

## Latest in long line

Geoffrey Prime is the latest in a long line of Iron Curtain spies since the last war. Major defections, arrests and scandals show the breadth of the infiltration by Russia and her allies:

1946 Dr Alan Nunn May discovered passing atomic secrets.

1950 Dr Klaus Fuchs, departmental head at Harwell, also supplied atomic weapon details.

1950 Dr Bruno Pontecorvo, another Harwell scientist, defected.

1951 Donald Maclean, head of the American Department at the Foreign Office, and Guy Burgess, second secretary at the British Embassy in Washington, defected.

1958 Brian Linney, an instrument engineer, revealed electronics secrets.

1961 Portland naval spy-ring broken to reveal Gordon Lonsdale as a Russian spy, and a spy team including Mr and Mrs Peter Kroger and two Admiralty clerks, Ethel Gee and Henry Houghton.

1961 George Blake found spying within MI6.

1962 William Vassall, Admiralty clerk, found passing defence secrets.

1963 Kim Philby, once a senior figure in MI6, fled to Russia after admitting treachery.

1964 Sir Anthony Blunt, Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures and a former MI5 man, admitted he had worked for Russia during the war.

1965 Frank Bossard shown to have sold Ministry of Aviation secrets to the Russians.

1968 Douglas Britten, RAF chief technician, shown to have provided Russians with information on Sigint and GCHQ.

1971 Nicholas Prager, former RAF sergeant, found to have passed V-bomber secrets to the Russians.

1972 Leonard Hinchcliffe revealed to have passed Foreign Office documents to Russia.

1972 David Bingham, Royal Navy sub-lieutenant, found spying for Russia.

1979 The Blunt affair revealed publicly in a Commons statement and Professor Blunt stripped of his knighthood and honours.

# Espionage and sexual deviation – secret lives of Geoffrey Prime

Geoffrey Prime's secret life as a spy was not uncovered until the first layer of his secret life as a child molester was peeled away. Sir Michael Havers, QC, the Attorney General told the Central Criminal Court.

After the investigation following Prime's arrest for the Sexual Offences, a further investigation was instituted, the Attorney General said. When the defendant's home and personal property was being searched the investigating officers began to discover material which suggested that the defendant was involved in activities even more grave than the sexual offences.

Recovered from the defendant's wallet were the following items:

Code pads known as 'one time pads' used to receive and transmit messages in code (Exhibits 1 and 2)

A document explaining how to handle microdots.

A piece of paper with details of radio frequencies, and

A TOP SECRET memorandum which in no circumstances should have been in the possession of the defendant.

The police also took possession of a powerful radio, two recording tapes, a black briefcase, a carrier bag containing notebooks, and 26 envelopes pre-addressed to the Eastern Sector of Berlin.

At this stage it is necessary to say something about the career of the defendant.

He was born at Stoke-on-Treat and after attending schools in Staffordshire joined the Royal Air Force in 1956. After service in Africa he was accepted to attend a Russian language course and qualified in May, 1964.

In June, 1964, he was posted to RAF Gatow in West Berlin where his work was of a classified nature.

**Positive  
vetting**

In 1966 he was promoted to corporal and in 1968 to sergeant. His engagement with the Royal Air Force terminated on July 31, 1968, but before his discharge he had sought employment with the government service. After positive vetting he was accepted and began work in London remaining there until March, 1976, when he moved to Cheltenham. During his time in London, he was again positively vetted in 1974.

In the course of his employment both in the Royal Air Force and in the government service until he resigned in September, 1977, Prime came to have access to information ranging from the simply sensitive to matters of the very highest secrecy such that their communication to an enemy would cause exceptionally grave damage to the interests and security of this country and its allies.

The prosecution say that for almost 14 years the defendant was, in fact, in persistent communication with the Russians, the information he disclosed in due course reaching the 'exceptionally grave damage' category I have referred to.

The defendant was first interviewed with regard to espionage on June 8, 1982. Detective Chief Superintendent Cole began by saying:

'It will not surprise you that because of the nature of the offences for which you are being dealt with and your previous employment with the Government, your behaviour has been put under a microscope. I have carried out a number of inquiries and from these inquiries I believe that you may have been engaged in passing information to a subversive agency.'

Prime replied: "I don't know where you have got that information from but that certainly isn't true I can assure you."

**He was given  
£2,000**

Thereafter he was far from forthcoming. He claimed that the material which the police had recovered from his home had been provided to him for the purpose of spying by an Eastern Bloc agent in 1974. He denied that he had ever communicated any information to his contacts. He admitted visiting Vienna in 1975 and 1976 but insisted that those visits were simply holidays. He admitted visiting Vienna in 1980, and Potsdam in 1981, at the request of his Russian contact but denied passing any secret information. The following, which lasted four hours,

## Crown's case

was skilful and persistent but elicited no more than that he had received £2,000 from the Russians although he never got further than 'considering' working for them.

On June 11, 1982 he was interviewed again and explained that in September 1977 he had booked flights to Helsinki on two occasions with a view to living in Russia but his regard for his wife and her children prevented him from going through with his plan.

## Secret case compartment

During that interview, which was quite short, he explained that in 1974 he had been given, via his sister, a briefcase with a secret compartment containing spying equipment. The briefcase, which was already in police custody in connexion with the sexual offences, was fetched and Prime showed the officers that if two screws securing the handle were removed it exposed a secret compartment in the base of the briefcase.

On June 25, 1982, Prime was again interviewed this time for about seven hours. He repeated his earlier version of events and continued to deny passing any secret information to the Russians. It would serve little purpose to relate any of the detail.

On the morning of June 26, 1982, Detective Chief Inspector Picken and Detective Sergeant Hartridge questioned the defendant again for about 45 minutes but he repeated his denials.

He was seen again at 2.30 pm on June 26, 1982 by Detective Chief Superintendent Cole and Detective Chief Inspector Picken. He admitted that he had told his wife shortly before his arrest that he had been spying but when questioned about this admission claimed that it was untrue.

However at 4 pm a dramatic change occurred. The defendant said: "Yes, Mr Cole, at 4 o'clock today, 26th of June, 1982, I now wish to tell you the whole truth of this tragic affair. I cannot go on talking about my wife whilst I am continuing to tell lies. It will take a long time, could we have a short break then I'll start from January, 1968, when this affair started."

After a short break the defendant began to dictate a statement. Because of its length it was not finished on the night of June 26, but was broken off at 9.30 pm and restarted at 10.45 am on Sunday, June 27, finishing at 2.40 pm.



**Sir Michael Havers: Praise for police**

The salient features emerging from that statement, were:

a. His first contact with Russian agents was not in 1974 as he had claimed but in January 1968, when he was stationed in Berlin. According to that statement, Prime began to feel sympathy for the Soviet regime in the mid 1960s and when returning from leave handed a note to a Soviet officer manning a check point into West Berlin indicating that he wished to make contact. Later he found a metallic cylinder attached to the door of his car. The cylinder contained a note which directed him to Friedrichstrasse station where he was met by Russian agents. He explained that he wished to give them any information they wanted.

b. Thereafter, Prime met his contacts Igor and Valya regularly until July, 1968, when he left the Royal Air Force. He told them the nature of his work and revealed all the information which was available to him. He used a miniature camera to photograph RAF Gatow's telephone directory and delivered the photographs together with a sample of classified material to his Russian controller.

c. Prime told his controller that he was thinking of applying for employment as a linguist in the Civil Service and was encouraged to pursue his application.

d. He returned to England in July, 1968, and was successful in his job application being told

to report for duty in London on September 30, 1968.

e. Before starting work he returned to East Berlin and received extensive training in the arts of the spy. He was taught the method of secret writing which allows invisible messages in code to be overwritten on seemingly innocuous letters. He was taught how to use a miniature camera for photographing documents. He was taught how to receive coded radio transmissions and how to receive and handle microdots. He was told the dead letter box procedure for conveying information.

f. When he returned to England he brought with him the briefcase which contained:

- (1) Code pads known as 'one time pads' which he was to decypher messages sent to him by radio and to encypher messages he sent back.
- (2) secret writing paper on which to write encoded messages
- (3) envelopes addressed to East Germany which were to carry the secret messages in invisible code
- (4) £400 in sterling

## Code name Rowlands

He was given the codename Rowlands and a password to be used when meeting contacts. In reply to the contact saying: "I believe we met in Pittsburgh in 1968"; Prime was to reply: "No, at that time I was in Berlin".

g. Once he started work in London, Prime regularly conveyed information to the Russians and received information from them usually by radio.

h. In the autumn of 1969, Prime was told by radio message to go to a secret hiding place in Esher near a lake. He went and received a few hundred pounds in sterling and a letter congratulating him on his progress.

i. In May, 1970, he took photographs of documents which he had taken with the miniature camera to Abbey Wood, in London, and left them at a secret hiding place in a wood.

j. In the summer of 1971 he collected more money and more spying materials at a pick up point near Banstead Station, in Surrey.

k. In 1972 or 1973 the defendant mislaid his one time code pads and was forced to send a letter to East Germany in invisible writing in plain text explaining the loss.

l. According to the defendant, contact was lost until 1974 when Soviet agents left a briefcase at his sister's home. This part of Prime's statement is confirmed by Prime's sister who remembers a man and a woman who spoke in broken English delivering a parcel for Prime. She opened the parcel and saw the briefcase which was apparently empty. In fact it was a replica of the briefcase Prime had been given in August 1968 and had spying equipment and £400 in the secret compartment.

## Access to more secrets

m. In the spring of 1975, while still in London, Prime was given a briefing by his employers in order to receive and understand fresh material of a higher security classification. He reported immediately to his controller in East Berlin.

n. His controller arranged a series of meetings in Vienna which took place in September, 1975. Prime took with him photographic copies of highly secret material and microfiche cards of an equally sensitive nature. He received £700 or £800 in sterling.

o. Prime flew to Vienna again in May, 1976. Between September, 1975, and May, 1976, he had been regularly sending details of top secret information. He took with him in May, 1976, more photographed documents he had had access to while in London, and explained the nature of his new job at Cheltenham.

p. He had, in fact, been transferred from London to Cheltenham in March, 1976.

q. At one of the meetings in Vienna, in May, 1976, Prime was informed that should he ever wish to defect he would be given a pension and the rank of colonel. He was given £1,000 before he returned to England.

r. Prime was promoted in 1976 and on November 1, 1976 he became a section head which gave him access to a wider and even more secret range of material. As a section head he regularly attended meetings at which matters of the utmost secrecy were discussed.

s. Between his return from Vienna in May, 1976, and his

# How spying came to light

resignation on September 28, 1977, Prime took 15 rolls of film amounting to approximately 500 photographs of top secret documents.

t. Prime claimed that by September, 1977, the pressure of living a double life got too much for him. He had married in June, 1977, and taken over the care of his new wife's three children. He decided to defect by flying to Helsinki and indeed booked flights on September 11 and September 20, 1977, but on each occasion did not go through with it.

u. According to Prime, he had no further contact with Russian agents until he was telephoned in April, 1980, and asked to go to Vienna.

v. He flew to Vienna on May 16, 1980 taking with him the 15 rolls of film of top secret documents together with handwritten notes. He was taken to a Russian cruise ship on the Danube for two or three days and questioned at length about the material he had brought with him. He was given £600 and flew back to England.

w. In October, 1981, Prime claimed that he was again contacted by telephone and agreed to go to Berlin for a further meeting. He flew to Berlin on November 16 and was taken to Potsdam in East Germany, (DDR) where he was closely questioned about Allied activities which were top secret. When the debriefing was finished he was given £4,000 and taken back to Berlin.

x. Prime indicated that the one time pads and the secret writing pads which the police had seized were given to him either in Vienna in 1980 or at Potsdam in 1981. He claimed that he had not used any of them nor had he had any further contact with Russian agents.

y. At the end of his statement Prime said:

"Looking back over the entire period I deeply regret the extent of the betrayal manifested by my activities which were in breach of the trust place in me

by my Government. I believe that I first embarked on these activities partly as a result of misplaced idealistic view of Soviet socialism which was compounded by basic psychological problems within myself. These problems had made me susceptible to the type of propaganda which I became aware of during my service in West Berlin. I am also deeply ashamed and find it difficult to express my remorse in words in relation to the anguish and suffering which I have caused for my wife and family."

The defendant, during the course of his interrogation, claimed that the miniature camera and a further set of one time pads were still at his home in the attic but despite the most extensive searches they have not been found.

The exhibits recovered from Prime's home and his wallet were examined by a variety of experts and their conclusions were as follows.

Exhibit 1 and 2 - the one time pads were of a type used by Russian intelligence.

The document referring to microdots explained the usual method of retrieving and developing microdots which are a well known method of conveying secret information. It was a signal schedule describing days, times and frequencies when radio contact could be made with Prime.

It was a verbatim copy of part of a TOP SECRET document to which Prime would have had access in the course of his work. It was a powerful radio which was capable of receiving in England short wave radio messages from East Germany on the frequencies specified in Exhibit 6. It was a tape recording (which was actually on the tape recorder when found by the police) which contained highly sensitive information and was in Prime's voice.

It was a tape recording which contained speech in German in a language of which Prime had a working knowledge. The speech

in code on the tape had been broadcast in East Germany in 1970.

It was a notebook with indecipherable indentations which Prime admitted had contained secret carbons.

It was a brown loose leaf folder with indentations which were coded numbers which Prime admitted had contained secret writing carbons.

It was letters in envelopes addressed to East Germany. The patent content of the letters was innocuous. Prime admitted that invisible writing in code was overwritten on letters of that type.

In a nutshell the exhibits referred to plus the briefcase were the indispensable tools of a modern spy.

The remaining part of this opening must, in the view of the prosecution, take place in camera with all members of the public excluded because to explain in any detail what information Prime passed, and to convey to your Lordship the extreme gravity of what Prime did, would involve revealing matters which would be prejudicial to the national safety if so revealed. But before doing so, in fairness to the defendant, there is one comment I would like to make. There has been much wild speculation, most of which is unsupported by the evidence, about the nature of the damage for which he is responsible, especially in relation to nuclear warheads and endangering the lives of agents. I repeat, there is no evidence to support speculations of this kind.

There is perhaps one last matter which should be mentioned at this stage. The responsible services have nothing but praise for the masterly way in which Detective Chief Superintendent Cole, Detective Chief Inspector Picken and police officers under their command coped with what is the gravest investigation they will ever be likely to undertake. In an unfamiliar field they worked with remarkable diligence

*The Times*  
11 NOV 82

## The seven charges

Geoffrey Prime pleaded guilty to seven charges under Section 1 (I) (c) of the Official Secrets Act, 1911, of communicating information useful to an enemy. They were:

COUNT ONE: That Prime for purposes prejudicial to the safety or interests of the State between December 31, 1967, and August 1 1968, communicated in Berlin information which was calculated to be or might be or was intended to be directly or indirectly useful to an

enemy. COUNT TWO: As above but between September 30, 1968, and April 29, 1982, and without any geographical location. COUNT THREE: As above but between May 1 and 3, 1970, at Abbey Wood, London. COUNT FOUR: As above but between September 1 and 30, 1975, in Vienna. COUNT FIVE: As above but between May 1 and 31, 1976, in Vienna. COUNT SIX: As above but between May 1 and 31, 1980, in Vienna. COUNT SEVEN:

As above but between November 1 and 30, 1981, in Potsdam.

Prime also pleaded guilty to three charges under the Sexual Offences Act, 1956, of indecent assault.

COUNT ONE: On April 10, 1980 indecently assaulted a girl aged 11 in Gloucestershire. COUNT TWO: On May 28, 1981, indecently assaulted a girl aged 13 in Worcestershire. COUNT THREE: On April 21, 1982, indecently assaulted a girl aged 14 in Hereford.



*Guardian*  
11 NOV '82

# Security chaos that aided an agent

ON APRIL 1, 1981, the civil service unions at GCHQ in Cheltenham decided to work to rule as part of their national campaign. This meant that they followed all available security procedures. The result was chaos.

Rigorous security checks at the gates to the base caused a queue of traffic which trailed back to the M5 motorway and started to choke the centre of Cheltenham. The local police complained bitterly and soon the normal, lax security was restored.

Sources close to the base claim that security there has been in decline for the last two or three years, largely because the number of security staff has been cut in an attempt to save money without jeopardising the base's main job of gathering intelligence.

In spite of the arrest of Geoffrey Prime in June, and the emphasis this has placed on the need for security, the sources say that procedures have not changed, and the decline continues. Outside contractors have been working there maintaining equipment — a risk to security which saves some money.

Prime is the first Cheltenham employee to be prosecuted for spying. Alex Lawrie, who worked there for 22 years and who has become an outspoken critic, said: "That means either that security is so good that there have been no others or that it is so bad that the others have not been found. I must incline towards the latter view."

## Latter View.

Other GCHQ stations have certainly been penetrated by spies. One of them, RAF Sergeant Doug Britten, is still in prison serving a 21-year sentence for spying for the Russians from 1962 to 1968 at listening posts in Cyprus, and Britain.

Details of the damage done by Britten were kept secret at his trial, but a man who worked with him at Digby has told the Guardian: "There was the biggest flap ever, just after the Cuban crisis in 1962, because the Russians suddenly changed everything."

"After a period of years and years when you had been able to tune in knowing the right time and the right frequency, you tuned in and there was nothing there. That was Doug Britten. He had told them exactly what frequencies and call signs and codes we knew about, so they changed the lot."

Britten was recruited by a Soviet diplomat, Alexander Ivanovitch Borisenko, who approached him in the Kensington Science Museum, introduced himself as "Yuri", and started talking to him about a amateur radio, Britten's hobby.

Yuri started to buy low-grade information from Britten, photographed the payments and then blackmailed him for higher-grade material. Britten used a camera, disguised as a cigarette case, to photograph documents at Digby, and beer cans with false bottoms to pass on the negatives.

Unlike Prime, Britten was caught by the internal GCHQ security system which noticed that he was living beyond his means. A report by the Security Commission concluded, perhaps optimistically, that his case reflected no security weakness.

During the period of Britten's espionage, a corporal with the army signals unit at Teufelsberg in West Germany, Brian Patchett, defected to East Germany taking still more GCHQ secrets with him. Apart from Prime, Britten and Patchett in the GCHQ complex, the Russians have been well served by infiltrators in the American National Security Agency, which is so tight and secretive that it is known colloquially as No Such Agency.

In 1960, two NSA intelligence analysts, Vernon Mitchell and Bill Martin, defected to the Soviet Union where they held a press conference, exposing the NSA's activities and, in particular, its habitual interception of its allies' communications.

In the backwash of their defection, 26 other NSA employees lost their jobs in "a purge of sexual deviants" inspired by the "fact that US security officers believed that the defectors might have been homosexual. Three years later, in 1963, another NSA employee, a cryptologist named Victor Hamilton, defected to Moscow. Again, the Russians allowed him to publicise details of the NSA's activities in an interview with the newspaper Izvestia.

At the same time, army sergeant Jack Lunlap, who was a courier at an NSA base, shot himself when he discovered that he was being investigated for living beyond his means.

Internal documents are all classified. Sensitive material at GCHQ is marked "Handle via Comint channels only" — a higher classification than top secret. Even administrative memos are marked "Staff — in confidence."

Specific documents have a

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## Agent aided by chaos

Continued from page 4

coded classification. The most sensitive material is marked "Umbra;" a slightly lower category is "Spoke."

Alex Lawrie is by no means the only GCHQ employee who is scathing about the practical effect of the security procedures. One former employee said: "I have known of numerous occasions of people leaving with secret stuff, often not

even knowing they had taken it."

This man described security at one RAF listening post in West Berlin. "There is no security. It would be so easy to give someone secrets from there — just put it in your pocket, get a bus into West Berlin and hand it over.

"Or go into East Berlin for that matter. I once fell asleep on the S-bahn and woke up in East Berlin. It's no problem."

# Five stripped of security clearance as result of Prime's blackmail list

From Our Correspondent, Cheltenham

Geoffrey Prime, the jailed Russian spy, acted as a "talent spotter" for his Soviet masters and drew up detailed lists of potential blackmail targets among the staff at the Government Communications HQ in Cheltenham.

During his 14 years as a Russian linguist, the last two at the Cheltenham HQ, Prime, aged 42, who was imprisoned for 35 years last November, built up detailed files on the people he worked with.

A considerable number of files have been discovered, containing hundreds of personal facts about his colleagues. Those named have been interviewed by officers from MI5 and the GCHQ security division.

Five of them have been disciplined and lost security

clearance because they were not entirely frank when questioned. As a result they have been demoted.

The people were interviewed to discover if they had been put under any pressure by the Russians.

The five had tried to cover up certain personal details which they did not know their interrogators were aware of as a result of Prime's information. However, none was found to be under Soviet pressure.

The inquiries, described by one of the five as "hostile", involved a detailed examination of their bank accounts and extended to what they did in their private lives.

The underlying reason for the interviews was MI5's belief that when Prime came to leave the base in 1977 he had already

been replaced by at least one other "mole" who had an equal, if not greater access to classified information.

Otherwise Prime would have been encouraged to stay on. Instead the Russians agreed to his leaving, and even offered him the rank of colonel in The KGB with a pension for life.

Prime, who also built up detailed files on young girls, three of whom he assaulted in attacks which finally led to his arrest and the discovery of his spying activities, is to appeal against his sentence later in the year.

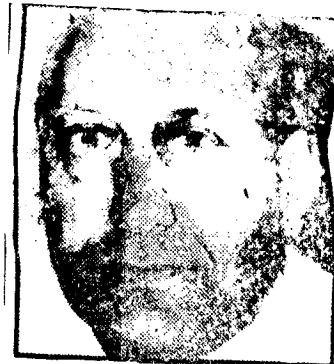
He will be claiming that 35 years, and three more on top for his sex offences, was too harsh after he gave police an MI5 full cooperation when it was discovered that he was a Soviet spy.

30 Jan '83

# The man who rocked the boat

## SOUTH AFRICA

### Eric Marsden on South Africa's spy scandal



Gerhardt: shock arrest

AT THE GATE of the Simonstown naval dockyard a notice warning visitors to take photographs or make sketches is signed "The Commodore".

"Please don't photograph the submarine," a woman officer said, but it was too late in more senses than one. The forbidding commodore was in jail, suspected of passing the secrets of the naval base to the Russians.

The arrest of Commodore Dieter Gerhardt, 47, and his wife, Ruth, 40, had been announced by the prime minister, Pieter Botha, on the eve of the annual visit to the base by the foreign press corps. The visit went ahead in lower key than usual but a planned call at the underground Silvermine communications station, which monitors Soviet naval movements in the southern Indian Ocean and the South Atlantic, was dropped.

We were advised politely that none of the officers or staff of the Simonstown dockyard would have any comment on Gerhardt's departure, and were given little chance of talking to anyone but the two briefing officers. There seemed to be less activity than usual: The espionage scandal has shaken morale and shocked the multiracial work force of 2,500.

Gerhardt is believed to have been detained through cooperation with foreign intelligence services. Sources in Pretoria say that Soviet spies have been uncovered in several countries, including South Africa, as a result of the recent reshuffle of the West German intelligence service, Bundesnachrichtendienst. Other sources claim that the CIA was involved.

Dieter Gerhardt's father was born in Germany and in 1927 emigrated to South Africa, where he was to become an architect for the government. But Dieter was born when the family was in Berlin and it is believed he was not brought to South Africa until after the war.

Dieter joined the German navy in Pretoria and joined the South African navy at 17 without

matriculating. He was encouraged by a young lieutenant, "Chips" Biermann, who later became chief of the navy, to complete his studies and this led to an engineering degree and later to overseas training.

Diplomatic and intelligence circles think that the authorities may be more interested in what they can learn from Mrs Gerhardt than her husband. The Gerhardts were married 10 years ago, and there is speculation that the alleged espionage activities began about that time.

The couple, whose son, Gregory, is being looked after by Gerhardt's brother, a Johannesburg doctor, are being held under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act, relating to detention for alleged terrorism and subversion. These offences, like treason, carry death as a maximum penalty.

The navy refuses to comment on reports that it has been meeting to decide whether an exhaustive review of policy, projects and security measures is needed in view of secrets supposedly now in Moscow's hands.

The Soviet Union have been particularly interested in Silvermine, which has been kept from prying eyes. Its detailed reports on shipping movements, transmitted regularly to New York, have helped the US navy by complementing information obtained by satellite.

Now that Gerhardt and his Swiss-born wife are in jail, people are asking how a foreign-born man could have risen to such senior service rank. Gerhardt, says one neighbour, was more of an intellectual than most naval officers and closely interested in politics. His political philosophy did not seem to be on the lines of the Christian Nationalism professed by the country's rulers.

South African leaders are convinced that the Simonstown scandal is further proof that the naval base is a prime Soviet target for control of the southern seas. Since James Callaghan pulled Britain out of the base eight years ago, in deference to black Africa, it has been unused by western navies.

South Africa has been tentatively forging links with South American states, including Argentina, but reports of a South Atlantic treaty organisation have been denied by both sides.



## Duff to be new head of intelligence committee

By Peter Hennessy

### Duff for JIC

Sir Antony Duff is expected to be confirmed this week as chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, which has been reorganized on the suggestion of the Franks committee

Whitehall expects Sir Antony Duff, coordinator of security and intelligence in the Cabinet office, to be confirmed this week as chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), which has been refashioned on the recommendation of the Franks report.

He will succeed Mr Patrick Wright, the Foreign Office deputy secretary, who has headed the committee since January, 1982.

The Prime Minister discussed Sir Antony's appointment at the weekend in conversation with a number of Whitehall insiders, including Sir Robert Armstrong, the Secretary of the Cabinet, Mr Francis Pym, the Foreign Secretary, and Mr Michael Heseltine, the Secretary of State for Defence.

Sir Antony, who will be 63 next month, retired from the Foreign Office in 1980 but was persuaded to return to lead the Cabinet Office's security and intelligence secretariat, which watches the budgets of the secret agents on behalf of the Cabinet Secretary. He was planning to retire again this spring and is still keen to go.

However, Sir Antony seems certain to accede to Mrs Margaret Thatcher's plea that he set up the newlook JIC. How long he will remain and who will be groomed to succeed him is an open question, since Whitehall appears unusually devoid of talent on the intelligence side at present.

Sir Antony headed the JIC between 1976 and 1979 during his tenure of the Foreign Office deputy secretaryship, which traditionally carries the ex-officio chairmanship of the committee.

Lord Franks recommended that the link should be ended, that the post become full-time and be based at the Cabinet Office, with its holder enjoying direct access to the Prime Minister.

In 1979-80 Sir Antony was Deputy Governor, Southern Rhodesia, overseeing the transition to independence and the emergence of Zimbabwe. He was made a Privy Councillor in recognition of his services in southern Africa.

In spite of his Foreign Office background, Sir Antony is greatly admired by Mrs Thatcher. He also enjoys one of the highest reputations among his fellow professionals in Whitehall.

Whitehall expects him to become part of Mrs Thatcher's "alternative Foreign Office", which already includes Sir Anthony Parsons, former ambassador to the United Nations and now her foreign policy adviser at 10 Downing Street.

*Daily Telegraph*  
*16 May '83*

# WOMAN WHO SHIELDED A SPY WAS CANDIDATE FOR TORIES

By GERALD BARTLETT

MISS DOROTHEA BARSBY, the woman criticised by the Security Commission for shielding the spy Geoffrey Prime, was last night defended by Dartford Conservative party officials, who recently appointed her a candidate in local elections.

"We checked her suitability for the job of representing us in the Swanscombe and Greenhithe council elections, and judged her to be excellent and personable political material," said Mr Anthony Gilham, Conservative Association chairman.

"We would certainly consider her for office again in the same way as anybody else. The fact that this woman stood as referee for Prime has been given far more importance and prominence than it really warrants. It surely plays only a minor part in all of this."

Miss Barsby, who was not at her home in Sun Villas, London Road, Dartford, last night, came last in a field of six council election candidates with 92 votes.

### 'Incompetence' claim

At no time did she tell Dartford Conservative Association officials of her involvement with Prime or his first wife.

Mr Gilham hinted at incompetence on the part of the security services when he said it did not "seem sensible for

organisations, like MI5 to rely upon one reference from a man's wife and another from a woman who was a trusted friend to appoint a man like Prime to a sensitive position."

Beneath Dartford Conservative Association's decision "not to condemn Miss Barsby under any circumstances" is a deep embarrassment on the part of Conservative Parliamentary candidate, Mr Robert Dunn, who until the dissolution of Parliament last week was Parliamentary Private Secretary to Mr Cecil Parkinson, the party chairman.

Local party workers who agree Miss Barsby was put forward at short notice to "wave a blue flag in a sea of red" acknowledge that her involvement with Prime could now reduce Mr Dunn's votes at the election.

Neither Mr Dunn nor his wife were prepared to comment last

night, but referred all callers to Mr Gilham.

The Security Commission report last week revealed that Prime's spying activities at the top-secret Government Communications Headquarters in Cheltenham could have been ended in 1973 had not Miss Barsby lied to security investigators about his integrity.

Miss Barsby, who knew Prime had confessed to being a Soviet agent to his first wife in 1973—the first Mrs Prime and Miss Barsby are close friends — was nominated by Prime as one of his referees.

### Confession hidden

Not only did Miss Barsby not volunteer her knowledge of that confession, but she told the investigator she had no reason to think Prime should not be entrusted with secret Government work, said the Security Commission report.

Miss Barsby, said to be "an attractive woman in her early 30s with short dark hair and a pleasant, personable manner" is believed to have worked as a personnel officer in London for some years, before returning to Dartford, where she was born, to be near her parents.

Neighbours at Miss Barsby's neat terraced-house said last night that they had not "had sight or sound of Dot" since last Thursday — the day the Security Commission report was published.

At another address she sometimes uses, two miles away in Clarendon Gardens, Stone, the white mobile cafe in a front garden from which she and a woman friend serve hamburgers to motorists on the A2 was closed.

Prime's first wife Helena, now Mrs Overy and living in Blackheath, was last night still considering making a statement through her solicitor.

*Daily Telegraph*  
*13 May '83*

# Friend knew Prime was spy in 1973

By GERALD BARTLETT

**G**EOFFREY PRIME'S spying activities for the Russians could have been ended in 1973 had a close friend of his first wife, who knew he had admitted being a Soviet agent, not deliberately lied to security investigators about his integrity, Mrs Thatcher said in the Commons yesterday.

The friend, Miss Dorothy K. Barsby, who knew of Prime's admission from the first Mrs Prime, was nominated by Prime as one of his referees for a positive vetting investigation in 1973. "Not only did she not volunteer her knowledge of the confession... but she told the investigator she had no reason to think Prime should not be entrusted with secret Government work."

Mrs Thatcher, in a written reply to a question about the Security Commission report on the Prime case, said the commission recognised that personnel security measures, no matter how rigorous, could never provide an absolute guarantee against disloyalty.

"They have nevertheless recommended a number of measures to improve our defences. The Government accepts the commission's recommendations, and will implement them as quickly as possible."

The recommendations include a pilot scheme to test the feasibility of using lie detectors during screening, and random searches of staff handling highly-classified material at Government establishments.

Prime, 44, was sentenced to 35 years in prison last November for spying for the Russians from the secret Government Communications Headquarters at Cheltenham. Miss Barsby was a witness at his wedding in August, 1969.

## Six-month inquiry

He may not have been the only "mole" supplying the KGB from the top-secret Government Communications Headquarters at Cheltenham, the Security Commission said in its report yesterday on a six-month inquiry, headed by Lord Bridge, into the affair.

The security service is still carrying out investigations at GCHQ, said the 43-page report.

The report said that since Prime stood trial, his first wife, Helena (now Mrs Helena Overy),

## PRIME

By GERALD BARTLETT

Continued from Page One

and her close friend, a Miss Barsby, had both confessed that they knew he was a spy.

His first wife said that in April, 1973, she discovered a large sum of money, which led to Prime admitting he was supplying information to the Russians.

Miss Barsby, who subsequently became a positive vetting referee for Prime, admitted that his wife told her about this, and she therefore knew he had admitted to spying before she agreed to be his referee.

"It is tragic that neither of these women had the courage to come forward and denounce Prime, and so put a stop to his espionage in 1973," said the report.

### 'Strong dislike'

Miss Barsby had since said she threatened to tell the police about Prime's spying, whereupon his wife said she would completely deny the story.

But the report added that Miss Barsby took a strong dislike to the positive vetting investigating officer who interviewed her "because most of his questions were about her, rather than about Prime."

For 11 years, the inquiry discovered, Prime, a Russian linguist, was regularly taking the most highly-secret documents home in his briefcase in the evenings, and photographing or copying them there.

He had access to information "of the very highest secrecy." The conclusion was "inescapable that the damage he inflicted was of a very high order."

Lord Bridge's inquiry at GCHQ found there was no check to ensure that documents were present before the vaults were locked at the end of each day. In the 12 months before the inquiry began last November, no spot checks were carried out to ensure that top-secret documents were confined to GCHQ offices.

In August, 1968, a month before joining GCHQ, Prime flew to Berlin and spent a week in a flat being trained by two Russian agents in radio transmission, secret writing, use of codes, microdots and dead-letter boxes, the report added.

However, the commission said, Prime's positive vetting was "thorough, conscientious and efficient."

### Psychological tests

Among its recommendations the commission said consideration should be given to the introduction of psychological testing into the screening process.

Positive vetting should where possible and appropriate, include "interviews with independent persons other than the referees named by the applicant."

Recommendations by the Security Service about the security arrangements at Cheltenham concerned improvements to perimeter fencing, site layout, car parking, security points, gateways and barriers; supervision of staff at overseas posts and on return; checks on staff attached to GCHQ from other organisations — and on contractors; design of passes; spot checks on classified documents and computer material; "lost document" procedures and access by cleaners.

"None of these measures would, in our opinion, have played any part in deterring, impeding or revealing Prime's espionage had they been in force in 1976 to 1977," the report said.

The commission said that an "extreme measure" which might theoretically have been embodied in personnel security screening procedures would be the use of random, overt surveillance of the subject's private activities.

"This was universally and emphatically rejected by all those with whom we discussed it and we think rightly so."

Last at a GCHQ spokesman said: "It is the first we have heard of the person by the name of Barsby. She is not and was never an employee of GCHQ."

Report of the Security Commission, 1982, H.M.S.O., 64.



## WIRED FOR LIES

In the dark record of Soviet penetration of British secrets history has a grim habit of repeating itself. In 1952 intense pressure from the United States after the conviction of Klaus Fuchs and the defection of Burgess and Maclean forced Whitehall to introduce positive vetting. Thirty years later a similar cycle of security lapse and prompting from Washington has led to a further tightening of Britain's anti-mole mesh.

The Americans, whose intelligence organizations have been locked into ours by both Treaty and mutual self-interest since 1946, have a right to complain stridently when a spy as damaging as Prime is unmasked, particularly as he was uncovered by accident. The original police interest in him stemmed from his sexual deviation rather than the political perversion implicit in his pro Soviet leanings. Yet there is an element of holier-than-thou in Washington's attitude. An audit recently conducted by this newspaper into the number of defections and/or espionage convictions since 1945 produced the following tally: United States 57; United Kingdom 25.

The Security Commissioner's findings on Prime, though containing a battery of sensible, practical improvements in technique in what can never be a fool-proof procedure will be remembered as the occasion

when the polygraph (or lie detector) joined the defensive armoury of the positive vetting procedure. The United States authorities told the Commissioners they were certain that NSA polygraphs would have picked up an American equivalent of Prime. The Commissioners became convinced that polygraphs in Cheltenham would have kept Prime out of the Government Communications Headquarters.

The Council of Civil Service Unions does not like the idea and has denounced its use as an un-British activity that will be inefficient and unjust to boot. The council's strictures should not be dismissed as a routine Labour movement knee-jerk against anything Mrs Margaret Thatcher does, since Whitehall's unions have usually cooperated responsibly and sensibly in such matters since Mr Attlee introduced his rudimentary pre-positive vetting "purge procedure" in 1948, when MI5, the Treasury and the unions agreed to operate jointly a "no martyrs policy". But in this case the council is wrong. Alternative work in non-sensitive areas would wherever possible be found for officials denied clearance.

It is very proper that there should be concern about polygraphs. There are pleasanter ways of spending a morning than being wired up by the gentlemen of MI5, but there is a clear need

to reassure the United States in this area. The very special intelligence relationship between Washington and Whitehall is central to the defence of the West.

The Prime Minister has therefore accepted the sensible and welcome controls of the use of polygraphs recommended by the Security Commission. The technique will only be applied to persons serving in the security and intelligence agencies, and only when questions such as "have the other side ever tried to recruit you?" rather than "do you have trouble with your wife or bank manager?" have to be asked. The Commissioners have recognised the unreliability of polygraphs and warned that an adverse finding of itself must not be deemed conclusive. Equally daft, though the Security Commission does not say it would be to assume that anybody who has cleared the lie detector hurdle is demonstrably clean.

Positive vetting is, has always been, and will remain voluntary. If an official does not want to endure it, Whitehall will find him work outside the Minister's private office, the nuclear side of the Ministry of Defence or the secret agencies. A post in a sensitive section of government service is a privilege not a right even for an established civil servant. The nation's security in these most sensitive areas is too important to be trifled with.

14 May '83

# Lie detector 'would have exposed

By David Nicholson-Lord

PRIME

## Attack on daughter was 'major blow'

Britain's counter-espionage operators should be put through an intensive 14-month training course before they are allowed to use polygraph lie detectors in positive vetting, leading security experts said yesterday. But the machines would "undoubtedly" have exposed Geoffrey Prime, who spied for the Russians from 1968 until 1981.

The training is vital because interpretation of the physical stress revealed by the lie detector is the key to the test, Mr Peter Heims, a security consultant who specialized in stress analysis in staff recruitment, said mistakes can occur if machines are operated by inexperienced people.

"Lie detectors should be used only as an aid," Mr Heims said. "You should never base a decision just on what you find from it. The machine is only as good as its operator. If necessary, you should give a person the benefit of any doubt."

The Government's proposed introduction of polygraphs has aroused opposition from trades unions on libertarian grounds. But Mr Heims, who advocates use of the machines for MPs, civil servants, police and local government officers as well as the security services, said: "When national security is involved, privacy goes out of the window."

One of those to benefit from the polygraph is Mr Peter Hain,

The father of the woman denounced by the Security Commission for not exposing Geoffrey Prime, the spy for the Russians, nine years before he was caught, said yesterday that the disclosures had come as a "major blow".

Miss Dorothy Barsby had been told by Prime's first wife in 1973 that he was a spy but had not told the police. She had even acted a referee for him during a positive vetting, saying she knew of no reason why he "should not be entrusted with secret government work."

The commission, chaired by Lord Bridge described Miss Barsby's action as "disgrace-

ful" and said it was tragic that neither woman had the courage to expose Prime and put a stop to his espionage nine years ago.

Speaking from his home in Dartford, Kent, where he is bedridden, her father, Mr Barsby, said: "I am an old man with a bad heart and it came as a major blow to me when my daughter was criticized in the official report. She leads her own life and we do not interfere."

Prime was jailed for 38 years last year for passing secrets to the Russians while he worked at the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) at Cheltenham.

Miss Barsby was close friend of Miss Helena Organ, and was a witness at her wedding to Prime in the Church of St Anselm and St Cecilia in north London in 1969. The marriage lasted six years and the couple separated when Prime went to live in Cheltenham. She has since married a London teacher, Stephen Overy.

Miss Barsby's role was unknown until the security report was published on Thursday. There was no reply yesterday at her home in Dartford, Kent. The curtains were drawn. There was also no response from the home of Mrs Helena Overy in south London.

the former Young Liberal and civil rights activist now fighting Putney for Labour in the election. Mr Hain, acquitted on charges of raiding a bank in Putney, was also declared innocent by the polygraph.

Mr Hain said yesterday he had been apprehensive about the test. "I thought that if by some fluke or technical aberration it should point the other way it would obviously be very damaging. I don't think anybody has anything to fear from lie detectors but I don't think

they should be forced on people because there is an element of chance about it."

Opinions vary on the accuracy of the test, with some authorities citing a figure as low as 80 per cent and claiming it can be defeated by trained spies. But according to Mr Jeremy Barrett, managing director of Polygraph Limited, the instrument is 95 per cent accurate.

He said yesterday: "I have no doubt that we could have exposed Geoffrey Prime many years ago if he had been

subjected to a polygraph test. It is absolutely impossible to beat the lie detector when it is operated by trained hands."

According to the Security Commission yesterday, the Soviet Union had advised its agents in the United States to avoid polygraph tests. Prime acknowledged under interrogation that he would not have sought a job at GCHQ in Cheltenham, one of the highest security establishments in the country, if he had been required to take a lie detector test.

*M. J. ...*  
*13 May '83*

# Security overhaul to stop Prime repeat

By Nick Davies

THE Government yesterday agreed to a radical overhaul of internal security in Whitehall and in the intelligence services to deal with the succession of security failures behind the case of Geoffrey Prime, who spied for the Russians from 1968 to 1981.

A Security Commission report, published yesterday, highlights the ease with which Prime slipped through the positive vetting system and evaded physical security precautions while he channelled highly classified information from the Government Communications Headquarters in Cheltenham to the KGB.

In one damning passage, the commission discloses that Prime's first wife and her best friend both knew he was a spy in 1973. Neither woman

*Leader comment, page 12*

said anything to the authorities, despite the fact that the friend was nominated by Prime as a character referee, and interviewed by a positive vetting officer.

The commission, which has been studying the case since Prime was gaoled for 35 years last November, recommends a series of changes, many of which have been pressed upon them by the American intelligence services, whose own operations were jeopardised by Prime's activities.

The commission makes its recommendations with an air of pessimism. "We recognise that personnel security measures, no matter how rigorous, can never provide an absolute guarantee against disloyalty.

"But the vivid demonstration which the Prime case affords underlines the necessity for the adoption of the most effective practical safeguards which human ingenuity can devise."

At the recruitment stage, applicants should undergo a polygraph test—sometimes called a lie detector—along the lines of that used by the CIA and the NSA in the United States for the last 30 years. Questions would be restricted to direct matters of loyalty and, unlike the American test, would not stray into general matters of lifestyle and background.

Applicants should also undergo a psychological test, in the form of a lengthy questionnaire, designed to reveal possible flaws of character. This, too, is standard procedure for new recruits to the

*Turn to back page, col. 5*

# Security overhaul to stop Prime case repeat

Continued from page one  
American intelligence community.

These two filters would be backed by interviews with a larger selection of the applicant's associates, not simply those who had been nominated as referees.

The commission backs a list of suggestions by MIS officers who checked security at GCHQ in Cheltenham after Prime's arrest last June, and notes that action on these suggestions has

been delayed while GCHQ decides whether it can afford them.

Again the report stresses the exceptional damage which Prime inflicted.

The commission's recommendations represent a complete about-face, since measures such as polygraphs have consistently been rejected by internal inquiries on grounds of their ineffectiveness and of their implications for invasion of privacy.

At the heart of the commission's new stance is the perception that in the Prime case internal security procedures functioned perfectly.

There is no evidence of personal failure by any security officer. "The personal vetting system does not protect us from Prime, but the explanation for this lies in the limitations of the system itself and not in any fault on the part of those who operate it."

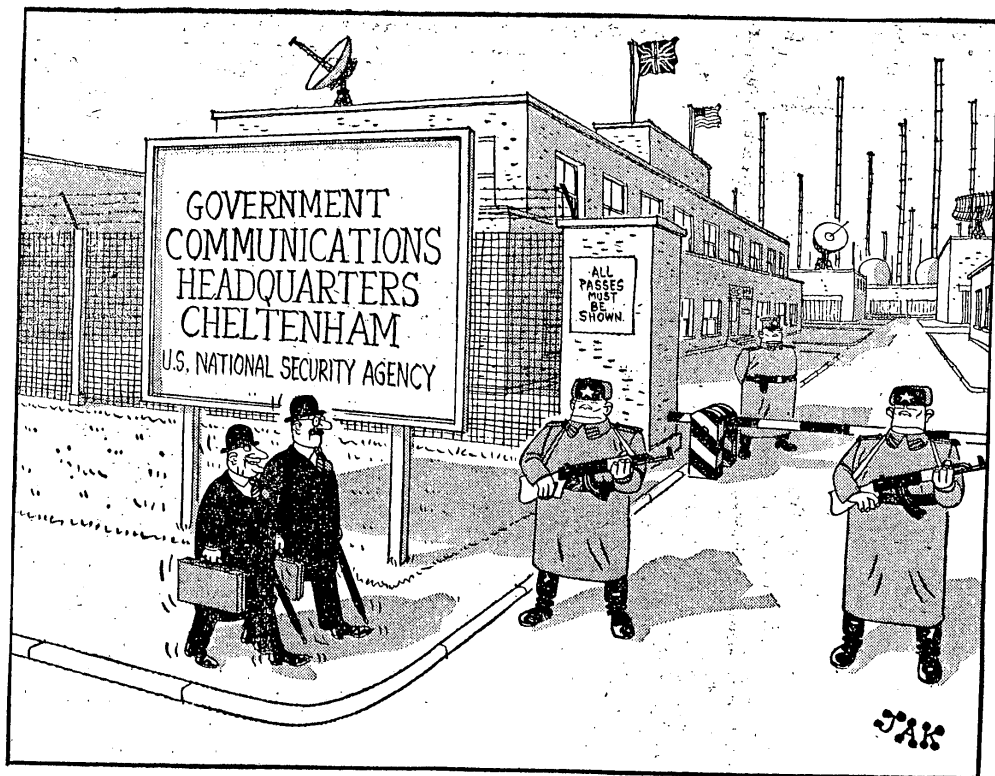
The Prime Minister presented the commission's findings to the Commons yesterday, and accepted the whole package. However, she acknowledged that parts presented cause for concern.

Richard Norton-Taylor adds: Civil Service union leaders reacted angrily yesterday to the Security Commission's recommendation that lie detectors (polygraphs) should be introduced to vet officials appointed to particularly sensitive posts.

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Approved For Release 2005/08/16 : CIA-RDP96B01172R000300020001-7



"I see they've tightened up on security!"

13 May '83

# Lie detector to be used on security staff

By Rodney Cowton, Defence Correspondent

The use of the polygraph or lie detector in Britain is to be introduced as soon as possible as a result of a recommendation given to Parliament by the Security Commission yesterday.

The commission had been examining the circumstances under which Geoffrey Prime had been able to spy for the Russians from 1968 until 1981, during most of which time he was employed at the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) at Cheltenham, one of the highest security establishments in the country. Prime was jailed for 35 years at the Old Bailey last November.

The commission says that the polygraph is the only means which could have protected GCHQ from Prime's treachery.

The commission has therefore recommended that a pilot scheme using the polygraph should be introduced for screening in the security and intelligence services. The Prime Minister said yesterday in a written parliamentary reply to Mr Michael Foot, that the Government accept the commission's recommendation.

The commission's proposal is limited to the use of the polygraph to counter-intelligence examinations, for example the detection of approaches by hostile intelligence services. It will not be extended to cover questions of life-style such as drug-taking, sexual habits, financial matters and so on.

The report also recommends the introduction of random searches of staff as they leave GCHQ, and suggests that these might also be considered for other government establishments where large quantities of highly classified material are available.

Other recommendations affecting individuals working in the security and intelligence services are that for positive vetting, individuals should be required to agree to allow access to their medical records, and that consideration should be given to the introduction of psychological testing into the security screening process for employment in the intelligence and security agencies.

The report says there is no positive evidence to contradict Prime's statement that he acted alone. "There have been intensive and extensive investigations, but no evidence has so far come to light to suggest that Prime had an accomplice, or that the Soviet Union has, or had, another source of information within GCHQ."

Nevertheless, the Prime Minister said that investigations were continuing with a view to being as certain as possible on this point.

The report finds nothing to criticize in the activities of the men who carried out Prime's positive vetting in 1968, 1973, 1974 and 1976. "We cannot lay the blame for Prime's espionage upon the shoulders of those responsible for carrying out our present security procedures. It is

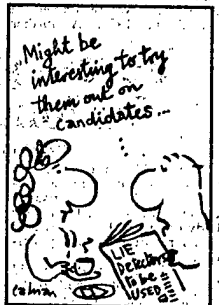
the procedures themselves that must be reexamined."

Prime was brought to justice when his second wife revealed his activities to the police. However, the report reveals that Prime's first wife, Helena (now Mrs Overy) had been told by him of his activities in 1973. She also told her close friend Miss Barsby.

The report records that Miss Barsby subsequently acted as a referee for Prime when his positive vetting was being reviewed, and told the investigating officer that "she had no reason to think Prime should not be entrusted with secret government work."

The commission describes Miss Barsby's action as "disgraceful", and says it is tragic that neither of these women had the courage to denounce him and so put a stop to his espionage in 1973.

It also notes that Prime consulted a psychiatrist in November 1972, and that if this had been known about it might



have raised a doubt about his fitness for positive vetting clearance.

The commission finds only one area in which the failure to take an obvious precaution facilitated Prime's espionage. This was a failure to check the counter on the photocopying machine which Prime used whilst at GCHQ. The counter, which would have revealed that Prime was using the machine and not entering up the register.

The commission regards it as unlikely that this would actually have led to Prime's detection, and says that its contribution to the overall damage done by Prime was small.

The Prime Minister said that Prime's disclosures had caused exceptionally grave damage to the interests of Britain and its allies. The Security Commission's report is published in full, with the exception of its appendices which contained classified information.

A spokesman at GCHQ said last night: "It is the first we have heard of a person by the name of Barsby, but she is not, and has not been and employee here."