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Security

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Miss R. J. M. Ritchie

Your minute A07827 of 17 March, 1982 arrived here about ten minutes before Lord Carrington, who wished to report personally to the Prime Minister on this case.

What he had to say confirmed the content of your minute, and he added that, at her interview with the Security Service, Miss Ritchie had confessed to passing telegrams and a report by our Defence Attache in Tel Aviv to Ansari. Miss Ritchie was now in the hands of the police and, on the assumption that she repeated to them the admission she had made to the Security Service and subject to the views of the DPP, it was likely that she would be charged and appear in court tomorrow.

C. A. WHITMC

17 March, 1982

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MR. WHITMORE

Miss R. J. M. Ritchie

I think that the Prime Minister should know of a security case involving a member of the Diplomatic Service which may come to public notice. The person concerned is Miss Rhona Jane McIntyre Ritchie, born on 15th June 1952. She joined the Diplomatic Service in 1979 and was posted to Israel in 1980, firstly to undertake language training and thereafter to be Second Secretary (and, on promotion last month to Grade 5, First Secretary) in the British Embassy in Tel Aviv.

2. Information was received at the beginning of March that Miss Ritchie had been having an affair with Rifaat al-Ansari, whom they described as a Security Officer at the Egyptian Embassy in Tel Aviv, and that she had been passing him secret documents, including intelligence material, over a period of months, some of it affecting Israeli security.

3. On receipt of the information, and after consultations with the Security Service, HM Ambassador in Tel Aviv was informed. He had no evidence to support the Israelis' allegations of espionage. However, subsequently Miss Ritchie volunteered in conversation with one of the secretaries in the Embassy that she was having an affair with Ansari, and that, although she felt guilty about not informing the Embassy of this relationship, she had done nothing wrong.

4. It was decided, after consultations with the Security Service, that Miss Ritchie should be brought back to London for interview by the Security Service. She returned on 14th March and is being interviewed today.

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5. Miss Ritchie, as First Secretary (Political), had access to all normal classified information and Defence Attache reporting.

As far as it has been possible to establish, she did not avail herself of the opportunity to read any of this material.

6. The Security Service have consulted the Attorney General about the case. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, who is of course to visit Israel at the end of this month, has been informed. I will minute you further when I am told of the results of the Security Service interview with Miss Ritchie.

REA

Robert Armstrong

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