

cc FCO  
MOD

## 10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

7 August 1985

Dear Julian

Thank you for your letter of 23 July about Special Operations, copies of which you sent to Geoffrey Howe and Michael Heseltine.

We have of course given a great deal of thought to the problem of coping with terrorism. Since the outrage in St. James's Square in April 1984, we have extensively reorganised the arrangements in the Cabinet Office and the relevant Whitehall Departments for dealing with terrorist threats. I can assure you that there has never been wider recognition within Government of the need for prompt and adequate assessment of intelligence about terrorist threats and the importance of prompt and co-ordinated counter measures. We shall continue to see to it that our national arrangements reflect this. Internationally our priorities should be the fullest and most effective exchange with our major allies of intelligence and assessments about terrorism. At the diplomatic level we should work for strengthened international co-operation where this offers a real prospect of helping to counter the terrorism threat. Here too, we have made progress; but there is still much to be done. As you know, we circulated various proposals for combating terrorism, particularly hijacking, at the Milan Summit.

/Unfortunately,



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Unfortunately, there was not time to press them at that meeting. But the Foreign Affairs Council on 22/23 July agreed that the Ten should urgently look at this whole question. We shall be following this up.

In dealing with acts of terrorism, we can and do make use of the Special Forces if the circumstances are appropriate. You will of course recollect that the SAS took part in the action against the siege of the Iranian Embassy in London.

Turning to Special Operations in general, I am sure you will understand that it would be inappropriate for me to go into details.

As I mentioned when we met in my room in the House last year, the political and other risks of using such a capability in the circumstances of today need to be weighed with great care; otherwise the consequences could be serious and outweigh the results achieved. But you have my assurance that the capability we do have is appropriate for the kind of tasks we might be required to undertake.

*Yours  
Ranger*

The Rt. Hon. Julian Amery, M.P.



SECRET AND PERSONAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

6 August 1985

Dear Tim,

Can see this

Charles Powell wrote to Len Appleyard on 23 July enclosing a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from the Rt Hon Julian Amery MP about special operations. I enclose a draft reply, couched in general terms, which has been cleared with the MOD and our friends. We would not recommend that the Prime Minister take up the detailed points in paragraph 2 of Mr Amery's letter.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Richard Mottram at the MOD.

Yours ever,

(P F Ricketts) Peter Ricketts

Tim Flesher Esq  
10 Downing Street

SECRET AND PERSONAL



DRAFT: ~~memo~~/letter/teletext/dispatch/news

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:  
Prime Minister

Reference

DEPARTMENT: TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

The Rt Hon Julian Amery MP  
House of Commons  
London SW1

Copies to:

PERSONAL

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

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CAVEAT.....

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Enclosures—flag(s).....

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Spec. Operations Exec.  
DIFFERENCE  
H/1

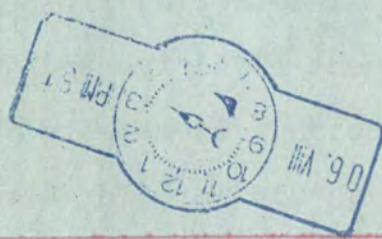
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CF PPS

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

A 23 July 1985

I enclose a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from the Rt. Hon. Julian Amery, MP, returning once more to his earlier theme of the need to reconstitute a special operations capability. He cites a number of reasons why the Prime Minister might be more disposed toward this than when he discussed it with her in February.

I see that he has copied his letter to the Foreign Secretary and to the Defence Secretary. I should be grateful for a draft reply which might issue on behalf of all three recipients of the letter. I have no reason to suppose that the Prime Minister's views have changed since February.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

(CHARLES POWELL)

L.V. Appleyard, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'L.V. Appleyard'.





FROM: THE RT. HON. JULIAN AMERY, M.P.

112, EATON SQUARE,  
SW1W 9AA

TEL: 01-235 1543  
01-235 7409

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

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23rd July, 1985

*Dear Margaret,*

May I refer to my letters to you of 6th July 1982, 31st January 1984 and 29th February 1984? I tried in those and in our talk on 21st February 1984 to put the case for giving Britain an increased capability on the lines of wartime SOE and PWE in order to counter terrorism directed against us and our friends and to support "resistance" in countries occupied by the Soviet Union or by its surrogate powers. At our talk you gave me a very fair hearing but, I think, felt that on the grounds of cost involved and the dangers of exposure by investigative journalism, the objections to my proposal outweighed its advantages.

Forgive me if I return to the subject but a number of things have happened since we spoke.

1. There has been a sharp increase in terrorism world wide including terrorism directed against Britain from the IRA and from Libya.
2. President Reagan has declared war on terrorism. So did you in your speech to the American Bar Association.
3. Vice-President Bush has stressed that counter-terrorism may not only involve security measures but may also call for pre-emptive action against terrorist centres. He has publicly asked that America's allies should support the CIA in this.
4. The Soviet connection with the training and equipment of international terrorism has been widely accepted.
5. The US Congress has openly appropriated funds for the support of the "Contras" in Nicaragua and the Freedom Fighters in Afghanistan.

The Clarke amendment seems to have been virtually rescinded.

6. The European Community Governments are actively considering measures to counter terrorism. Britain is probably the most experienced of them all both from our experiences in Northern Ireland, Malaya, Kenya and Cyprus and as the leading power in World War II in supporting "Resistance" in Europe and South East Asia. The French have similar experience. So to a greater or lesser extent have other members of the European Community.

../. .



23.7.85

contd:

I don't know how far you were able to discuss counter-terrorism at the Milan summit, but clearly it will be difficult to give support to the Americans (or if need be restrain them) or to cooperate with our Continental colleagues/partners in these matters unless we have an organisation to give us the necessary capabilities. If we are to protect our intelligence sources this may have to be more distinct from the intelligence services than is, I understand, at present the case though, no doubt, under the same overall control.

I have not wanted to go back to the group listed in my letter of 6.7.82. The less these things are talked about the better. I have, however, consulted Professor R.V. Jones of Aberdeen and Alun Chalfont who both have some experience of the business. They have urged me, to ask whether in the light of recent developments, you would care to look at the whole matter again.

I have also discussed all this with Alec Home who said he would try to have a word with you or Geoffrey Howe about it. Alec has a copy of this letter and of my earlier letters to you.

I am copying this letter to Geoffrey Howe and Michael Heseltine.

*Yours ever,*

*Julian*

Julian Amery

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, MP  
Prime Minister