

RESTRICTED

CABINET OFFICE

THIS FILE MUST NOT GO OUTSIDE THE CABINET OFFICE

HR 14/6

CLOSE
1996

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1996

Writings of former Public Servants

PART NUMBER

1

FILE BEGINS 6 January 93 ENDS 15-10-96

FILE No. HR 14/6

PART NUMBER
1

INDEX HEADINGS

REFERRED TO	DATE	REFERRED TO	DATE	REFERRED TO	DATE
		CLOSED 1996			
CAB	103/	833	833		
		File to go for second review			

RESTRICTED

HR 14/b

~~SARIS~~ CJR. YH
Publications?
R.

Tessa

Spoke to Rick Hall in Defense Secretariat

They've seen Mark Urban book, which has caused
them some difficulty. Rick doesn't recall seeing anything
on Michael Herman's book. (I think MEH was a former
Secretary of JIC)

Books like Urban are cleared (when referred to the
Cab. office) by an ad hoc group of officials under
Kate Collins of Def. Sect. (Years ago there was an
official Cab. office OD(DIS), ~~was~~ and Pat used to
receive the papers, but Rick Hall says this former
arrangement lapsed, to be replaced by the informal
one under Kate C's supervision.

We think the best thing wd be for you to have
a word with Kate Collins (GS? You can't tell
now!) on 270 0071.

Richard.
15/10/96

Ps. Rick tells me that
Kate C's group also had
a hand in Andy McNab's
SAS book but in view of
the material, of course, it wasn't
necessary to consult Pat.

The secret service, open to question¹⁹

How good are Britain's intelligence services? What are they for? Do they achieve their purpose cost-effectively? These questions are so central that even the most secret parts of the state must not be immune from public questioning and debate.

Tomorrow sees the publication of what I believe to be the most thoughtful, detached and up-to-date primer on the subject ever produced by a recent member of the British intelligence community in Michael Herman's *Intelligence Power in Peace and War*. Its appearance coincides almost exactly with Mark Urban's *UK Eyes Alpha* which, to the consternation of insiders, has placed in the public domain detail and argument from the recent secret areas of the state which is without precedent in its immediacy and sensitivity. One has been cleared by the Cabinet office, the other most certainly has not.

The past decade has seen the greatest advances towards accountability and openness since Sir Francis Walsingham turned intelligence into a serious part of statecraft in Elizabeth I's time.

It is high time, as the turn of the century approaches, to take a cool, hard look at just what we should and could be seeking by way of our national niche in the global influence business. This is especially so since there is a real possibility of a change of government next spring that would produce an administration with almost no experience of intelligence activities.

Intelligence is a crucial element in any forward calculations. Is it the most cost-effective way of buying such influence for a cash and kit strapped country? Or is it, as a member of Her Majesty's Secret Intelligence Service inquired

The Independent
15 October 1996



Peter
Hennessy

Do the intelligence services have a vital part to play in a changing world, or are they merely the 'itch after the amputation' of Britain's arm of global influence? It's time to review their role

recently, merely "the itch after the amputation" of Britain's arm of influence?

The Treasury has always taken a great deal of persuading that the nation gets value-for-money from its intelligence effort which, as Michael Herman puts it, still places us in the upper second division of intelligence powers. The Treasury sees intelligence-gathering like any other government operation as a "customer-contractor" deal. Customer departments, they argue, should tell their colleagues in the secret service what kind of information they need. The state's secret servants would then procure it, and the customer departments would pay.

John Major was quite keen on the idea when chief secretary to the Treasury. But, as Prime Minister, he appears, rightly, to have taken a broader view. Good intelligence is too much a seamless garment for this narrow approach to be sensible or practical.

Yet the Treasury is right to point out that the itch for intelligence, whatever the utility of its yield to those who would wish to maximise British influence or to approach the negotiating table well primed, does not come cheap at about £1bn a year. Though as Michael Herman points out, "intelligence is cheap compared with armed force or policing; governments can afford to buy a lot of it for the cost of a frigate, or for the police manpower deployed on anti-terrorist protection". "The British government," he adds tellingly, "is said to be spending almost as much on private consultancy fees for the Civil Service as a whole as it spends on intelligence."

When the Treasury acquires its copy of *Intelligence Power in Peace and War* it will, I suspect,

skim the book until it reaches the section on "Accuracy", with its chapter on intelligence failure and remedies. One hears all the time how Western intelligence as a whole failed to predict either the ending of the Cold War or the concatenation of events and personalities that triggered its termination.

Without wishing to explain away intelligence failures, I have to say that if I had been sitting around the table of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) in the late Eighties I would not have wagered my pension on the likelihood of the Red Army being confined to barracks when the satellites, especially East Germany, began to slip from the Soviet Union's ultimate control. Intelligence has to be both accurate and illusion-free. It is not a trade that attracts or welcomes Pollyannas.

In a nasty world in which British interests, for both historical and current reasons, still girdle the globe, I remain convinced that British ministers, diplomats, civil servants and the military need to be as well primed as possible with timely information, often of a kind that cannot be procured by open means from orthodox sources. A new government would, I am sure, feel the same not least because of omnipresent terrorist threats. There is no indication that a Labour cabinet would finally wish to withdraw from an international posture that brings with it a seat at the UN Security Council and a range of influences out of proportion to our current wealth and firepower.

Real advantage remains with those nations whose knowledge base outstrips that of the competition. Intelligence without question is an influence-multiplier in the sense that it

enables a state to apply its other instruments of influence more effectively. And when I recently put the proposition "what targets should British intelligence concentrate on now?" to one of that heroic post-war breed of old Empire hands-turned-intelligence officers, without hesitation he replied "terrorism, international crime and trade". To his list I would add weapons proliferation, especially nuclear, biological and chemical.

That said, there is, I am sure, considerable scope for re-ordering the UK's intelligence effort within a gradually – though not dramatically – shrinking allocation of resources. Michael Herman is convincing on the need for cuts to fall on the collection side rather than upon the all-source analytical capacity where he wants both improvement and modest expansion.

This might be the time, too, to consider the feasibility of knowledgeable outsiders from universities and business being brought in to the JIC process to help avoid "tunnel vision".

Another crucial element in any hard, forward look would include the durability of the special intelligence relationship with the United States. Without it Britain would slip swiftly from its upper second division status as an intelligence power. Yet I suspect that so powerful is the Transatlantic and old Commonwealth nature of that relationship (which is enshrined in the 1947 UK/USA agreement) that the British intelligence community may be sceptical of and resistant to some of the opportunities that may arise if Europe continues to integrate and the UK remains part of that integration process.

The point I am making, in

essence, is that late-Nineties Whitehall, whatever the electorate decides next spring in terms of the political personnel of government, must see a really thorough review of Britain's place in the world which sweeps up all the elements of our external relationships. Only then can the kind of intelligence capacity the UK needs in the 21st century be properly assessed and its costs set in the context of the gamut of policies, people and institutions which make up the British face towards the rest of the world.

Whatever might come out of such a review, the Treasury will continue to see what remains as an expensive job creation scheme for a certain kind of Brit who cannot bear to think of his or her country falling out of the great game. And who is to say the Treasury is wrong?

If the Treasury could apply its resource accountancy skills retrospectively, even they might appreciate that just one potential armed conflict averted in advance thanks to reliable and timely intelligence would fund the whole apparatus for several years. The capital costs arising out of the Falklands war (quite apart from the battle bills themselves) reached £2.6bn over the first five post-invasion years – equivalent, at mid-Eighties prices, to about three years' worth of total British intelligence.

The writer is Professor of Contemporary History at Queen Mary and Westfield College, and author of 'Muddling Through: Power, Politics and the Quality of Government in Post-war Britain' (Gollancz, £20). This article is based on a lecture given yesterday to the Royal Institute for International Affairs.

CABINET OFFICE
A 11147
- 8 JUL 1996
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No.



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

London SW1A 2AH

Sir John Coles KCMG

The Permanent Under Secretary of State

Telephone: 0171-270-2150

Facsimile: 0171-270-3776

5 July 1996

Sir Robin Butler GCB CVO
Cabinet Office

Dear Robin,

*C. Miss Collins PSH
Miss Andrews*

SIR JOHN HERMON'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

1. I hope that you will not mind me writing to you about a point in John Chilcot's letter of 26 June. John draws attention to what he calls ill-judged references to former NI Ministers, the RUC and the Security Service and the DPP (NI). It is impossible to make a firm pronouncement without having seen the text, but I wonder if the references to which John alludes may not offend against the third Radcliffe rule, prohibiting disclosure of information affecting matters of confidentiality within 15 years of the event. I understand that you and Patrick Wright corresponded on this very point in relation to Nicko Henderson's memoirs. My concerns may turn out to be ill-founded, but you might think it worth asking John for a copy of the passages in question, so that you can form your own view.

Yours ever

John

John Coles

CABINET OFFICE
H Internal
- 8 JUL 1996
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE NO.



Permanent Under-Secretary of State
SIR JOHN CHILCOT, KCB

FGS/B/6/68147

CABINET OFFICE
A 10669
28 JUN 1996
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No.

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
STORMONT CASTLE
BELFAST BT4 3ST

Tel. Belfast (0232) 528121
Fax. Belfast (0232) 528276

CABINET OFFICE
H Internal
- 8 JUL 1996
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE NO.

Sir Robin Butler GCB CVO
Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service
The Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London
SW1

26 June 1996

Dear Robin

C. Miss Andrews

I've let Kate Collins

know about the C. Mr Budd
possible FCO
objections. Miss Collins

SIR JOHN HERMON'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Martin

577

Sir John Hermon, who was Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary from 1980 to 1989, has passed to the NIO a copy of the draft autobiography which he has been working on. We do not know when the book will be published. Sir John wanted to ensure that his book did not breach his duty of confidentiality as Chief Constable.

David Fell and I are content that there is nothing in the draft which is directly against the national interest in terms of national security. However, I am writing to alert colleagues to the strong possibility of public comment and re-opening of old issues when the book is published, in particular in relation to the Stalker/Sampson affair.

We do not think it necessary to circulate the draft to colleagues (it has in any case been given to us in confidence). The book deals with Sir John's childhood and progress through the ranks of the RUC. However, I should draw colleagues' attention to the fact that there are some ill-judged references in the draft to former NI Ministers, the RUC, the Security Service and the DPP(NI). These could be objected to on the grounds that they may be breaches of courtesy, accuracy or confidentiality (though not such as to be a breach of national security). Such references, coupled with the re-telling of the Stalker/Sampson affair, may be picked up by the media and the public more generally.

In the event that such issues became the subject of press interest, we would of course give Ministers appropriate lines to take, making clear that the views which Sir John expresses in the book are entirely his own.

David Fell and I agree that we should not seek piecemeal deletions or amendments to the text; it would be better to offer no suggestions rather than a small number which could be taken as implying that we find the rest of the book unobjectionable. In responding to Sir John Hermon, we will of course make it clear that in refraining from making suggestions we are not confirming the accuracy of the book or the desirability of its publication.

I am copying this to Wednesday Morning colleagues and to Alex Allan.

Yours ever,
John



CABINET OFFICE

Historical and Records Section

Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW

Telephone 071-217 6050

Facsimile 071-217 6010

(GTN 217)

HO96/216/

Mrs J Astley
Flat 15
161 Fulham Road
London SW3 6SN

30 April 1996

Dear Joan

When we met at Edward Thomas's Memorial Concert you asked about the release of the SIC files.

Good news, I am glad to say! Over half of the files are already in the Public Record Office and available to the public for purposes of research - the reference numbers are CAB 121/1-400.

The reviewing process continues and the next one hundred or so will be transferred to the PRO in January next year.

I hope this is helpful and if there are any particular files you wished to see which are not yet available at Kew please let me know and I will gladly see what I can do.

Best wishes

Pat

MISS P M ANDREWS

Richard
✓
To see + p.c.

Pat
30.4.96.

~~MISS ANDREWS~~

Pat,

CAB 121 (SPECIAL SECRET INFORMATION CENTRE) FILES

You asked for information concerning the availability of the above mentioned records.

There are a total of 785 pieces in the CAB 121 group of records. The first 400 pieces are now available to the public at the PRO, subject of course to the pieces/extracts which have been retained on sensitivity grounds. The remaining pieces are being targeted for transfer as follows -

X { CAB 121/401-500 due to be available at 1 January 1997 32
CAB 121/501-600 due to be available at 1 January 1998 23
CAB 121/601-700 due to be available at 1 January 1999 31
CAB 121/701-785 due to be available at 1 January 2000 53

Bill

BILL EWING
25 April 1996

~~Pat~~
I have checked the review notes and indicated above the number of pieces that are indicated as releasable. Pieces 401-500 are in Rm 36 and 501-785 in Hepburn Basement Rm 03.

Bill

Bill 26/4

A supplementary. As the lady who wants to see these pps is getting elderly (and I don't mean me!) are any of the pieces at X yet cleared + cd she see them here?

Pat
25/4



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

London SW1A 2AH

19 March 1993

Sir Peter Wilkinson, KCMG
Flat 15
161 Fulham Road
LONDON SW3 6SN

Dear Sir Peter,

GUBBINS AND SOE

Thank you for your letter of 6 January to Patricia Andrews in the Cabinet Office enclosing a copy of your book. I am writing to confirm that there is no official objection to publication.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Bone
Library & Records Department

*Shelley
For filing.*

*Publication is expected
July or September, 1993*

*PO Andrews
28/4/93.*

bcc: **Miss P M Andrews**
Cabinet Office (Hepburn House)

Mr Sibson
Cabinet Office (70 Whitehall)

Mr Murray
PUSD (CN)

Mr Jones
PUSD (DSW)

*Mr. Powell (with
papers).*





CABINET OFFICE

Historical and Records Section

Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW

Telephone 071 217 6050

Fax 071 217 6010

H093/188 ↓

G Cowell Esq
SOE Adviser
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Room 3/97
Old Admiralty Building
London SW1A 2AF

5 March 1993

Dear Geruase

GUBBINS AND SOE

Richard Bone asked me to let you have the attached copy of "Gubbins and SOE" by Sir Peter Wilkinson which Joan Astley left with me in January.

Richard has been advised to write to Sir Peter saying that there is no official objection to publication and would, I think, feel happier doing so if you had actually had sight of the text!

I also have the original text which I shall return to Mrs Astley as soon as the letter has been sent.

Yours ever

Pat

MISS P M ANDREWS

UNCLASSIFIED



FROM: T A Jones, PUSD (DSW)
DATE: 3 March 1993

CC: Mr Murray, PUSD (CN)
Mr Sibson, Cabinet Office
(70 Whitehall)
Miss Andrews, Cabinet Office
(Hepburn House, Marsham St)

Mr Bone
LRD

GUBBINS AND SOE

/ 1. Following our telephone conversation, I attach a draft reply to Sir Peter Wilkinson's letter of 6 January.

T A Jones

UNCLASSIFIED

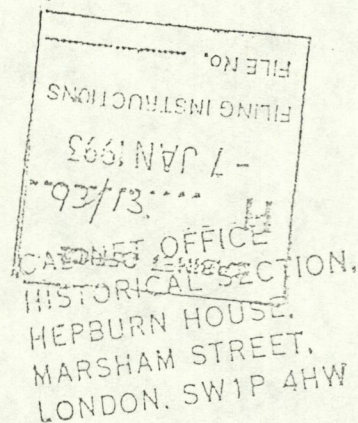
CABINET OFFICE	
H	262 ✓
05 MAR 1993	
FILING INSTRUCTIONS	
FILE No.

FLAT 15
161, FULHAM ROAD,
LONDON SW3 6SN

071-584 4876

6 January, 1993.

Miss Patricia Andrews,
Cabinet Office Historical Section,
Hepburn House,
Marsham Street, SW1.



Dear Miss Andrews,

Here is the book, GUBBINS AND SOE, which Joan Astley and I have completed and which we discussed on the telephone with you this morning. The publishers, Leo Cooper, Pen and Sword, have accepted it and want to set it without delay. I should therefore be most grateful if you would be kind enough to have it cleared as soon as possible.

Most of the material on SOE falls into the category of "personal knowledge, private information". However, there are numerous references to, and some quotations from, SOE papers which at the time of writing were not publicly available. Christopher Woods, who was then the SOE adviser at the Foreign Office, was good enough to undertake extensive researches and supply us with all the material deriving from this source. I confirmed with him the other day that, in his opinion, everything he sent us was suitable for publication and that he did not wish to place restrictions on its use. For the rest, we have drawn on material available in the PRO or already in print.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Wilkinson
(PETER WILKINSON)

UNCLASSIFIED

DRAFT LETTER FROM R BONE ESQ, .LRD, TO SIR PETER WILKINSON

Sir Peter Wilkinson
Flat 15
161 Fulham Road
London
SW3 6SN

GUBBINS AND SOE

Thank you for your letter of 6 January to Patricia Andrews in the Cabinet Office enclosing a copy of your book. I am writing to confirm that there is no official objection to publication.

UNCLASSIFIED



CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS Telephone 071-270 0071

NO.0457

Tim Jones Esq
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
PUSD, Room E210-6137
Downing Street East
London SW1

26 February 1993

Dear Tim,

GUBBINS AND SOE

Thank you for your letter of 24 February.

The only outstanding question, which we discussed briefly, was who should give Sir Peter Wilkinson authorisation. My understanding is that it is the normal drill for the parent department to give (or withhold) authorisation. I therefore think the FCO should give authorisation in this case, despite the fact that Sir Peter Wilkinson contacted the Cabinet Office. You kindly agreed to take this forward.

*Yours sincerely
J*

J SIBSON

cc: R Bone Esq - FCO (LRD)
M Murray Esq - FCO (PUSD(CN))
Miss P Andrews - Cabinet Office

*Rory asked for
a copy of whatever
goes so that I
can return the ms.*

CABINET OFFICE
H 2.4.4 ✓
O 1 MAR 1993
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

24 February 1993

London SW1A 2AH

Telephone: 071-

Your ref: No.0424

270 2340

J Sibson Esq
Cabinet Office

Dear Tom

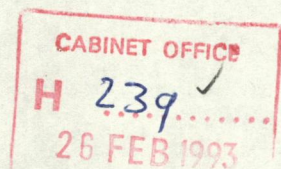
GUBBINS AND SOE

1. Thank you for your letter of 1 February which I have discussed with Roger Bone. I enclose a minute recording his views.
2. It would seem safest to operate on the basis that the book does need authorisation, and that in the present circumstances it should be given. If challenged about why the rules seem to be more lax than for past employees of other intelligence agencies I think that a line about the special circumstances of SOE's existence in wartime should be sustainable. The SOE archives are being prepared for publication and the first section will, I understand, be released in the reasonably near future. Authorisation of Sir Peter Wilkinson's book would fit in with this timetable. The question of authorisation of books by employees of other agencies will clearly need to be revisited as and when the agency archives are released.

*Yours
Tom*

T A Jones
PUSD (DSW)

CC: Mr Bone, LRD
Ms P Andrews, Cabinet Office
Mr Murray, PUSD (CN)



ZM2 4 9	
REC	REGISTRY
18 FEB 1993	
IN	REGISTRY
	Action taken

3

[Handwritten initials]

18/ii

FROM: Richard Bone, Library
& Records Department
DATE: 15 February 1993
cc: Mr Murray, PUSD
Mr Cowell

Mr Jones
PUSD (DSW)

GUBBINS AND SOE: PERMISSION TO PUBLISH

1. Since Sir Peter Wilkinson has approached the Cabinet Office for clearance he has acted properly, and since he had formerly approached the SOE Adviser for information, he could be said to have consulted the Office at a sufficiently early stage. We are not then dealing with any obvious contravention of rules, but only with the question of the desirability of publication. It would be difficult to argue against the desirability of a book on this subject and, in view of the number of less punctilious authors who have already published, unreasonable to penalise one who had acted relatively conscientiously.
2. Mr Cowell has spoken to Sir Peter about the phrase 'personal knowledge and private information'. Sir Peter has given his assurance that this phrase is used merely as a blurb, to enhance the authoritative nature of the book, and does not refer to information which is in any way at odds with, or significantly extra to, the information which has been released to him officially. All this information was released without any restrictions on eventual publication and in the knowledge that it would be so used.
3. In the circumstances I am ready to agree to publication providing the text is as Sir Peter describes it.

[Handwritten signature of Richard Bone]
Richard Bone



CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS Telephone 071-270 0071

NO.0424

1 February 1993

Tim Jones Esq
PUSD W 137
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Downing Street West SW1

Dear Tim,

GUBBINS AND SOE

I enclose copies of a self-explanatory exchange of notes with Pat Andrews about a book about SOE which has been submitted for clearance by Sir Peter Wilkinson.

2. I think that it would be safe to operate on the assumption that the book does require clearance under the OSA if only because part of it draws on "personal knowledge and private information". The question arises as to the criteria for authorisation in this case. Should the test simply be whether the book contains any material harmful to national security? Or should we take the tougher line, adopted in the past in relation to memoirs by former members of the agencies ie that it is contrary to the public interest for memoirs by such people to be published, irrespective of whether their contents are damaging? This boils down to the question of whether former members of SOE - and I am assuming that Sir Peter Wilkinson is a former member - are regarded as falling in the same category as former members of the agencies.

3. The few papers I have been able to track down do not answer this question definitively. But a note of 13 March 1991 by Richard Bone (copy attached) strongly suggests that we have taken a more relaxed attitude towards publications by former SOE members than retired agency personnel. As the FCO has the lead responsibility in relation to SOE matters, I should be grateful if you could confirm that this is the position.

4. On the assumption that we do indeed take a more relaxed attitude, the test will be whether the book contains any damaging material. The responsibility for deciding whether or not to authorise publication would rest with FCO; but I imagine that you would wish to seek a further, formal assessment from the SOE Adviser.

5. I am copying this letter to Pat Andrews.

Very soon
J
J SIBSON

Enc:



2-96
HO93/57

22/1
~~MR SIBSON~~

GUBBINS AND SOE

Thank you for your minute of 21 January.

I am afraid I have no papers about Sir Peter Wilkinson's access to the SOE Archive but what he has said about it, which is what I put in my minute of 20 January, has been confirmed by the present SOE Adviser, Gervase Cowell.

Former officials, such as Sir Peter, who seek access to material in the SOE Archive are told that they should "consult" prior to publication rather than that they need "clearance" but, having been consulted we must, I assume, give clearance for publication - or not.

Given the circumstances in which material was supplied by the SOE Adviser ie in exactly the same way as it would be to any enquirer with anything so provided being deemed, as I said, to have passed into the public domain, publication of that material would not constitute unauthorised disclosure. Nor, of course, would the material available in the PRO or already in print. The only area of possible concern, it seems to me, must be that of "personal knowledge and private information" but as the book has been written mainly from these sources it is obviously an area we should consider.

X1 Perhaps you would like to have a word with Gervase Cowell, the present SOE Adviser (210 6742). He may be able to clarify further. The last thing I want to do is to cause anyone work which is not strictly necessary, on the other hand I am concerned that the book should receive the necessary consideration.

Pat Andrews

MISS P M ANDREWS

Historical and Records Section
22 January 1993

file

NO.0409

MISS ANDREWS

GUBBINS AND SOE

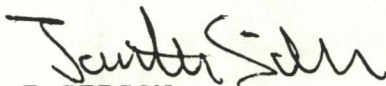
Thank you for your note of 20 January.

2 Two questions arise:

- does Sir Peter Wilkinson need clearance for publication?;
- if so, should such clearance be given?

We need first to establish the answer to the former question. This turns on whether the book contains information the unauthorised disclosure of which would constitute an offence under the Official Secrets Act 1984. I note that much of the information was supplied by the former SOE adviser. But I think that we need to know a little more about the circumstances in which it was provided, and the basis on which he provided it. Are there any relevant papers?

3 I am sorry to have to ask for more information. But I do think that we need to be clear about whether we need to consider formally whether or not to authorise publication - a process which would inevitably take a little time.


J SIBSON

21 January 1993

HO93/50

MR SIBSON

47
10 JAN 1993

GUBBINS AND SOE

Sir Peter Wilkinson, former diplomat, who served in the Cabinet Office in 1963-64 and is shown in Who's Who as a Consultant to the Cabinet Office in 1972-73, just before his retirement, contacted me a week ago about clearance for publication of the attached book which he has written, together with Mrs Joan Astley, formerly assistant to Ismay, on Gubbins and SOE. I understand from the SOE Adviser in the Foreign Office that the book has been expected for some time.

The book has been written mainly from personal knowledge and private information. Sir Peter had contact with the former SOE Adviser who, he says, undertook extensive researches in the SOE Archive and supplied material from the Archive which is quoted from in the book. However, once supplied in this way by the SOE Adviser, the material is deemed to have passed into the public domain and no restrictions are placed on its use. Apart from this the authors have drawn on material available in the PRO or already in print.

Mr Cowell, the SOE Adviser, is of the opinion that the book requires little, if any, official clearance but you may think that OSIP should be aware of the book and its proposed publication. Sir Peter is, of course, anxious for clearance as soon as possible as the book has been accepted for publication by Leo Cooper. Perhaps you would be kind enough to let me know what action you think is necessary.

Pat Andrews

MISS P M ANDREWS

Historical and Records Section
20 January 1993

217 6050

FROM: Richard Bone, LRD

DATE: 13 March 1991

cc: Mr Ling
Mr Berman, Legal Advisers
Mr Cowell, LRD
Mr Newton, PUSD
Mr Uden, EED
Mr Stephens, Box 500

*I will try to find an opportunity
for a mild approach.*

PLC
PS/PUS

R 24/3
PATRICK WRIGHT

SIR REG HIBBERT'S SOE MEMOIRS

1. It would be helpful if Sir Reg could be gently reminded that it would have been appreciated if, as a former member of the Diplomatic Service, he had consulted the FCO before deciding to publish his SOE memoirs. I do not think that mentioning the intention to the PUS at a social occasion can be interpreted as consultation. Had he approached the Office the SOE Adviser would have been very ready to help with the text in the interests both of factual accuracy and any residual sensitivity.

2. Short of legal proceedings (shades of "Spycatcher") there is little, other than appeals to loyalty, etc., that we can do if former members of the Service choose to ignore DSR either by not consulting or not submitting manuscripts when required to or by disregarding requests for change. In any event, to consider more rigorous action would not be appropriate in this case. The memoirs deal with his experiences, before he joined the Service, in an organisation which was closed down in 1946 and unlike others, does not have any overt continuation. He is entitled to defend himself against critics of his war-time activities (we have helped Lord Brimelow do so in the Tolstoy case). To the best of my knowledge he has not had access to official SOE papers, which are covered by the Intelligence "blanket" and will not be released and, assuming that he did not retain papers, is not disclosing information but drawing on his memories. In addition to the official SOE histories 55 books have been written over the years by former members of SOE of which, according to our records, only 16 were submitted for clearance. Two of these were written by former members of the Diplomatic Service (Sir Andrew Gilchrist and Mr Ivor Porter). Among the authors who apparently did not submit their books for clearance were Stephen Clissold, Rex Leaper and Fitzroy MacLean. To try to enforce a "duty of confidentiality" rule after so many horses have bolted would make little sense. Furthermore we have to consider

/that

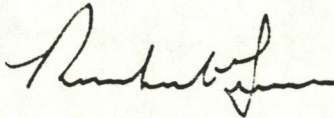
RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

that any action could lead to undesirable publicity about areas on which the files remain sensitive.

3. The regulations on Diplomatic memoirs are, however, still generally observed and, for this reason alone, it would be prudent to remind Sir Reg of them.

4. Responsibility for SOE-related publications rests with the SOE Adviser (not the MOD).



Richard Bone
Library and Records Department

RESTRICTED

Shilly



HO93/77 ✓

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

GUBBINS AND SOE

Mr Sibson telephoned on 1 February to say that he had decided to ask the Foreign Office (PUSD) whether Sir Peter Wilkinson's book on Gubbins and SOE needed the more stringent clearance accorded to former members of the intelligence service. He thought not and if this was confirmed by PUSD it would simply be a question of asking Mr Cowell to confirm that nothing in the book would damage national security. Clearance for publication could then be given.

Mr Sibson agreed to contact the PUSD forthwith and let me know the outcome.

P.M.A.

MISS P M ANDREWS
1 February 1993

HO93/57 ✓

file



MR SIBSON

GUBBINS AND SOE

Thank you for your minute of 21 January.

I am afraid I have no papers about Sir Peter Wilkinson's access to the SOE Archive but what he has said about it, which is what I put in my minute of 20 January, has been confirmed by the present SOE Adviser, Gervase Cowell.

Former officials, such as Sir Peter, who seek access to material in the SOE Archive are told that they should "consult" prior to publication rather than that they need "clearance" but, having been consulted we must, I assume, give clearance for publication - or not.

Given the circumstances in which material was supplied by the SOE Adviser ie in exactly the same way as it would be to any enquirer with anything so provided being deemed, as I said, to have passed into the public domain, publication of that material would not constitute unauthorised disclosure. Nor, of course, would the material available in the PRO or already in print. The only area of possible concern, it seems to me, must be that of "personal knowledge and private information" but as the book has been written mainly from these sources it is obviously an area we should consider.

Perhaps you would like to have a word with Gervase Cowell, the present SOE Adviser (210 6742). He may be able to clarify further. The last thing I want to do is to cause anyone work which is not strictly necessary, on the other hand I am concerned that the book should receive the necessary consideration.

Pat Andrews

MISS P M ANDREWS

Historical and Records Section
22 January 1993



NO.0409

MISS ANDREWS

GUBBINS AND SOE

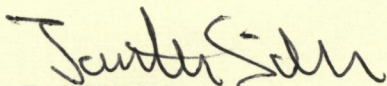
Thank you for your note of 20 January.

2 Two questions arise:

- does Sir Peter Wilkinson need clearance for publication?;
- if so, should such clearance be given?

We need first to establish the answer to the former question. This turns on whether the book contains information the unauthorised disclosure of which would constitute an offence under the Official Secrets Act 1984. I note that much of the information was supplied by the former SOE adviser. But I think that we need to know a little more about the circumstances in which it was provided, and the basis on which he provided it. Are there any relevant papers?

3 I am sorry to have to ask for more information. But I do think that we need to be clear about whether we need to consider formally whether or not to authorise publication - a process which would inevitably take a little time.


J SIBSON

21 January 1993



HO93/50



MR SIBSON

GUBBINS AND SOE

Sir Peter Wilkinson, former diplomat, who served in the Cabinet Office in 1963-64 and is shown in Who's Who as a Consultant to the Cabinet Office in 1972-73, just before his retirement, contacted me a week ago about clearance for publication of the attached book which he has written, together with Mrs Joan Astley, formerly assistant to Ismay, on Gubbins and SOE. I understand from the SOE Adviser in the Foreign Office that the book has been expected for some time.

The book has been written mainly from personal knowledge and private information. Sir Peter had contact with the former SOE Adviser who, he says, undertook extensive researches in the SOE Archive and supplied material from the Archive which is quoted from in the book. However, once supplied in this way by the SOE Adviser, the material is deemed to have passed into the public domain and no restrictions are placed on its use. Apart from this the authors have drawn on material available in the PRO or already in print.

Mr Cowell, the SOE Adviser, is of the opinion that the book requires little, if any, official clearance but you may think that OSIP should be aware of the book and its proposed publication. Sir Peter is, of course, anxious for clearance as soon as possible as the book has been accepted for publication by Leo Cooper. Perhaps you would be kind enough to let me know what action you think is necessary.

Pat Andrews

MISS P M ANDREWS

Historical and Records Section
20 January 1993

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