

BE  
22/4 ✓ ~~Mr. King~~  
Thank you.

Security

MR. WHITMORE

I raised the issue of a recording facility with Mr. Wiggins on Monday. He told me - and repeated your today - that it had always been planned to have c.c. Mr. Davies-Jones own a facility and that once Mr. Malye had completed some work closely in hand, one would be available. He will not re-raise all this.

I also took up with him the issue of a secure telephone link to the White House. The Americans are flying a spec over today, and it should be installed and working by the week-end. (Add) 21.4.

On Saturday, 17 April, I had cause to set up the secure line to the White House, for which as you know there are just the two extensions.

This was the first time that I had had to set up the equipment, and I was surprised that there was no facility to record the conversation. The link is secured via the communications officer in the Cabinet Office, and therefore bypasses our switchboard, effectively ruling out the possibility of recording. I was assured by the Cabinet Office that they too would be unable to record the call; indeed, if any problems were encountered during the call it would be necessary to alert them to the problem by re-dialling '3'.

The omission of such a facility seems to me to pose a number of problems - not least that there is no fool-proof system to later check what has been said. Of course, during normal working hours there would be the opportunity for a Private Secretary to listen in to the call by using the extension by your desk. However, out of office hours, the Duty Clerk could be called upon to monitor a conversation on sensitive material with which he is not totally familiar. This could lead to problems when later called upon to write up the conversation.

This was something that the Prime Minister was obviously unaware of, and does seem to represent a weak link in the system. I can appreciate that for security reasons, it is impossible to link a Private Secretary at home into the call, but a tape recorder within the building would not surely represent a threat to security.



I wonder if you are therefore content for the present system to continue or whether consideration could be given to installing recording equipment similar to that used for routine calls. I am told that the old BELGARD system previously installed had this capability.

[Since drafting this minute I have now learnt from Mr. Wright in the Cabinet Office that British Telecommunications are due to provide a recording system, but to date have failed to do so.]

*P. Ewing*

P. EWING

21 April, 1982.

24 Aug. Spoke Wright. Will investigate



J 24/8.

10 DOWNING STREET

Mr ~~Spence~~ Spence

So far as I am  
aware we still  
do not have a facility  
to record K470 calls  
(See my minute to  
Mr Whitmore of 21.4.82)

Is it possible to check  
if arrangements are in  
hand to deal with this  
problem?

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