

to go to Sir M. Brook

P.M. (55) 82

TOP SECRET

PRIME MINISTER

I have read with very great interest the Foreign Secretary's minute of the 19th of October, about ^{- flag x} countering subversive activities, Communist and other, throughout the world, and I should be very glad to take part in a discussion on the subject. To prepare the way for that, may I offer some comments from the point of view of my responsibilities?

2. So far as the Colonies are concerned, we must, I agree, consider not only arrangements for their security while they are Colonies, but also how best to prepare in this field for the day when they become independent, and when consequently we cease to be responsible for their internal security, but retain a considerable interest in it - and responsibility for our relations with them passes from my department to the Commonwealth Relations Office. For that reason, I think it would be useful if the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations could join in our discussions.

3. I am very glad to note the recognition that, so far as the Colonies are concerned, Communist subversion is not the only, and is not indeed in many cases the major, threat to security, the other chief disturbing factor being racialist nationalism. Of course Communist propaganda and intrigue draw what advantage they can from nationalism, and nationalist leaders have from time to time not been

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above flirting with communism in the hope of thereby promoting their primary ambitions. But the various factors have I am sure to be kept clearly separate in our minds, as requiring different treatment, and I am glad to see this is recognised.

4. I also agree that the solid foundation (given a clear and consistent general policy) of any satisfactory security system must be good intelligence and proper security forces. This aspect of the matter has, as you know, been thoroughly worked over in consequence of the creation of the Committee on Colonial Security, and a great deal of action has been taken on the lines recommended in General Templer's Report to that Committee. This will be a continuing process.

5. The Foreign Secretary's minute however goes further, and raises as a matter of general policy the question whether greater use should not be made in countering subversion of whatever origin of our available resources in the field of clandestine and covert activities. From my point of view there is no doctrinal objection to this,

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* Passages deleted and
retained under Section 3(4)

J. L. Green
14. 8. 2000

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J.R. Green 14.8.2000

* Given, however, a decision

(which I should support) that this kind of activity should not on doctrinal grounds be ruled out of court, I do not think that we can proceed other than empirically, taking Colony by Colony and problem by problem. For one thing, I understand that the manpower, and the financial resources of M.I.6 are by no means unlimited, and that of these the former is much the more serious limiting factor.

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* Passages deleted and retained
under Section 3(4)

J.R. Green

14.8.2000

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But of one thing I am very clear, and that is so long as a territory remains dependent - so long, that is, as the Governor remains responsible for security, and does not share that responsibility with local politicians, any clandestine or covert activities in his territory must of necessity be under his control and subject to his approval

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and, through him, to that of the Secretary of State for
the Colonies. *

Passage deleted and retained
under Section 3(4)

J.R. Cullen

14.8.2000 *

This does not
mean that the Governor should or need be privy to the
details of each and every operation, any more than
Ministers are here.

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Paragraphs 6 and 7 deleted
and retained under Section 3(4)

J.R. Cullen

14.8.2000

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paragraph 7 deleted and
retained under Section 3(4)

J.R. Green

14.8.2000

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8. Coming nearer home, I would agree with the suggestion in the 16th paragraph of the Foreign Secretary's minute that the general oversight of this matter should rest with the Colonial Policy Committee. I am however less certain of the best means of handling the matter at the official level. The Foreign Secretary suggests that for the present this task might be given to the Official Committee for countering Communism Overseas (the A.C.(O) Committee). I am not sure that this is entirely appropriate on grounds either of composition or of terms of reference. That Committee is specifically concerned with countering communism, and not with countering subversion in general. If it is agreed that the problem is a wider one, then either the terms of reference of that Committee would require to be substantially broadened, or a new Committee to be set up altogether. I am inclined to favour the latter course. The A.C.(O) Committee as at present constituted contains no member of the Colonial Office (although a Colonial Office representative attends its meetings) - nor for that matter is the Commonwealth Relations Office represented in full membership. I do not think that a Committee under Foreign Office chairmanship,

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comprising in addition representatives of the Chiefs of Staff and of the Ministry of Defence, together with the Head of M.I.6, is appropriate to deal with the intricate matters of Colonial policy which would undoubtedly arise under the broader concept which we are now discussing. Some of these are mentioned in paragraph 5 of the Foreign Secretary's minute. In my opinion, to the extent that an official committee is required, it should be under Colonial Office chairmanship, and include among its members representatives of the Foreign Office, the Commonwealth Relations Office, and of M.I.5 and M.I.6 as full members, leaving it for the Ministry of Defence and the Chiefs of Staff to appoint representatives to attend the Committee, as is the present practice vis-a-vis the A.C.(O) Committee in respect of the Colonial Office and some others. We should not I think allow the metaphorical expression, "cold war" to blind us to the fact that what we are considering is not war-like operations at all, but, whatever methods may be employed, operations which are essentially political.

9. I am sending copies of this minute to the Foreign Secretary, the Minister of Defence and the Secretary of State for War.

ALB.

R. 15th November, 1955.