

Mr Reddaway
Sir Stewart Crawford

SECRET

HOME COUNTER SUBVERSION: UNATTRIBUTABLE EXPOSURE

1. Sir Burke Trend sent for me last night to say that Ministers were very disturbed at the effectiveness of extremist Left Wing organisations in important aspects of the national life, particularly in the industrial and student fields and that special attention needed to be paid to mass media.
2. Ministers had come to the conclusion that an important counter weapon was exposure of the details of these organisations, their personnel, tactics and objectives. In the industrial field in particular, in spite of Security Service reports, Ministers were much influenced by reports from top employers claiming that strikes were often inflamed by travelling agitators. Ministers had agreed to strengthen the Information machinery to deal with these problems. In particular it had been decided to set up a Standing Group responsible for unattributable exposure of subversive activities and I was asked if I would take on the job of being Head of this Group.
3. I said I was not keen to do this, but agreed to find out more about it before making my decision.
4. I saw Donald Maitland this morning who said, incidentally, that his own staff was to be strengthened by another man who would have particular responsibility for keeping in touch with television and seeing that good spokesmen were lined up in time for programmes. He said that discreet material about special trouble-making groups joining legal picketers had been given by him to the Sun newspaper and printed. The controllers of the Sun Group had been shocked by the violent letters and threats they had received for publishing this and had their eyes opened as to the sort of people they were exposing. There was now in fact a considerable amount of requests from the Press for more material about the extremist organisations and subversion at home generally.
5. Ministers had decided, therefore, to have a Ministerial forum which would discuss the broad policy of exposure and a Minister specifically designated to give authority for individual exposure operations of any scale or special delicacy.
6. Working below this would be a Group composed of representatives of IRD, ECO, Security Service, either Mr Maitland himself or perhaps his new colleague and representatives of such Departments who might be concerned with the agenda, e.g., Ministry of Employment, Ministry of Education and Home Office.

Minister to
operate, but
not execution
to do.

But?

7. This Group would:

- a. set in motion studies of the broad problems by getting surveys and assessments written by IRD, the Security Service, outside experts, etc.;
- b. work out specific exposure projects for dealing with the threats revealed by the assessments;
- c. submit for Ministerial approval, projects which needed authority;
- d. put the projects into effect by contacts with mass media representatives and others who could help.

8. The Group would be a secret one. It would meet as often as necessary to discuss the assessments produced on the various threats. But clearly it was envisaged that it would meet fairly often. Sir Burke Trend had said that he regarded the job of Head of the Group as a part-time one which could be combined with Secretary of the overseas Counter Subversion Committee and I assume that the other representatives of the Group would also be part-time, though perhaps specially designated by their Departments to become experts in this field.

9. It would in fact not be a Research Group - this work would be farmed out to others. It would be an operational group whose job was to think up the projects for dealing with internal subversion, make the contacts and arrange the exposure. It would be responsible also for informing those who should know in other Departments in Whitehall, so that plans could be coordinated.

10. I said that the Home Regional Meeting chaired by the Head of IRD already carried out very much this sort of function. What seemed to be new was having a special Minister responsible and the political decision to take a bolder initiative in exposure. Mr Maitland said he was aware of this, but the object was to bring IRD with its expertise into wider operations across the board on the Home front without upsetting Home Departments.

11. Since much of the machinery exists already, it is clear that the real thrust of the new approach will be the development of new and bigger operations. This, I suppose, means somebody (perhaps the Head of the Group - i.e., me?) helped by IRD and the Prime Minister's Press Office generally, really getting out into a more dynamic contact with selective mass media contacts, Members of Parliament and such Groups as the Working Together Campaign and the Economic League in industry.

This tricky and important job requires the imagination, energy and wide range of contact possessed by Mr Reddaway in the 1950's.

12. I got the feeling that this has not all been thought through and that the immediate need is for the setting up of a bit of machinery, and that the appointment of a specific body to take responsibility is being undertaken at this speed to allay Ministers' growing disquiet by demonstrating that "something is being done". At the same time, it is clear that a genuine problem exists on which more action is necessary and that it is better to take positive action of a start somewhere than to go on discussing the subject interminably as has happened for many years. One of the aspects that I am not sure has been thought out are the implications of the FCO getting directly involved on a greater scale. I assume that the idea is that the Head of the Group should in fact be appointed to the Cabinet Secretariat and that IRD, which will do a lot of the work, is being more and more regarded as an interdepartmental agency. I elsewhere got a sniff of the feeling that the JIC and Assessments Staff (who work under the Cabinet Secretariat umbrella) may themselves spread increasingly into the Home field or that a parallel organisation may be contemplated for the Home side.

13. I am not at all keen to take on this job for a number of reasons:

a. the most important is that I am 61 and for health and other personal reasons had, before this matter arose, already decided to give the short notice required in my contract and inform the Chairman of the Counter Subversion Committee that I would like to terminate my contract at the end of July and then either be considered for a part-time advisory job on modest pay for the rest of the year or stop working forthwith. I had taken on the present job mainly because my son was still at Oxford and he finishes this summer;

b. the new job is a very interesting and important one and being an operational job, requires a degree of energy and enthusiasm and robust health which I have not at present got. The job should also be held by somebody for at least a couple of years so that the experience gained from doing the job could be used more and more in the future;

c. as I said to Sir Burke Trend, I hardly think that a job dealing so much with

(I am already in the process of getting a cottage in the country.)

the gut issues of domestic politics should be given to someone who, like me, has spent 33 of the last 38 years abroad (Mr Maitland would not have this and said that his own experience showed that FCO officers often had a fresh view of home problems);

d. the plain fact is also that because of the rule that my pay and pension together must not on re-employment exceed my pay when I retired, and because my pay when I retired, technically about 5 years ago, was round about £6,000 (less than half my final pay when I finally, formally retired in October 1972) after drawing the pension which I have earned, I can only be paid about £2,600 a year. This pay has been very welcome to me while my son was at university and I was happy to accept it in an interesting and not too onerous back-room job. But the new job is a difficult and exciting one which needs to be done by somebody really whole heartedly. And quite frankly I don't feel disposed to take on an active job with inevitable pressures in any case. So that to do it in addition to my present task for less than a Third Secretary's salary is not particularly alluring.

14. I made these points broadly to Mr Maitland who nevertheless is obviously keen to have something to say to Ministers next week and somebody to serve up on a plate and he said that he accepted my general statement, but suggested that I might set the new machinery up for a few months while they found someone to take it over.

15. I have to reply by Monday morning to Sir Burke Trend. Certainly if I stayed on for the next few months, I would be willing to give every possible advice and help to the new Group, but I do not want to get personally involved in active domestic operations and I think that it would be better if I made this clear from the start.

16. In canvassing other possible candidates, Sir Burke Trend mentioned Mr Thistlethwaite of the Security Service, and Mr Maitland, who said that this job would be of great and direct interest to the Prime Minister, mentioned Mr Tom Barker or the new colleague who is due to join Mr Maitland's Press Office.

14 April 1972


L C Glass
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[see draft
to Sir B. Trend
attached]

What about
Jack
Moreton?
He is going
except for
his job. Or
the return of D.G. himself?