the Sunday afternoon, to make this point known so as to discredit Mr Heseltine.

This raises the key issue of how Sir John learnt of Sir Patrick's doubts. Was he told of them by Mr Brittan on the Downing Street staff ? "

I believe that Sir Gordon Reece was the link man with Sir John Cuckney, and tipped him off.

Can the Prime Minister deny it ?



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Page 168

"Sir Brian Hayes and the officials were against him going. They argued that, despite the heat engendered in the House, nothing fundamental had changed. "

"The politicians were less certain. They had talked to Tory MPs and knew what their mood was. They thought the prospects for survival were bleak. "

Ofcourse Sir Brian Hayes did not think that his Secretary of State should resign -

because he knew jolly well from Colette Bowe and others in the Department

*may be instigate*  
who was the perpetrator of the offence of the selective leak

people who know Sir Brian Hayes tell me that they find it inconceivable

that this upright and impressive civil servant

should have urged a Minister to stay

if he thought he was guilty of prolonged deceit of the Prime Minister -

how discreet Sir Brian Hayes is, I know not,

but I take it on my responsibility to say that it seems to be common talk

in the Athenaeum and the Reform Club, and in the upper echelons of Whitehall,

and Sir Brian still consider the Rt Hon Gt for Richmond ill done-by



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Does the Prime Minister challenge the Linklater/Leigh account of this meeting

in the DTI -

and if not, how does she explain the unanimous view of the civil servants present ?

The Civil Servants had no axe to grind -

The politicians who wanted the Rt Hon Gt for Richmond to leave office,  
and demurred at the meeting,

may have had their own political calculations

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS DESERVES TO KNOW WHAT SIR BRIAN HAYES AND HIS SENIOR COLLEAGUES  
KNOW ABOUT THE STATE OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE PRIME MINISTER.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Nor is it acceptable to place the onus on Mr Charles Powell

and Mr Bernard Ingham.

If Mr Powell really behaved so badly,

why has he remained in his job -

why hasn't he been eased out ?

The only reason can be that he was indeed carrying out the Prime Minister's wishes.

From the Adjournment Debate on

the House will accept that I am hardly Mr Bernard Ingham's most uncritical admirer -

but fair's fair -

whatever he did or didn't do,

the Rt Hon Lady has responsibility for his actions,

and Members on all sides find it simply incredible that

these two people, Mr Ingham and the Prime Minister,

should see so much of each other during their working lives,

and that it never occurred to the Prime Minister to ask Mr Ingham



35

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

about what he knew of the issue that was endangering her Government.



36

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Out of the window goes any old-fashioned doctrine of MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY.

Shades of Sir Thomas Dugdale and Crichton Down, which must be Ancient History

The notion that Ministers ought actually to go as far as resigning,

because of failures of their civil servants

may belong to a by-gone age.

In its place we seem now to have a very different doctrine indeed -

the doctrine that is now before us is that if a senior Minister or a Prime Minister

find themselves in a jam of their own making,

blame the civil servants

*The PM's Image is one of Courage  
- but blaming civil servants for  
one's own actions is not Courage,  
but Cowardice*

- this novel doctrine in Britain

should be unacceptable to any self respecting, honourable House of Commons





HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Page 166 " The sequence of events as recounted by the Prime Minister was, indeed, incredible, for it required MPs to believe that she had never herself asked a single pertinent question about a scandalous action which directly affected her government. "



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Page 166/167

To accept Mrs Thatcher's full explanation it was necessary to believe that both she and Bernard Ingham

had behaved entirely out of character;

that she had never thought to ask a man in her own office,

and with whom she worked in conditions of great intimacy,

how a leak of major political significance had been effected;

and that he,

who knew more about the art of leaking than any other man in the country,

had never told her what had happened.

It showed a Prime Minister,

apparently unable to control her own officials,

but approving of the use of smear tactics against a fellow Minister.



39  
—

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

But ofcourse, all these things and more can be explained by the fact- I repeat fact -

that the Rt Hon Lady for Finchley did indeed know about the leak from a very  
early stage -

on Page 142, Linklater and Leigh write

" READ MS LUNCH

MS TIME PERMITS

---

"NOT WINT HONOUR."

Every morning at Downing Street Mrs Thatcher goes through the contents of the papers with Bernard Ingham. Their main feature on the Tuesday was a number of 'splashes' about the amazing leak of Mayhew's letter. The Murdoch-owned *Sun* shrieked, 'You Liar!' at Heseltine. (They had to apologise and retract later after receipt of a writ.) How far did the Prime Minister and her Press Secretary note their joint achievements in the campaign to discredit Heseltine? As Sir Robert Armstrong put it:

In the course of a discussion of business with members of her staff... which was not recorded and at which a considerable number of other matters were discussed, the Prime Minister was told there had been contacts between her office and the DTI. But not in any detail. People were in and out of the room during this, including Nigel Wicks, her Principal Private Secretary... Events do move very fast in the PM's office... you don't go over events that happened three or four hours ago.

Clearly it was felt there was no need for a long post-mortem.

However, the morning also brought an unwelcome envelope. It was a copy of a letter to Sir Robert Armstrong, who as well as being Cabinet Secretary is also Head of the Civil Service. It was from the Attorney-General.

Sir Michael Havers, who had just returned to his duties, had found his deputy, Patrick Mayhew, in a state of rage. As Havers wrote, the unauthorised leak of a classified letter from one Minister to another was a serious matter. He therefore suggested that Armstrong should set up one of the 'leak inquiries' which were such a regular feature of the Thatcher administration, and had so publicly in the past led to the arrest of civil servants under the Official Secrets Act.

Curiously, Mrs Thatcher did not seem to spring on this suggestion with her usual zeal, although she discussed it with her staff. 'I was told that the Solicitor-General's advice had not been disclosed by my office,' she says. 'I did not know about Leon Brittan's own role.'

Mrs Thatcher may indeed not have known precisely how Leon Brittan's departmental discussions had been arranged. Nor, as her subsequent behaviour made quite clear, did she particularly care. She did not institute any inquiry.

Instead, following Havers's complaint, she spoke privately to Brittan about the leak. Although this is something the Prime Minister has failed to disclose, to widespread disbelief, the evidence comes from an authoritative source, who told us:

The Prime Minister knew about the leak. She was pleased it had been done. There was a meeting between Brittan and her after the complaint from Mayhew. Only the two of them were present... Brittan assumed she knew of [the leak's] origins. You must draw your own conclusions.

One of Brittan's friends adds, 'Nobody thought it was a problem. The complaints were out of the public domain and any inquiry was expected to be a formality. Leon wasn't worried at all about it.'

It became clear to a number of people that, so far from being abashed, Brittan had, on the contrary, become bolder still in his campaign to undermine Heseltine before the key Cabinet meeting due on the Thursday.

James Prior of GEC was due to see him 'to explain GEC's position'. Brittan made it clear in a manner that those present saw as heavy-handed that he was 'not at all pleased' by the existence of the Consortium.

Next he egged on his back-bench colleague Patrick Jenkin to attack Heseltine in a radio interview. It was another clumsy move. Jenkin confided in Sir Robin Day over the airwaves, 'I found myself talking to Leon and he raised the issue, and we talked about it, and he said, "Well, it would be very useful if you were to say that."'

Propaganda tends to fall a little flat when its true purpose is revealed so candidly.

The next day, Wednesday 8 January, only twenty-four hours before the fateful Cabinet, a new initiative on the leak inquiry was blunted.

The Attorney-General 'had some conversation with' Armstrong (the words are the Cabinet Secretary's) about the progress of his complaint to the Prime Minister and Sir Robert. Mayhew had been serious about the leak, he said. But once again, matters progressed no further. Armstrong told the Defence Committee later that it had been a taxing week. He found himself to be busy and distracted, unable to apply his mind to the matter...

Brittan renewed his war of attrition against Heseltine, supported now by another colleague and friend, Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Foreign Secretary. His department played its part by instructing the British ambassador in Rome to ask the Italian premier, Bettino Craxi, to desist from sending messages of support to the European Consortium. It was an unusual attitude to diplomacy; if the Italians still believed that Heseltine spoke for a united British Government, they must have been rudely disabused.

Brittan's contribution on that Wednesday was an attempt to copy tactics first adopted by Heseltine, who had used the commercial

39A



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

I do not know precisely when this meeting took place.

I do know the authoritative source.

The source was in a position to know, at the centre of Government.

I challenge the Prime Minister, if she disputes the source,  
even if she understandably does not like litigation,  
at least to ask for a retraction -

her failure to do so can only be interpreted as acquiescence  
that Linklater Leigh and their source are indeed accurate.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS DESERVES TO KNOW WHAT THE PRIME MINISTER IS GOING TO DO  
ABOUT LINKLATER AND LEIGH PAGES 142 and 143.

*yet again*  
It cannot, just be left in limbo.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

I, Mr Speaker, and I will repeat it outside the Chamber,

so as not to shelter under the cloak of Privilege,

will go further. *the Committee and length*

I say that the Solicitor General was lured by the Prime Minister,

~~xxxxxxx~~ with the reluctant connivance of the Trade Secretary

into writing a letter,

which, the Prime Minister intended to be leaked,

selectively or otherwise,

*before*  
from the very moment it was suggested to the Law Officer.

In other words, the Solicitor General was set-up by the Prime Minister

into writing a letter,

when he genuinely had no notion of the purpose for which it was intended,

from the moment it was conceived in 10 Downing Street -

the Solicitor General, an honourable Law officer,

was had for a sucker, used and abused in a shameful way



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

No wonder the Solicitor General contemplated resignation -

it might be easy for me to suggest that he should have resigned,

but it would have been an awesome responsibility -

for that might have been the effect -

of bringing his whole Government tumbling down,

had he done so.

Equally, the reason the Attorney General was beside himself with rage,

on returning from his sick bed,

was that he realised that his colleague, the Solicitor General had been set up.

42a

Page 42: add at ~~here~~ bottom of page:

And yet.... I have to say to the Law Officers of the Crown what they undoubtedly know deep in their hearts.

It is that they bear higher responsibilities than those of most honourable members.

They are symbols of our national respect for law, for justice, for morality in public life.

Then

~~If~~ factors of political expediency transcend those centuries-old standards it should come as no surprise to all of us here if the law, if justice as we practice it, if public morality fall into general disrepute.

If we, as representatives of the people, are seen to be cutting corners, covering up the truth, flouting the ~~ancient~~ traditions achieved and cherished by our forbears, we can have no right to complain if our fellow-citizens beyond the precincts of this Palace of Westminster begin to do the same.

~~But then will become of the people who inhabit this scented island.~~

Deep issues are involved here....

(CC on: ~~text~~ to Page 43)





HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

It is not only the circumstantial evidence -

I do not believe that a Solicitor General reading the Times at home one Saturday morning says to himself, " I must pen a hyper-sensitive letter to the Defence Secretary, complaining about his actions, as soon as I get back to the Office. "

If the House doubts my word,

let a Select Committee,

examine, under oath,

members of the then Private Office of the Rt Hon Gt for Weybridge



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Speaker, for most of the extraordinary things about the leaked letter which MPs and the country have been expected to believe, I do offer an explanation, to the House.

But, first, let me offer a preface.

Often people say -

"What's the point of Parliamentary Questions ?

What's the point of debates and speeches in the House ? "

- one thing about Parliamentary activity is that those who focus on particular subjects become the receptacles for information, which would not otherwise come to us.

After some press coverage in the Times Diary and the Guardian of this debate, I was given the following information,

which I am authorised to use, by a participant at an dinner

for the Turkish Minister of Technology, *Mustafa Titiç*  
on *30<sup>th</sup> January* at *MUSTAFA TINAZ TITİZ*  
*Lancaster House*



45

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

In anger, officials of the Department of Trade and Industry, in a position to know, raged about the behaviour of politicians,

for all at the dinner who cared to listen.

They were seething and angry at the fact that the blame for the leaking, the selective leaking, of the Solicitor General's letter had been put on them, and their colleagues at the DTI.

It could be argued they said,

that what the Prime Minister had told the House of Commons, in a narrow sense, was technically correct -

that there were no telephone calls for " permission to leak or selectively leak " -

why ?

Because there was no need for such telephone calls -

THE AGREEMENT TO LEAK HAD BEEN TAKEN BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND AN UNEASY

RT HON GT FOR RICHMOND, WHO HAD DEMURRED, BUT WAS EAGER TO PLEASE THE PM,

*INDUCING*

BEFORE EVER ~~ASKING~~ THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL TO WRITE A LETTER TO THE THEN DEFENCE SECRETARY



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

When my Rt Hon Friend, the Leader of the Opposition,  
questioned the Prime Minister on her actions,  
he did not get very far -  
nor did I do any better, nor any of the rest of us -  
because we were all like an audience looking at a conjurer,  
and looking at the wrong part of the trick to see how the conjurer did it -  
the hanky panky of selective leaking  
was at the very conception of the performance,  
and did not take place after the letter was formulated -  
that was the point where we were all looking,  
because even the most hardened of us had not expected that degree of cynical  
*vulgar* behaviour  
~~skulduggery~~ from a British Prime Minister -



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

To be fair to Coilette Bowe, although she had the instruction from Mr Bernard Ingham, she certainly kicked out against what she was being expected to do - and the House will remember that she said very little, but what she did say in public was that every enquiry should be referred to Number 10 Downing Street.

No wonder !

Nor , technically, was Mr Bernard Ingham lying to the Armstrong Enquiry - ~~xxxxxxx~~ just possibly he did not discuss the leak, AFTER the letter had leaked with the Prime Minister - such discussion would have been superfluous, as Mr Ingham knew, A PRIORI, explicitly what the Prime Minister wanted done, and what had been cooked up BEFOREHAND between the Prime Minister and her uncomfortable Trade Secretary.

ANSWER

WILL THE MINISTER ~~COMMENT ON~~ THE SPECIFIC CHARGE AGAINST HIS PRIME MINISTER THAT THE "DIRTY WORK " & THE DECISION TO LEAK A LAW OFFICER'S LETTER - TOOK PLACE BEFORE IT WAS SUGGESTED TO THE SOLITITOR GENERAL THAT HE SHOULD WRITE A LETTER.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Now, Mr Speaker, I hope that the Law Officers will study what I have just said, because the House of Commons is entitled to know what, the Rt Hon Gt for Wiltshire, and the Rt Hon Gt for Royal Wootton Bassett think about what I have just said -

put in colloquial language, the Solicitor General was set -up,  
used  
and abused.

No wonder the Law Officers were reported as being on the verge of resignation

but I advise them not -

because had they resigned on this issue, at that time,

their whole Government would have been at risk,

and that would be a fearful responsibility to take on their shoulders

BUT THE LAW OFFICERS DO NOW OWE THE HOUSE OF COMMONS THE TRUTH AS TO WHAT DID OCCUR.



49

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Let us be clear -

it is nauseating what this Prime Minister has done -

in her tantrums, mad with anger against her erstwhile Defence Secretary,

she and Bernard Ingham, with the eventual acquiescence, but against the better judgement of,

her Trade Secretary,

hit on the idea of putting the Rt Hon Gt for Henley wrong in Law,

and making him look publicly foolish -

so these three cook up the scheme of getting the Law Officer -

the other one, the Attorney, General was understandably away sick -

to send a letter, which they intended to leak wholly or in part -

leaking it, Mr Speaker, selectively or in full was the raison d'etre of the letter -

that was its purpose - to do down the infernal nuisance, that the Rt Hon Gt for Henley had

by then become.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

So they prompt the Solicitor General to write his letter.

The Rt Hon Gt for Tonbridge Wells imagines, naturally enough,

that every Law Officer's letter to a Minister of the Crown is handled gingerly.

In all innocence, he writes the letter

Routinely, a copy went to Downing Street.

I understand from those who have worked in Number 10,

both under Lord Wilson, and under the Rt Hon Gt for Bexley,

that any Law Officer's letter, because it may have consequences for the Courts,

is handled with especial care - and rightly so.

Can one imagine Sir Donald Maitland using a Law Officer's letter for such a purpose ?

Not at all !

Moreover, it is a pertinent question to ask,

why a Law Officer's letter went anywhere near Mr Ingham's desk,

unless the whole purpose was to make use, or abuse, of it in public ?





57

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The only way in which the Downing Street Civil Service machine would allow a Law Officer's letter any where near the Press Office would be because they knew they had to act under Prime Ministerial Instruction.

But to continue the narrative.

Mr Bernard Ingham, knowing his Prime Minister's pre-determined plan, orders a protesting Collette Bowe to leak the Solicitor General's letter to Chris Moncreffe of the Press Association.



52

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

They imagine that the leaked letter will serve its purpose of helping to discredit the Rt Hon Gt for Henley, that it will be a ~~two~~ day wonder, ephemeral and forgotten like so many 2 day wonders in British politics - they take the view that the situation will be manageable, and that the House of Commons will, as usual, move on to other interests.

Unfortunately for the Prime Minister,

an outraged ~~little bird~~ *Government employee*

livid at the treatment of the Civil Service, meted out to them by the Prime Minister, confirmed my information that it was Collette Bowe who phoned Mr Moncreiffe, and that Miss Bowe acted under Ministerial and Prime Ministerial Instructions. Otherwise, I would not have named her in this House.

With the naming of Collette Bowe, the situation which the Prime Minister, and her accomplices thought was manageable, became UN manageable.



53

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The paramount consideration then became the need to protect the position of the Prime Minister.

The only way to do it was to put the onus, the blame, on understandings, or misunderstandings between civil servants - no matter, that it involved, impugning without good reason, the competence and integrity of civil servants caught in an impossible situation.

UNACCEPTABLY IMMORAL

DOES NOT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS THINK THAT THIS IS ~~UNACCEPTABLE~~ BEHAVIOUR BY MAJOR POLITICIANS



54

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Might I ask the Deputy Prime Minister,

and may well have passed sleepless nights, pondering what his duty was,

what they would have made about Regimental Officers,

blaming the underlings this way, for their own misdemeanours,

in the Mess of the Scots Guards ?

But I say to Lord Whitelaw that the comparison with what his Prime Minister has done  
is valid.

WHAT QUESTIONS IS LORD WHITELAW GOING TO ASK ?



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Conservative ~~King~~ Knights of the Shire, who populated the Government back-benches,

when I first arrived here,

would turn in their graves,

if they thought that a character who behaved in this way towards civil servants,

was leading the Conservative Party.

*fellow humans,*

By any standards,

blaming the Civil Service,

for Politicians' chicanery,

is odious and vulgar behaviour.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

56

More culpable still is that knowing full well her own role,  
the Prime Minister allowed, albeit unenthusiastically,  
a Police Enquiry to go ahead.

Authorising a Police Enquiry,

when a Prime Minister knows full well that she was responsible for the leak,

that she instigated the very offence under investigation

is the action of a contemptible human being.

If any of the rest of us were caught wasting police time,

we would soon be in the dock.

Is there one set of rules for a Prime Minister

and another for the rest of the British people?

The Prime Minister seems to believe there is!



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

I say to Hon Members opposite,  
and particularly those like the Home Secretary, with his responsibilities,  
that before he decides to go into the Government Lobby at 2.30,  
he's better, to protect his great office, if nothing else,  
to ascertain from DTI officials,  
what did happen,  
and confront his Prime Minister with what exactly she did get up to.

Moreover, I ask the Government Whips to let the Law Officers know what has been said -

I rang their office to let them know I would refer to them -

because the Attorney and the Solicitor General had better be very clear  
<sup>72ally</sup>  
about what happened before they vote.



38

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Conservative Members of Parliament must ask themselves  
whether it is acceptable to them  
to be led by a ~~woman~~ *Danson*  
who allows, albeit reluctantly a ~~police~~ enquiry to go ahead  
when she knows that the <sup>*leak*</sup> ~~criminal~~ act which they are asked to investigate  
has been <sup>*perpetrated*</sup> ~~devised~~ by herself,  
in connivance with her closest inside ~~cronies~~, *associates*  
suchg as Ingham and Reece,  
and with the reluctant connivance of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.





JK

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

What the House of Commons has now to decide in the light of Ministerial replies

is whether or not it seems

that the Prime Minister by her actions

has brought the public life of Britain into disrepute.

Mr Speaker, it is for my fellow Members of all Parties to judge.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

4th March 1986.

Dear Prime Minister,

thankyou for your letter of the 24th February, replying to my own of the 11th February. You state in your letter that you have nothing to add to the "full account" given in your statement to the House on the 23rd January and in the debate on the 27th January. Consequently, in search of the answers to the two questions which I raised, I have re-read the parliamentary reports of both your statement and of the debate.

My first question was, "Did you canvass with your advisers or any Minister before you requested, through your office, the Solicitor-General to write his letter, the possibility of the letter being put into the public domain?"

Nowhere in either of the reports which you cite can I find that you expressly said that you did, or that you did not, so canvass. Perhaps you might be so kind as to draw my attention to any passage on which you rely in this regard.

In the absence of any express statement I have been obliged to consider what is implied by your statement and by your speech. An inference can be drawn that you did canvass the publication of the letter with someone. I say so for the following reasons:-

1. You stress many times in your statement and in your speech that it was "essential" (23Jan.c.450), "vital" (23Jan.c.455) and "of the first importance" (27Jan.c.601) to get into the public domain the knowledge that there were possible inaccuracies in the then Defence Secretary's letter of the 3rd January upon which judgments might be founded. Indeed, you go so far as to say that, "it was a matter of duty that it should be made known publicly that there were thought to be material inaccuracies which ought to be corrected." (23Jan.c.449).
2. It was "in view of the continuing need for accuracy and consistency in government statements on this subject" (27Jan.c.60) that you asked that a message be sent to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, suggesting that he seek the Solicitor-General's opinion. Considering the importance which you attached to the accuracy of government statements, and having regard to your view of your duty, it would follow that, in seeking the Solicitor-General's opinion, you intended it to be made public in some way if it transpired that there were inaccuracies or inconsistencies which needed correcting.



30 A

3. On Saturday, 4th January, the Solicitor-General's provisional view, that there were material inaccuracies which needed to be corrected, "was reported" to you (27Jan.c.652). You go on to say, "The matter could clearly not be left there." (27Jan.c.65) I take it from this that, conscious of your duty to ensure and aware of the importance of ensuring the accuracy and consistency of government statements, you intended to make public your knowledge of the possible inaccuracies. you say, "I think that it is essential to get into the public domain the fact that there were possible inaccuracies which were relevant to the situation." (23Jan.c.458).
4. It appears, however, that once the Solicitor-General's provisional opinion was reported to you on Saturday 4th January you took no obvious steps to bring the matter to the public's attention notwithstanding the fact that it was, as you say, "urgent that it should become public knowledge before 4 pm. that afternoon, 6 January." (23Jan.c.450). Instead, you say, "I therefore, through my office, asked him to consider writing to the Defence Secretary to draw that opinion to his attention." (27Jan.c.652).
5. In that such a letter would not, prima facie, put that information into the public domain and in that you attach great significance to that information being put into the public domain and further in that, despite the urgency of the situation, you took no other steps towards putting that information into the public domain I am driven to conclude that you intended that the Solicitor-General's letter should be published in some way.
6. Further, you will recall that you said, "It was to get that accurate information to the public domain that I gave my consent." (23Jan.c.455). When questioned on this later you replied, "I did not give my consent to the disclosure. It was not sought ..." (27Jan.c.656). You will appreciate that this denial, which relates to the specific disclosure, does not negative the assertion that you consented to disclosure of the letter, as you originally stated.
7. Your office appear to have considered that to be the case. You say, "They did not seek my agreement: they considered - and they were right - that I should agree with my Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry that the fact that the then Defence Secretary's letter of the 3rd January was thought by the Solicitor-General to contain material inaccuracies which needed to be corrected should become public knowledge as soon as possible." (23Jan.c.450). Nowhere do you say what led your office to consider that you would agree to the matter becoming public knowledge and in particular that you would agree to the fact that it was the Solicitor-General's opinion becoming public knowledge.



60 B

8. Equally, the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry appears to have considered that you had consented. You say, "He asked his officials to discuss with my office whether the disclosure should be made and, if so, whether it should be made from 10 Downing Street as he would prefer." (23 Jan. c. 450). You do not say what led the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to suppose that the disclosure might be made from 10 Downing Street, however I note that you say, "I discussed the matter with my office the following day, when I also learned of the Law Officer's concern. I was told that the Solicitor-General's advice had not been disclosed by my office." (27 Jan. c. 657). It would appear, therefore, that you also were under the impression that the Solicitor-General's advice might have been disclosed from your office.
9. Finally, you said, "It was vital to have accurate information in the public domain because we knew that judgments might be founded on that ..." (23 Jan. c. 455).

You did not say to whom you referred when you said "we" in the last passage quoted. Other than yourself it may include your officials, who knew your mind and through whom you communicated with both the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and the Solicitor-General. It may include the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, who contacted the Solicitor-General at your request and who thought that the disclosure might be made from 10 Downing Street. Finally, it might include the person who reported the Solicitor-General's provisional opinion to you; in that it was the Department of Trade and Industry who first approached the Solicitor-General it would follow that they also reported the outcome.

In any event, I am driven to conclude from your statement and from your speech that the answer to my first question is, "Yes". Should I be wrong in this conclusion I would be grateful if you could disabuse me as soon as possible.

My second question was, "When you agreed to the setting up of an inquiry, did you at that stage know or have reason to believe that it was an official leak?"

In order to answer this question I have again referred to the reports of your statement and of your speech, as you suggest. I can find no passage where you expressly state that you did, or that you did not, know or have reason to believe that the "leak" was "official" when you authorized the inquiry. I note that you said, "I did not know about the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry's own role in the matter of the disclosure until the inquiry had reported." (27 Jan. c. 657), however, with respect, I do not consider that statement to fully answer the question and I would be grateful if you could draw my attention to any other passage which might be of assistance to me.



60C

I do not consider the above statement to fully answer the question for the following reasons:-

1. You say, many times, in your statement and in your speech that the inquiry was set up to establish the facts. You further say, "I did not know all the facts, ..." (23Jan.c.453) and that "many" (23Jan.c.453), "an enormous number" (23Jan.c.454), "most" (23Jan.c.455,460) and "a vast number" (23Jan.c.456) of the facts reported by the inquiry were not known to you until the 22nd January when the inquiry reported. You will appreciate, however, that non-specific statements as to what you did not know until the 22nd January do not answer the specific question as to what you did know on the 13th January when you authorised the inquiry.
2. In seeking to discover, from your speech and your statement, what you did know on the 13th January we find that you learned about the disclosure of the Solicitor-General's letter "some hours after it had occurred." (27Jan.c.657) i.e. in the evening of the 6th January. You say, "I discussed the matter with my office the following day, when I also learned of the Law Officer's concern. I was told that the Solicitor-General's advice had not been disclosed by my office. I was also told, in general terms, that there had been contacts between my office and the Department of Trade and Industry." (27Jan.c.657).
3. You do not say what is meant by the phrase "in general terms" in this passage, however in that it is there at all I infer that you were told more than the mere fact that there had been contacts. The state of your office's knowledge may be seen from the following passage; "Officials in the Department of Trade and Industry approached officials in my office, who made it clear that it was not intended to disclose the Solicitor-General's letter from 10 Downing Street; but, being told that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry had authorised the disclosure, they accepted that the Department of Trade and Industry should make it and they accepted the means by which it was proposed that the disclosure should be made." (27Jan.c.655). The extent to which this knowledge is included under the head of "general terms" is a matter for conjecture.
4. Further, you say, with reference to your statement of the 23rd January, ".... I set out the steps by which the Solicitor-General's letter of 6 January was made public, as this emerged both from the accounts of officials as reported by the inquiry and also from my subsequent discussions with the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, ..." (27Jan.c.654). A careful reading of this passage reveals that it refers to discussions with the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry "subsequent to the 6th January.



60 D  
—

5. I conclude from the above that when your "authority" was conveyed to the head of the Civil Service on Monday 13 January (27Jan.c.653) you had -
- (a) been informed that the Law Officers considered that there should be an inquiry;
  - (b) discussed the matter with your office, who were aware of the official nature of the "leak", in general terms; and
  - (c) had discussions with the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

In light of the above the inference can be drawn that, at the time you authorised the inquiry, you knew or had reason to believe that the disclosure was, in some way, official. With respect I consider that, without further clarification, the statement that you "did not know about the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry's own role in the matter of the disclosure until the inquiry had reported." (27Jan.c.657) fails to deny this inference.

I would be grateful, therefore, if you could explain what is meant by -

- (a) "General terms" (27Jan.c.657), stating what terms were used and what information was conveyed;
- (b) "Subsequent discussions" (27Jan.c.654) stating what discussion you, or your Private Secretary on your behalf, had with the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry subsequent to the disclosure on the 6th January and before the 13th January;
- (c) "The then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry's own role" (27Jan.c.657) stating what is meant by the term "role".

In the absence of such clarification I must conclude from your statement and from your speech that the answer to my second question is also "Yes". Should I be wrong in so concluding perhaps you would let me know.

I would be grateful if you could give these matters your urgent attention.

Yours sincerely,

John Morris J.C., M.P.

Grey Scale #13



**A**

1

2

3

4

5

6

**M**

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

**B**

17

18

19

