

Five who exposed a traitor

By Arthur Osman

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The force covers Hereford, Worcester and Shropshire. At its Worcester headquarters a senior officer said: "We have been instructed by the Director of Public Prosecutions to give nothing but the briefest information."

The five are: Det Chief-Supt David Cole, aged 44, married with three children and head of the CID. He was born in Gloucestershire and joined the old Worcestershire force when he was aged 16.

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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 instru-

The not-so-secure world of a Nato nerve centre

By Stewart Tendler

The Government Communications Headquarters, where Geoffrey Prime worked and spied, is the European nerve centre of NATO's long-term intelligence operation. The aeriels at GCHQ's two Cheltenham complexes are the ears of a listening post ranging across Europe and deep into the Soviet Union.

GCHQ is part of a global network, run principally by Britain and the United States, which listens, records and analyses the diplomatic, civilian and military communications of friend and foe, 24 hours a day. Cheltenham is one of the two main axes of the network and also the monitor for European diplomatic traffic, Moscow's links to the West and Soviet military and police radio channels.

It is the outward manifestation of the technological espionage that is superseding traditional spy craft. Human Intelligence, "Humint", has given way to Signal Intelligence "Sigint", and its great listening computer banks.

Sigint owes its origins to Allied success in deciphering enemy communications during the Second World War. The British "Ultra" team at Bletchley Park broke down German messages in one of the great intelligence victories of the war, while American cryptographers punctured the defences of the key Japanese Purple Code.

In 1952 President Truman signed an order founding the National Security Agency to centralize and coordinate American Sigint work. The NSA at Fort Meade, Maryland, is the United States equivalent of GCHQ, with an annual budget said to be more than \$1,000m.

It is through the NSA that indications of the range of Sigint work have come. In 1976 the Church Report prepared by the United States Senate on American intelligence operations outlined the brief to which modern intelligence operates.

Many of the British contributions to those Sigint functions are carried out or controlled from Cheltenham. Developed from a wartime base used by the United States air Force to train technicians, GCHQ now has complexes at Oakley, the original site, and Benhall, which has expanded rapidly in the past ten years.

Benhall is home for hundreds of linguists, Chinese and Russian speakers, like Geoffrey Prime, are at a premium. A rapid communications system

linked to Fort Meade allows speedy exchange of information.

Cheltenham also has laboratories and a training school for technicians. Secure equipment for embassies is developed there and the laboratories are also used to evaluate equipment "acquired" from abroad.

Since the NSA works not only for the intelligence community but also for civilian clients such as the FBI and the United States Drug Enforcement Agency, interceptions have ranged very wide, drawing further criticism.

Analysts who examine the processed messages can hopefully provide an effective appraisal of movements, intentions and dispositions which are passed to Cabinet committees in Whitehall and to the White House.



Sir Brian Tovey:
CGHQ chief

The effectiveness of arms race monitoring may partly depend on Sigint operations. The first indications of war would emerge from sudden troop movements, an upsurge in radio traffic and messages intercepted at Cheltenham. In wartime, GCHQ would be vital as the electronic successor to the Ultra team.

A commentator on the American intelligence community once described technological intelligence as "the most reliable sensory organs of the espionage body". If that description is right then Geoffrey Prime gave Moscow access to one of the most acute of those senses.

Little surprise was reported among staff at GCHQ when the arrest in July of Geoffrey Prime revealed that there was a spy in their midst.

With up to 8,000 staff and evidence of lax security at the Cheltenham base, there were those who felt that penetration was inevitable.

Anglo-American signals intelligence has been a central target

for the KGB, the GRU Russian military intelligence, and other espionage groups since the middle 1940s. Yet former Cheltenham staff have talked of insufficient security checks, badly guarded gates and unsupervised outside workmen within the offices.

The Times has been told that few of the internal security guards have police or military training while security for the control and movement of documents is slack. Personnel use limited entrances but when a shift changes, every eight hours, there are too few guards to check credentials, cars or cases.

Even before Prime's trial the Americans were raising doubts about British security, hinting that the dissensions which followed the Burgess/Maclean case in the early 1950s may resurface.

Given the sporadic but regular discovery of Soviet penetration of British intelligence, the security surrounding Cheltenham should have been extremely tight. The internal security force which guards the gates, patrols the perimeter and building interiors, is understood to include two M15 officers on permanent secondment. Advice on security is also provided from M15's London headquarters.

Special baffles have been installed to protect GCHQ's computers from any form of eavesdropping. Security men also check on visitors to Cheltenham's hotels.

Staff within GCHQ are vetted before they start employment and positive vetting of personnel with very high security clearance is supposed to be repeated every three years.

Geoffrey Prime would have gone to Cheltenham with seemingly impeccable references. His record with the RAF would have made him an ideal recruit. He would be aware of security requirements and already have received clearance to deal with signals intelligence while an airman.

Quiet, stable and married, there would be little about him to conjure suspicion. If the vetting experts from M15 and the Special Branch made further inquiries, they would have found no evidence of unaccountable finances.

Within GCHQ there seems to have been little chance that Mr Prime would be caught. One former member of staff described the security there as "a laughing stock".

*The Times**11 Nov '82*

Card index of 2,287 little girls' names

In his opening speech, Sir Michael Havers said: The defendant is a married man aged 44, with no previous convictions recorded against him. It is clear from the facts of these charge and also from what the defendant later told the police that he was sexually attracted towards girls in the ten to fifteen age bracket.

Over a number of years the defendant built up a card index system of young girls. His main sources of information were newspapers from the Hereford/Gloucester area. From newspapers he was able to find out the name of the girl, the names of her parents and sometimes a home telephone number. Armed with this information it was then his practice to telephone the girl and engage her in conversation as to her age, which school she attended and when her parents were likely to be out of the house. He maintained his index system, logging every call he made with details of who answered the telephone and, if it was the girl, details of what their conversation had been about and what name he had used when making the call.

At the time of his arrest the defendant produced to the investigating officers 2,287 index cards for such girls.

Crying and very distressed

Wendy, the girl referred to in Count 1, lives in Gloucestershire with her parents. On April 10, the defendant telephoned the home twice and spoke to Wendy, then aged 11, who was alone in the house. He claimed to be a Mr Brookes and asked if he could visit the house to attend to some plumbing. In the loft the defendant pulled a hood of striped pyjama material over his head, placed his hand over her mouth and told her to lift her skirt up. As she started to lift her skirt, the defendant was

Crown's case

disturbed by someone at the door and left the house. Wendy went to a neighbour's house crying, shaking and obviously very distressed.

Count 2, relates to the defendant's next victim, Donna, who lives in Worcestershire with her parents. On May 28, 1981, the defendant telephoned Donna, then aged 13. Claiming to be a Mr Williams he asked if he could do some painting estimates, after pretending to examine the house asked if he could take a photograph of her and threw her on a bed.

Threw girl into bath

Donna fled to the bathroom, and tried to call for help whereupon the defendant threw her into the bath, ordered her to take off her jeans and pants while he masturbated. Thereafter he made good his escape.

The girl named in Count 3, Jacqueline, lives near Hereford and in April 1982 was aged 14. She had received a telephone call on April 20 from the defendant claiming to be a Mr Williams doing some painting estimates. Jacqueline was persuaded to go upstairs to the bathroom where he threatened her and ordered her to pull down her pants she began to scream and this unnerved the defendant who left the house but not before asking if she knew any other girls on their own.

The police had been trying to catch the man who had assaulted Wendy and Donna. Unfortunately for the defendant his car, a distinctive Cortina, had been spotted and so it was that on April 27, six days after the assault on Jacqueline, the defendant was seen.

11 NOV '82

Women loyally stay silent

By Arthur Osman

Geoffrey Prime has been married twice and he is fortunate that both women have in the past few weeks shown more loyalty to him than he did to his country. Both have consistently refused to discuss their lives with him, despite sustained pressure from the media.

He married Helena Organ, a teacher, on August 9, 1969, at the Roman Catholic Church of St Anselm and St Cecilia, in Kingsway, London. He described himself as linguist officer (Foreign Office).

It was not a happy marriage and by the time they separated in 1973 he had moved to Cheltenham with GCHQ and she remained in London. She has since remarried and lives in south London.

Prime's second wife, Rhona, aged 38, was married to Peter Ratcliff and lived in Cirencester Road, Cheltenham, when she met Prime, who was not responsible for the subsequent breakdown of her marriage.

In the early 1970s she and her husband had a shoe shop at Up Hatherley on the outskirts of Cheltenham. They ran into financial difficulties and she approached GCHQ offering a room for a lodger and Prime moved in.

After separating from his first wife, Prime had a fairly low-key affair with a teacher in Cheltenham.

Prime married Rhona on June 18, 1977, at Cheltenham Register Office. She is a slight and attractive woman, a former pupil at the town's Pates Grammar School, who now works as a school meals supervisor.

Last Saturday she began the unhappy task of selling some of her husband's favourite possessions, advertising in the local newspaper such items as his squash racket at £16 and asking for offers for his car radios and other equipment.

She has maintained that, contrary to suggestions made to her by some people, money was a problem and on one occasion she told me: "I certainly cannot afford taxi rides".

She has resisted offers for her personal story of life with Britain's latest spy. She said: "It is a question of morality. I am standing by Geoffrey. Marriage is a very private affair and I intend to keep it so. I am saying nothing to anybody."

Mrs Prime has refused to be interviewed, saying that as far as possible she intended to keep her dignity. She had accepted

her husband's guilt, but

"He is a very good man".

She declined to say although she agreed to feared for him in the long ahead. He had been "at least unhappy" while in command in Gloucester and Birmingham prisons and added: "He is a man of and an active man, certainly not an average one".

She has jealousy guarded privacy and that of her sons. At one time there was a police guard on the house unostentatiously furnished in Pittville Court Lane, Cheltenham.

She revealed that she had been in regular telephone contact with Prime's first wife.

Prime was happy with and extremely fond of his stepsons. He took them regularly to watch Stoke City joined in impromptu soccer and rugby games in the local area. He even joined a squash club to help one of the boys who started to play the game.

It is thought that this found happiness with family. He "inherited" largely responsible for the decision not to defect to the Soviet Union.

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The background to Prime: Kremlin man in the heart of Cheltenham



The men who unmasked the spy showing the kit he used. From left the officers are Det Chief Supt Cole; Mr Robert Cozens, Chief Constable of West Mercia, Det Chief Inspector Picken and Det Supt Mayo. The articles include a briefcase with a hidden compartment, a tape recorder and a short-wave radio set, as well as code pads

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Edie Jones

11 Nov '82



The wife who could not live with her conscience

Mrs Rhona Prime, aged 36, went into the witness box smartly dressed in light grey suit and wide brimmed grey hat trimmed with a bright blue ribbon, bright blue jumper and a string of pearls.

She described herself as a practising Christian and told the Lord Chief Justice that her first marriage broke up and she was left bankrupt with three sons.

Prime came to her as a lodger in Cheltenham and they were married in June, 1977.

Mr Carman asked how she reacted when Prime admitted the sexual offences. Mrs Prime: "Total shock. I knew nothing about it at all."

Mr Carman asked how Prime had treated her and her three sons. With the "utmost respect", she replied. She did not know how he did it, living his "triple life."

Her sons had more respect for Prime than for their real father. Prime had been "just marvellous."

"He has worked very hard and brought me to a standard of living I would never have had without him."

Mr Carman asked: "When he confessed to you on the evening of April 26 this year that he had not only committed sexual offences but had also been engaged in activities as a Russian spy, did that come as a shock to you?"

Wife's evidence

Dark-haired Mrs Prime replied: "Yes it did come as a great shock."

During the weeks after her husband was taken into custody for the sexual offences she had discovered "the raw material" of his spying. She had informed the police first of what she had found and secondly of what Prime had told her.

"I took legal advice and I had a choice - I didn't have to do it. But morally I had to go to the authorities and tell them because I could not live as a Christian with that on my conscience or my husband's conscience and I believe in the end I have done him a favour, and hopefully the country."

Mr Carman asked: "what is your husband's attitude to the fact that you are the person who provided this prosecution with the ammunition it possesses?" She said: "He has taken it incredibly well. He has become a changed man, the man I always thought was always underneath. He has lost all his burden and is now a new man. Because of the terrible burden he carried for so many years he was incredibly unhappy. He was a tortured personality."

Mrs Prime said her husband was now able to "relate to

people" and had made a close friend in prison. "I believe for the first time Geoffrey Prime has found the goal in his life that he was always seeking," she said.

Mrs Prime said: "I intend to stand by my husband. As a Christian I can only utterly condemn the terrible crimes he has committed. But I know in my heart as a Christian I can forgive him because he is totally repentant and remorseful and is so full of guilt, he is a broken man."

Later, moments after Prime was led away to the cells after sentencing, Mrs Prime collapsed weeping in court.

She was immediately surrounded by police officers and was supported by a police woman as she was led from court. Still crying, with her head on the officer's shoulder, she walked uncertainly to a private room.

Mrs Prime, looking calm and composed, later left the Central Criminal Court by a side entrance. She did not speak as she was escorted into a taxi by police. Once inside, she bowed her head and hid her face in her hands.

With Mrs Prime was her parish priest, Father Adrian Hurst, who had helped her in court and who watched the trial from the back row of the public gallery. Another woman also left with Mrs Prime.

The Times
11 Nov '82

Commission to study Prime case

By Anthony Bevens, *"*
Political Correspondent

The Prime Minister will this afternoon announce a Security Commission investigation into the circumstances of the Prime Affair. The commission, chaired by Lord Bridge of Harwich, a former Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, will be asked to advise the Prime Minister whether any changes in security procedures are necessary in the light of the case.

Mrs Margaret Thatcher will be seeing Mr Michael Foot, Leader of the Opposition, to inform him of the reference before she makes a formal statement to the Commons.

The statement, which promises to be brief, will rehearse the circumstances of Prime's treachery and present a preliminary assessment of the damage done, but Mrs Thatcher will not go into any detail because of security considerations.

But Dr David Owen, the former Foreign Secretary, who was therefore responsible for GCHQ operations at Cheltenham, said yesterday that the security and intelligence services should start to spy on their own spies in order to help to preserve state secrets.

He said in an interview on independent television's *News at One* programme that positive vetting procedures were not going to halt Soviet penetration of the intelligence agencies.

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Lord Bridge to head Prime investigation

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"Unfortunately, what you also have to have to buttress your own internal security is some form of surveillance. In a free, democratic society nobody likes surveillance - people do not like the idea of spying on your own people to ensure that they have not got contact with the Soviet Union - but some degree of surveillance is necessary and that is a better check than positive vetting," Dr Owen said.

"People have to feel that if they know they are given secret information by the state, that the state will also take some measures to ensure that they are watching; to ensure that they do not pass it on."

Dr Owen also criticized the Prime Minister's tendency "to centralize all forms of control, particularly on intelligence, in her own person". He believed that a committee of privy councillors should have the power to question ministers

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Spy scandal strains US security link

By Henry Stanhope and Nicholas Ashford

The latest spy scandal has put further strain on the Anglo-American special relationship in intelligence which has survived a number of crises during its 35-year life.

By far the most embarrassing aspect of the affair is held to be the way in which Geoffrey Prime's disclosures to his Russian contacts involved United States and other allied secret information.

The transatlantic link is especially close between the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) at Cheltenham, where Prime spent the last part of his career as an agent, and the US National Security Agency.

The two organizations even share a programme of intercepting Soviet intelligence communications and analysing their decoded results.

This is the kind of work that Prime, a fluent Russian speaker, was apparently involved in.

Last night western sources were being even more than usually secretive on security matters when asked about the effects of Prime's long betrayal and its impact upon Nato.

At Nato's Brussels headquarters an official said simply: "Yes, we know all about it here. But it is all extremely confidential."

At the American Embassy in London there was a similar response; officials pointed to last week's reported comment

by Mr Caspar Weinberger, the American Defence Secretary, that the security breach was "unfortunate but not a great disaster."

Some of the most crucial information which Prime could have communicated was Western technology for monitoring and decoding Soviet electronic communications at GCHQ and elsewhere.

European sources were sceptical about American reports that Prime had disclosed information to the Russians about Nato troop positions and missile deployments. It would seem unlikely that he would be dealing with that kind of information.

But by selling details of western intelligence techniques he could force Britain, the United States and maybe other Nato powers to change their system.

Mr James Bamford, an American who has specialized on the workings of the National Security Agency said last night that the interchange between Britain and the United States on Soviet communications was total. "No secret is kept from either country".

But even more damaging than the actual material which Prime was able to communicate, is the fact that he operated for so long, and concealed a sexual perversion, without being apprehended.

The Times
11 Nov '82

The spying misfit at the nerve centre of Britain

- Geoffrey Prime, the child-molester who sold himself to the spymasters of the Kremlin, goes to jail for 35 years
- A curtain of secrecy drops after this latest strain upon Anglo-American intelligence relationships
- MPs call for tightening of British security and an inquiry into the background of the Prime case
- Prime, the sexual deviant, kept a card index of the names of 2,287 little girls, page 3
- The Attorney General's outline of the case in full, the charges and the mitigation, page 3
- Mrs Margaret Thatcher will make a full statement to the House of Commons today on security
- Background to the Kremlin's man deep in the top secret heart of Cheltenham, page 2
- The misfit of society that fell prey to the ruthless Soviet system, page 3

Prime jailed for leaking secrets to the Russians



the Russian spy, sentenced to 38 years imprisonment at the Central Criminal Court yesterday, has raised a question mark over the competence of British security and the extent of Soviet penetration in key intelligence areas.

Whitehall sources say the possibility of a leak within the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) at Cheltenham, where Prime worked and committed his most serious espionage, has been suspected for the past 10 years.

They hope the capture of Prime, who spied alone, has ended the spillage, and investigations, they believe, prove this.

But American intelligence sources are reported to believe the leak remains and suggest as many as three other agents have penetrated GCHQ, one of the West's two main centres for communications surveillance.

Film contained 500 documents

The sort of damage they could cause was illustrated by the Prime case yesterday. Lord Lane, the Lord Chief Justice, told Prime, a former linguist and analyst, that his 14 years as a Soviet agent had done "incalculable harm to the interests and security of this country and our friends".

As the judge passed sentence he told Prime, aged 44, of Cheltenham, "it is said you are anxious to repair the damage you have done but it is perfectly plain that a huge proportion of it is quite irreparable".

Earlier Sir Michael Havers, QC, the Attorney General, told the court that Prime's work had not given away the secrets of nuclear dispositions - nor information about agents but the damage caused became more and more "grave" by the mid-1970s when Prime arrived at GCHQ. On one occasion he passed film of 500 secret documents.

The court was emptied for a time as the judge listened in camera to details of the information leaked.

Prime, who left GCHQ in 1977, was arrested earlier this year after a series of indecent assaults on young girls in the

questioned by the police he confessed privately to his wife, Rhona, aged 38, and also revealed he had spied.

He gave himself up to the police the next day for the assaults but said nothing of the espionage. Yesterday Mrs Prime told the court she spent three weeks wondering what she should do about her husband's betrayal of secrets.

She had discovered equipment, part of what Sir Michael described as the "indispensible tools of the modern spy". After talking to a doctor, her parents and a solicitor Mrs Prime went to the police. She told the court: "I did not have to do anything but morally I had to go to the authorities. As a Christian I could not have that on my conscience or my husband's. I believe I have done him a favour."

Mrs Prime gave the police the first inkling of the fact that they were unwittingly holding the most serious Russian agent for two decades or more.

In time Prime, who told the court through counsel that he bore his wife no malice for her actions, admitted his life as a spy in a 30-page statement.

He said: "I believe that I first embarked on those activities partly as a result of a misplaced idealistic view of Soviet socialism which was compounded by basic psychological problems within myself."

He offered himself to the Russians while working for the RAF in West Berlin. Trained as a spy in East Berlin, he returned to Britain with a kit including methods of secret communication, cash and passwords.

Discharged from the RAF, Prime joined what Sir Michael would only refer to as "Government Service". In the time that Prime served in the RAF, and then in the "Government Service" in London and Cheltenham, the material he handled rose to "matters of the very highest secrecy".

Wife spoke in his defence

Paid usually no more than a few hundred pounds at a time, his total payment from the Russians was far less than £10,000, Prime was, nonetheless, highly esteemed. Sir Michael said they offered him retirement in the Soviet Union with a pension and the rank of colonel.

Twice Prime, himself, considered going to the Soviet Union and booked flights to Helsinki. *The Times* has been told that on one occasion he changed his mind only as he was driving to Heathrow airport.

The story of Prime's treachery was spelt out before a court packed with almost fifty journalists, policemen and security officials. Prime mopped his eyes as his wife spoke in his

Prime jailed for leaking secrets to Russians

Continued from page one

defence, but otherwise sat almost motionless during the two-hour hearing.

As the case got under way a 5,000 word copy of Sir Michael's opening speech was issued to journalists, who included many representatives of American newspapers and television.

A gaunt figure in the dock, Prime told the judge he had nothing to say before sentence was passed. But he was clearly stunned as he was taken down to face the start of a total of 38 years in prison, including three years for the sex offences.

While awaiting trial, Prime applied for an Open University place.

As the court emptied, Mrs Prime, who has three sons from a former marriage, collapsed. Tears running down her face she wept on the shoulder of a police woman as she was helped out.

Her husband received one of the highest sentences for espi-

onage since the last war. In 1963 George Blake, an MI6 officer, was given 42 years for betraying details of his service to the Russians.

Yesterday the judge made it clear the sentence would have been higher but for the fact that Prime pleaded guilty, provided a statement of his guilt and was prepared to cooperate with the authorities.

Prime's official grading was that of analyst of decrypted intercepts, in Cheltenham's Russian section, which is the largest at the centre's Oakley site where the massive computer is also based.

He was thus able to feed back to them the particular areas of activity in which the keenest interest was being shown.

He was able to tell them how much of their radio traffic we could "break" and, more importantly, how fast. This certainly helped to divert the main thrust of the centre's electronic surveillance work.

Observer
14 NOV '82

Cheltenham : a sieve for secrets

THE SORDID story unfolded at the Old Bailey last week raises disturbing questions about the whole of British security. Geoffrey Prime may or may not be the last source of secrets leaks from Cheltenham Communications Headquarters. In the nature of the game, nobody, including the Attorney-General, Margaret Thatcher, even Prime himself, can possibly know. What we do know is that Prime was able to weave in and out of the supposed security checks with an ease that has left not only Americans aghast.

Even before last week there was enough evidence of personal misdemeanour by GCHQ employees—at Cheltenham, in Hong Kong, and at other out-stations at home and abroad—to demand an inquiry into the whole organisation.

Nor should the inquiry stop at security in the narrowest sense. Rightly or wrongly, most people will conclude that there is something gravely wrong with any Intelligence body that can recruit and harbour a man like Prime who was so manifestly sick, to say nothing of the alcoholic section heads, property fiddlers and depressives whose doings have come to light in the Press in the past three years.

Clearly, these are only a fraction of the 20,000 loyal and highly qualified people who serve Signals Intelligence at Cheltenham and elsewhere. But it can fairly be asked whether the in-grown world of 'SigInt' is not in need of a draught of clear air.

US fears Prime wrecked years of intelligence work

by PATRICK BISHOP, ANDREW WILSON and IAN MATHER

SENIOR American defence strategists believe that years of work assessing Warsaw Pact military and defence postures may have been wrecked by the treachery of the jailed spy, Geoffrey Prime.

A highly placed Pentagon source told THE OBSERVER that the most serious consequence of Prime's activities was probably a flow of carefully planted 'disinformation' contained in signals that the Russians knew would be intercepted and decoded.

A huge American intelligence operation is under way to reassess all information obtained by signals interception during the 14 years Prime spied for the Soviet Union.

For several weeks experts from the National Security Agency have been at the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), in Cheltenham where Prime worked as a Russian linguist, trying to establish what reached Moscow and what did not.

Prime's job placed him in a position to inflict serious damage on Western security. As a section head he had full access to details of intelligence 'targets,' decoding

techniques, frequencies monitored, and above all the interception of specific signals which would enable the Russians to take evasive action and plant false intelligence.

He was also able to obtain information about the use of American 'Rhyolite' satellites for intercepting long-distance microwave telephone calls, as well as monitoring signals from missiles during test firings.

Until Prime has been thoroughly interrogated no one outside the Soviet military and intelligence leadership can know for certain to what use Prime's information was put.

Initial reports from Washington based on 'security sources' claiming Prime had revealed the location of NATO nuclear warheads and details of agent networks have been dismissed by both the United States Defence Secretary, Mr Caspar Weinberger, and the Attorney General at the trial.

The denials are based on the assumption that Prime's job would not have allowed him access to that information and that the supposedly 'watertight' cell system operated at Cheltenham would have made it impossible for him to obtain it.

Inquiries by THE OBSERVER suggest that the cell system—introduced in the 1950s at the Americans' behest—was as creaky as other aspects of Cheltenham security, and that the free-and-easy attitude to exchanging information inside GCHQ would have made it a relatively simple matter for Prime to obtain details of NATO orders of battle and other highly sensitive information.

Mr Jock Kane, a radar supervisor who left GCHQ after 32 years' service in 1978, after a long and unsuccessful campaign to alert his employers, Special Branch and politicians to security failures said: 'The cell system simply doesn't work.'

'I knew a radar technician who was often called on to do covert jobs around the country. It was secret work and his section boss wasn't meant to know where he was.'

'One day he got annoyed because the man was absent again, and he needed him. He went to the principal station radio officer and told him he wanted to get hold of him. The radio officer rang Cheltenham and was immediately told where he was.'

Mr Kane, whose allegations about yawning security breaches at GCHQ's Hong Kong station were substan-



GEOFFREY PRIME: Disinformation

security, 'One Against the System,' said he believed other agents had been operating inside GCHQ.

'GCHQ supplies 85 per cent of the foreign intelligence received by the Cabinet,' he said. 'It is unlikely that the KGB would have allowed Prime to stay out of touch with them for two years unless they had alternative sources of information. Prime was obviously useful but not essential.'

One important side-effect of the Prime affair has been the damage it has done to relations between British and US intelligence.

A Washington source said that US intelligence were angry at their British counterparts for not owning up earlier to the security breach, and in particular for not handing over the interrogation reports on Prime that would have given an initial idea of the seriousness of his treachery.

Shadow Home Secretary Mr Roy Hattersley said yesterday that Labour would continue to press for a House of Commons inquiry into Britain's security services. Speaking at a Birmingham meeting, he said there was a widespread belief on both sides of the House 'that other scandals, as yet uncovered, will reveal further failures in the system.'

tiated by exhaustive media inquiries two years ago, also said that Prime could have obtained information outside the scope of his immediate work without arousing suspicion.

'He would have had access to practically anything,' he said. 'He would be able to ask for any references to help him in his work—documentary stuff, etc., without arousing any notice whatever.' That could include, claimed Mr Kane, details of NATO battle plans.

Mr Kane, who has written an unpublished account of his campaign to tighten

28. Nov 81
Observer

14 Nov '82

Cheltenham closes ranks

By R. H. GREENFIELD

IT looks an unwarrantable affront to the muted elegance of Cheltenham. And so it is — though not nearly so much of an affront as the conduct of the man who worked there.

GCHQ, the Government's massive electronic espionage centre, is housed in two complexes on either side of the town, at Benhall and Oakley, on sites resembling a couple of technical colleges that have outgrown their accommodation. The two main blocks, built in the idiom of "modernist layer-cake," are surrounded by sprawls of what look like huddled classrooms.

Architecturally, GCHQ is an insensitive breach of good manners. But it is an offence that has paled into insignificance beside the enormity of engaging and promoting Geoffrey Prime, the man who has brought shame on a town that has always been a byword for well-bred respectability.

Most of the places mentioned at his trial—Berlin, Potsdam, Vienna—have an exotic flavour appropriate to the melodramatic if not faintly absurd "John le Carré-on" of passwords, dead letter boxes, secret brief-cases and other paraphernalia of modern espionage. But not Cheltenham.

Cheltenham is a once-fashionable spa, which acquired its handsome terraces and promenades in Georgian and Regency times, and its tradition as the home of retired colonels from the days when 19th-century servants of empire sought out its agreeable climate. It is a town now noted in the guide books for its handsome architecture, its annual Festival of Music and Literature, its art galleries and antique shops.

In the past few decades industry and business have moved in, as well as GCHQ, but the place retains its aura of gracious living. The 10,000 or so employees of GCHQ, in particular, with their own exclusive social club, sports teams and Government-owned quarters, have hitherto made

impact upon the even tenor of Cheltenham life.

Elderly military gentlemen still wish a courteous good morning to passing strangers. A vintage Sunbeam stands gleaming in the driveway of a villa in Queen's Road. A tiger's head, boar's tusks and a cluster of cavalry sabres decorate the bar of the principal hotel.

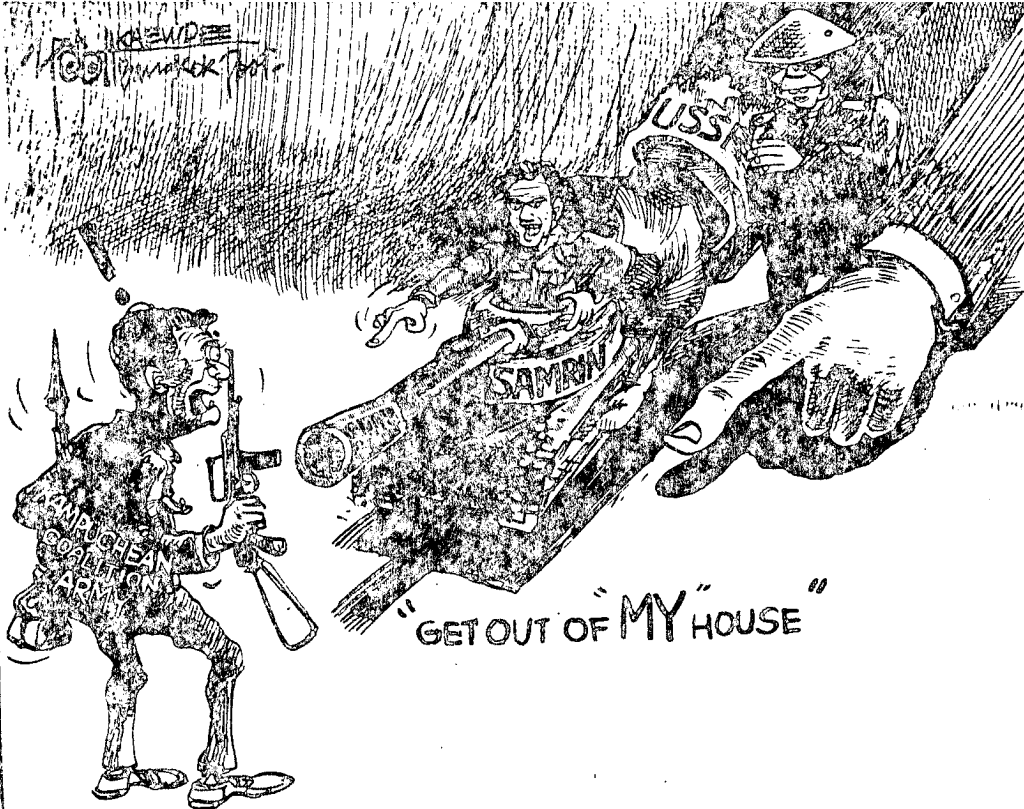
It was into this placid millpond of supremely English respectability that one resident — Geoffrey Prime, child molester and traitor — dropped his sordid bombshell.

Townpeople are reluctant to speak of it. "Disgraceful! That's all I would say. Disgraceful!" commented a tall man with a distinctively military bearing. And his wife? "It's all very distasteful, and I don't wish to discuss the matter."

Others are more philosophical. "GCHQ is now an established part of the place, and makes a welcome contribution to our trade and employment," said Mr Brian Wynn, the Town Clerk. "There is a certain sense of loyalty to GCHQ in Cheltenham, a certain rallying round. To criticise it publicly now would be like airing a scandal in the family."

Undoubtedly there are many local residents who are glad of the security GCHQ offers as national dole queues lengthen. Even at Cheltenham Ladies' College it has its impact; the school has developed a strong Russian language department, many of whose pupils can expect to go on to a modestly-paid but safe career behind those anonymous chain-link fences.

But for all the tactful closing of ranks in this tight-knit community, what Geoffrey Prime did is bound to have a permanent impact on the town. There will be other headlines on the front pages of national newspapers, but Geoffrey Prime himself will not be going away. Behind the high-security walls, floodlights and dog patrols of Long Lorton, about 20 miles off, he looks set to become a settled but far less welcome neighbour of the town than Prince Charles.



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The Argentine cruiser was
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Uncle Ayu hopes such nu-
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BYE bye for now, whether
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—Ayumongol
Sonakul

Latest UK spy scandal rocks the West

by Ed Blanche

LONDON
THE unmasking of Soviet
spy Geoffrey Prime, jailed
Wednesday for 35 years,
further undermined confi-
dence in Britain's security
services, penetrated by one
Soviet spy after another for
three decades.

Prime, 44, a former transla-
tor at the top secret electronic
eavesdropping complex in
Cheltenham, is the latest in a
long line of British traitors
who have betrayed their coun-
try and fellow agents, and in-
flicted serious damage on
Western security.

Their names include Guy
Burgess, Donald Maclean,
Kim Philby and Anthony
Blunt.

Despite the exposure of 16
Soviet spies or espionage rings
in Britain since 1946, US
intelligence has long suspected
that other British "moles"
were still compromising West-
ern interests.

US authorities are angry
that London has not yet pro-
vided a full assessment of the
damage done by its officials.



Prime...14 years of
passing secrets.

curity in the House of Com-
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ing the spy world, has claimed
the Soviets still have as many
as 25 agents in Britain's secret
services.

Just how serious the damage
Prime's betrayal caused is not
yet known and may never be.

But Judge Lord Lane de-
clared as he sentenced Prime:
"By your treachery, you have
done incalculable harm to the
interests and security of this
country, and the interests and
security of our friends in the
(NATO) alliance."

Attorney General Sir Mich-
ael Havers, prosecuting, said
Prime had done "exceptionally
grave damage."

The details that have
emerged, particularly of
Prime's work at the govern-
ment communications head-
quarters in Cheltenham north-
west of London, indicate that
his treachery could rank with
the major security disasters of
the 1950s and 1960s.

Opposition Labour Party
legislator Donald Anderson, a
former senior Foreign Office
official, charged that Havers'
admission "shows the affair is
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Philby, Burgess and Maclean."

Burgess and Maclean were

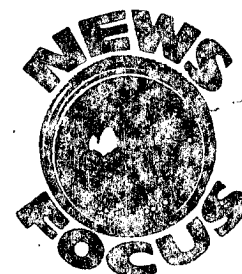
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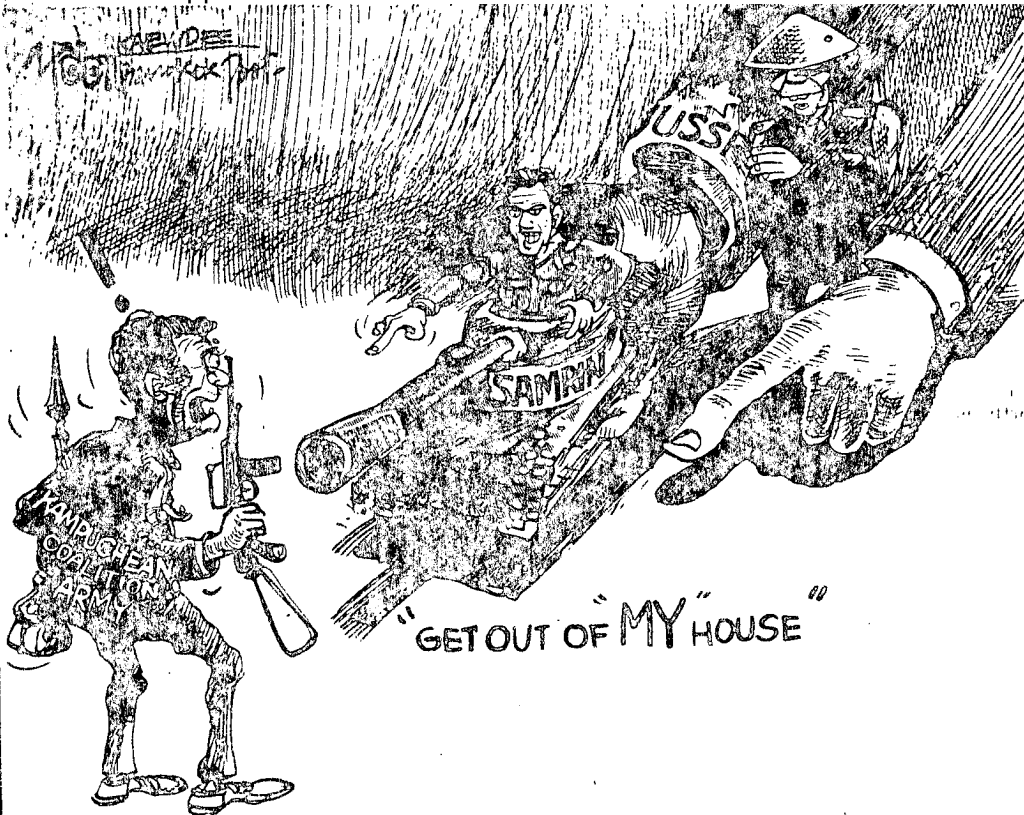
The sprawling Cheltenham
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Its banks of computers inter-
cept Soviet bloc radio, telex
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INTERCEPTS

Official sources said Prime's
work as a senior translator
handling secret intercepts
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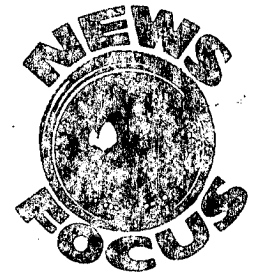
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ters of the Tyre yesterday killed.

Three Lebanese defence workers pulled many of the out of the rubble.

"It was a sight not describe. It was thing your eyes can believe," one of the told an Associated reporter in Sidon, (25 miles) north of Tyre.

All three men, dark green civil uniforms, refused their names. But said they had returned from Tyre working for five alongside Israeli soldiers.

An Israeli spokesman in Sidon Col Amnon Gonen the reporter: "There deaths — (Israeli) diers for sure." But said he could not give numbers.

Israeli spokesmen earlier the explosion caused by a bomb- ar.

Roads leading Tyre were blocked civilian traffic.

An Israeli spokesman in the B suburb of Baabda said no immediate ent on the casualty orts.

Beirut's state radio

o far, ia

activities so we sh hina has never a ne to win hegemon he said.

uld expect from a mutually advantage ip," he said, adding for Indonesia to ain the status quo.

long-standing ob of restoring ties vidence chief stated, the question of hinese-made prod esian market, and the unresol osian debts to Ch ntry's first presid ch President Suh government did r

...the party chief of the ... since 1972. ... party matters and ...

Alexandrovich Tikhonov. ... his age, ... party experience and ... charisma mean he ... succeeding Brezh-

Tikhonov has spent most of his career ... economic questions, ... related to heavy industry. ... long-standing and close associ- ... Brezhnev, who is believed to have

... since April 1976, also ... ruled out of the party leader- ship stakes because of his lack of broad party experience.

Since the Second World War his background has been fairly rooted in the arms and defence industries, though he has a civilian background.

Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachov: Born 2.3.1931. He is by far the youngest member of the politburo. Most observers believe he is unlikely to move to the number one party post this time, though he might be a candidate in future.

An agricultural specialist, he is one of the powerful central committee secretaries. He was elevated to the

some observers to advance Shcherbitsky as a possible candidate.

Personally very close to Brezhnev, whom he met 40 years ago in the Ukraine.

Arvid Yanovich Pelshe: Born 7.2.1899. A Latvian, said to have known Vladimir Lenin. He is the veteran of the Soviet hierarchy. His age excludes him from the top party post.

Grigory Vasilyevich Romanov: Born 7.2.1923. Head of the Leningrad Party, his relative youth made him seem a likely future candidate for the top when he was brought into the politburo in 1976, but he is not now regarded as a probable. — Reuter

and may lift martial law soon

Government says the comparative failure of opposition strikes and demonstrations across the country on Wednesday of lifting martial law by the end of the year.

Spokesman Jerzy Urban told a news conference the Government was encouraged by the poor response to calls by underground activists of the Solidarity trade union for a strike and demonstrations to protest against the union's banning last month. "There has not been a single strike in Poland," said.

Urban said he hoped the authorities could fulfil tentative plans by military leader Gen Wojciech Jaruzelski to suspend martial law by the end of the year.

Official figures released on Wednesday said more than 800 people were detained in demonstrations, the most serious in Warsaw, Wroclaw and Krakow.

State television said three security force members were admitted to hospital, one of them in a serious condition. Ten demonstrators were treated in hospital, including one with serious injuries.

Underground leaders who called for the stoppages and protests were expected to rethink their strategy after failing to attract more active street and factory support.

Following intensive propaganda and security measures the situation in the country is being kept under close watch.

appeals, the protests on Wednesday were less widespread than those in August.

Although there were scattered reports of stoppages, most people appeared to have worked normally. Management, military commissars and Communist Party activists had made clear that trouble-makers could be sacked, fined or jailed.

The underground has also called for demonstrations on December 13 to mark the first year of martial law. But after Wednesday's response they are sure to ponder whether such a call has any point.

Church services were held yesterday to mark pre-communist Independence Day — the date in 1918 when Poland became an independent state after more than a century of foreign domination.

Underground leaders called for the anniversary to be "properly celebrated," but did not give any further instructions. — Reuter

UN official to probe refugee suicides

NAIROBI, Kenya A TOP United Nations official flew to the Uganda-Rwanda border on Wednesday to investigate the suicide of 35 elderly refugees and the plight of 8,000 others stranded without food or water because of a resettlement foul-up.

The official was identified as Tom Unwin, director-general of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in the Ugandan capital of Kampala.

The 35, who committed suicide last week, were part of 8,000 refugees trapped at the border following a resettlement programme by the Ugandan Government. They are unable to cross into Rwanda because both countries agreed to seal the border. — UPI

Thatcher in security row over Prime

LONDON POLITICIANS are demanding a shake-up of Britain's discredited counter-intelligence network following the jailing of a 44-year-old Soviet superspy who was unmasked because he liked to molest young girls.

The two-hour trial of Geoffrey Prime, who spent 14 years passing sensitive British secrets to his Kremlin paymasters, was barely over on Wednesday when the pent-up political storm broke around Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

As Prime began a 38-year jail sentence for espionage and sexually molesting schoolgirls, Members of Parliament were clamouring for a purge of Britain's counter-spy defences which they said had been exposed yet again as hopelessly ineffective against Soviet penetration.

Thatcher, who is personally responsible for security matters, was to make a statement to Parliament yesterday. Government sources said she was expected to announce



Mrs Thatcher

a top level investigation by the Security Commission, which would advise whether any changes in security procedure are now needed.

The Daily Telegraph reported Thatcher is expected to say that nobody else was involved with Prime. But the Sun said senior US officials believe Prime knows the identities of three more British spies still feeding the Soviets with Western secrets.

Prime 44, a language expert who translated intercepted signals for the Government, passed precious secrets about electronic eavesdropping and codebreaking to the Soviet Union through East Berlin, Vienna, Potsdam, East Germany and even in a Russian cruise boat on the River Rhine.

and his trial showed, he never showed suspicion if he was arrested for molesting young girls. — Reuter, AP

Soviet icebreaker chased out

TROMSO, Norway A SOVIET icebreaker chasing a restricted military zone in Norway's waters was chased out after being ordered to leave by the Norwegian coast guard.

The Norwegian coast guard said the icebreaker was ordered to leave because it was operating in the restricted zone early on Tuesday, and was not permitted to be there.



14 NOV '82

Tougher GCHQ vetting

By CHRISTOPHER HOUSE, Crime Correspondent

MAJOR CHANGES are being made to the positive vetting department at Cheltenham Government Communications Headquarters, the nerve centre of British intelligence where Geoffrey Prime spied for the Russians over a number of years.

Steps have already been taken to increase the number of vetting staff through advertisements.

At the same time, British intelligence chiefs do not believe Prime's claim that it was Soviet ideology which turned him into a spy. They believe that the KGB not only had some kind of hold on him, but Prime, after being "rested," was actually going to return to Cheltenham or to some other highly sensitive post and carry on feeding the Russians classified information.

Prime, 44, of Pittville Crescent Lane, Cheltenham, was jailed for 35 years for spying and three years for sex offences at the Old Bailey last Wednesday. It was said he had caused "incalculable harm" to Britain and her allies.

The increase in positive vetting staff follows the discovery several months ago, and confirmed by Mrs Thatcher in the Commons last Thursday, that Prime was able to go undetected as a spy for 14 years even though he had been positively vetted on four occasions, three of them while he was working as a linguist at Cheltenham.

Whitehall officials said that the increase in vetting staff, in particular, was crucial to the future of Britain's intelligence network.

It would intensify the positive vetting of staff at Cheltenham, including possible random surveillance, and would make it easier and more efficient to vet again staff working at the headquarters at the moment. It would also mean all former employees could be checked out.

On October 29, in the magazine *Police Review*, a situations vacant advertisement appeared under the heading: "Government Communications Headquarters. Investigating Officers (Security) to be concerned with inquiries into the reliability of employees and prospective employees of GCHQ. Duties include conducting confidential interviews and writing reports."

"Considerable travel involved. Current vacancies are in Cheltenham. Salary starts at £7,820 and rises to £9,785 with promotion prospects."

Cheltenham has its own positive vetting department and the last time it advertised for vetting staff, as far as can be checked, was more than two years ago. On that occasion applicants had to face a five-man board, including one from GCHQ, in an office in Northumberland Avenue, near Trafalgar Square.

The positive vetting of staff at Cheltenham involves inter-

SITUATIONS VACANT

Government Communications
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Investigating Officers
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... to be concerned with enquiries into the reliability of employees and prospective employees of GCHQ. Duties include conducting confidential interviews and writing reports. Considerable UK travel involved.

Current vacancies are in Cheltenham.

Candidates, normally at least 40, must have served recently in the substantive rank of effective sergeant or above in the CID or United Kingdom Police.

Advertisement in the *Police Review* of October 29.

viewing potential employees' wives or husbands, parents, brothers and sisters, other relatives, former employers and friends no matter where they are.

Discreet checks are also said to be made on bank accounts and credit agencies, the idea being that there should not be one single thing which would make a person vulnerable to a foreign intelligence service.

The British intelligence chiefs believe the KGB had on Prime was possibly to do with his sexual inadequacies and perversions which he was already experiencing while serving in the RAF in West Berlin.

of what is considered here to be a flagrant case of incompetence on the part of British security in failing to detect, long ago, the activities of Geoffrey Arthur Prime.

Americans believe that a man of Prime's psychological instability would never have passed the type of lie detector test which security administrators to people involved in top secret intelligence work.

To accept American vetting procedures for people like Prime who share America's secrets, intelligence sources here believe, is not an unreasonable demand. "This is the time for us to shout," said one intelligence expert, "while Britain is deeply embarrassed by the Prime case."

The other reaction to the leakage through Britain of American secrets comes from the Congressional intelligence oversight committees in Washington. These committees have long demanded to oversee and approve special arrangements and treaties for intelligence sharing with foreign agencies.

Despite British security breaches, however, Britain and America need each other and share all secrets obtained from electronic eavesdropping on the Soviet bloc and China.

'Time for us to shout'

By RICHARD BEESTON
in Washington

BRITAIN'S latest spy scandal is prompting two separate reactions in the United States, one from within the intelligence community and one from Congress.

First, the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency will now start putting the pressure on British intelligence services to accept American standards in vetting procedures. This is the result