



B.B.C. ^{Security}
Panorama

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

DRAFT ANSWER

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

Made my views known openly on
number of occasions - on [unclear] - [unclear]

It depends on any particular programme [unclear]
the BBC.

Canadian - Burgess
No facilities are available to foreign
in their [unclear] to [unclear] U.K.
for telephone, [unclear] in [unclear] services.



NOTES FOR SUPPLEMENTARIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

Q4. Any questions about the contents of the programme?

A4. That is entirely a matter for the BBC.

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BACKGROUND NOTE

The BBC have denied that a video cassette of the film for the proposed programme has been shown to anyone outside the BBC; and they have denied that there has been any pressure upon them not to show the programme.

2. The Prime Minister will remember that, with her approval, and that of her colleagues, the Secretary of the Cabinet saw Sir Ian Trethowan on 29th July, to make clear the Government's view on the risks to national security interest in showing such a programme, and that in view of this it would not be possible for any present or former member of the public services concerned, or for present Ministers, to take any part. He discussed the programme further with Sir Ian Trethowan on two subsequent occasions.

3. Similar views have been expressed in recent months to the Chairman of the Governors of the BBC, Mr. George Howard, by the Prime Minister and by the Home Secretary, and to Sir Ian Trethowan by Sir Michael Palliser,

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BBC's security film cuts anger staff

By Stephen Cook

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Blunt's Oxford spy foray is revealed in vetoed film

by Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman

NEW LIGHT on the activities of Anthony Blunt, the former Soviet spy, is one of the items which have fallen under the editorial veto of Sir Ian Trethowan, the BBC's director-general. Trethowan has told the Panorama team that he is not happy about the evidence they have produced to back up allegations in an interview with Anthony Motion, an ex-MI5 agent.

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

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

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

He also claims that MI5, during inquiries about Blunt at Oxford, uncovered other Soviet agents who were "turned" by the British but not exposed; and that several "minor spies" were left alone because they were not important.

During the making of the programme, Motion, 49, described how MI5 learned finally of Blunt's treachery in 1964—15 years before he was publicly exposed. At that time Motion was a section chief with the security services and said he was asked to examine

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

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

Motion joined MI5 after a career with the Hussars and the Foreign Office. He was asked to investigate Blunt's Oxford connections because it was feared he had also recruited Soviet spies there. He said: "I first heard about Blunt in the early Sixties and was as mad as hell about it. But now I realise there was more to gain by not sending him to jail at the time."

Motion, now a restaurant owner and chairman of a regional tourist commission, said that he had not managed to pinpoint any obvious Blunt figures at Oxford. He added, however, that "several people had been discovered by MI5 at the time of Blunt's private con-

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

Motion says some "exposed" spies continued working with the knowledge of MI5 to help provide "counter-intelligence information"—a hallmark of the security services following their successful "double-cross" operations in the last war. Much of Motion's testimony is supported by the recollections of the poet Louis MacNeice, who died in 1963. In his book *The Strings are False*, published posthumously in 1965, MacNeice recalled in detail how Blunt, while at Cambridge, regularly visited Oxford left-wing students.

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

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

Dr David Owen, the former foreign secretary, who was also interviewed by Panorama, told *The Sunday Times* yesterday that he had argued strongly for greater accountability of MI5 and MI6.



Motion: ex-agent talks

Additional reporting by
Denis Reinhardt

Film dropped after Trethowan intervenes

By David Leigh

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

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

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

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

ation to a women's employer; and another sequence in which a former agent claimed to have arranged hundreds of illegal telephone taps for M16—an activity which the Government denies takes place.

Another excised passage consisted of an interview with a former M15 agent, named Anthony Motion.

The programme, called M15/M16—the need to know, also covers claims of M15 involvement in the downfall of Lord Lambton, whose activities with prostitutes were made known to the News of the World.

It deals with the Profumo affair, another ministerial sex scandal; M16 recruitment of criminals in the Littlejohn affair; and M16 plots to liqui-

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

There were interviews with Mr Merlyn Rees, the former Home Secretary who was in charge of domestic M15 phone-tapping, David Owen, former Foreign Secretary, and other MPs.

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

The interviewee who discussed phone-taps said he had conducted 500 black bag jobs—illegal phone taps subcontracted by M16 while ministers assured Parliament no such thing occurred.

The Panorama programme has been made openly. Many Fleet Street writers and special-ops journalists were consulted during its research, and Sir Arthur Franks and Sir Howard Smith, Callaghan appointees to head M16 and M15 were notified.

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

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

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

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

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