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Daniel W. B. Lomas & Christopher J. Murphy

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ARTICLE

The Foreign Office 'Thought Police': Foreign Office Security, the Security Department and the 'Missing Diplomats', 1940 – 1952

Daniel W. B. Lomas[a] and Christopher J. Murphy[b]

[a]School of Politics and International Relations, University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham, UK; [b]School of Arts, Media & Creative Technology, University of Salford, Salford, Greater Manchester, UK

ABSTRACT

The protection of diplomats, embassies and sensitive information has always been an important aspect of diplomacy. Today, security is an accepted norm of day-to-day diplomatic work, yet the importance of security in the UK Foreign Office was not always appreciated, with the department witnessing embarrassing security lapses and scandals during the first half of the Twentieth Century. This article highlights the importance of security to diplomacy, offering the first significant study of the origins and early development of the Foreign Office's Security Department, established in 1946. It also explores the tensions between security officials and the wider Foreign Office, which indicate the extent to which organisational and internal cultural issues stymied good diplomatic security, issues that were laid bare in the aftermath of the defection of Foreign Office officials Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean in 1951.

'It is argued', Foreign Secretary Harold Macmillan told the House of Commons in November 1955, 'that Foreign Service officers who are dealing with security are amateurs or are doing a job for which they have no background or training', a claim he rejected outright.[1] Macmillan's comment came during a debate on the contents of a specially commissioned report produced by an all-party conference of Privy Counsellors on the disappearance of Foreign Office officials Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean, who had defected to the Soviet Union in May 1951.[2] The report, commissioned after claims that the two missing diplomats were now in Moscow, reopened the issue of Foreign Office security, provoking hostile questions from opposition MPs that standards needed to be improved within the department. Speaking after Macmillan, Labour MP Richard Crossman claimed the Foreign Office was 'too high and mighty . . . to abide by the common laws of security' and pointed to

CONTACT Christopher J. Murphy C.J.Murphy@salford.ac.uk School of Arts, Media & Creative Technology, University of Salford, M5 4WT

a 'curious perverted liberalism which tolerated as eccentricity inside the Foreign Office conduct which would have been condemned if anybody else had done the same thing outside the Foreign Office'. The root cause of the matter was cultural, he argued: 'This means that the Foreign Office, like every other part of the Civil Service, must have strict rules about carelessness and cannot go on saying, "We are too talented and sensitive to work under security rules"'.[3]

Despite its importance, the issue of security within the Foreign Office has attracted little academic attention,[4] likely on account of the traditional focus on the core functions of the Foreign Office: the representation of Britain overseas. References to the Foreign Office's Security Department are effectively confined either to works exploring various aspects of the story of the so-called Cambridge Five or the memoirs of former members of the Department.[5] The recent availability of a significant amount of archival material concerning Burgess and Maclean, initially through Freedom of Information (FOI) requests prior to its release to The National Archives (TNA), has changed the research landscape concerning this aspect of Foreign Office activity considerably.[6] While of clear value to those interested in the history of the Cambridge Five,[7] the material released about the case of the 'missing diplomats' provides further, perhaps greater, value in terms of what it reveals about both the culture of the organisation for which they worked and the development of protective and personnel security within the Foreign Office. This material shows that several security issues that had proved problematic within the Foreign Office for some time, both cultural and structural, were brought into sharp relief following the disappearance of the men, culminating in a review that largely exonerated the Foreign Office from blame, while at the same time highlighting the need for changes to be made.

The British Foreign Office has only had a formal Security Department from 1946, though individuals had been previously tasked with the protection of codes, safes and locks before this.[8] In his 1955 study of the Foreign Office, Lord Strang, diplomat and former Permanent Under-Secretary 1949–1953, explained there was a natural obligation to 'preserve security in really important matters of state', with diplomatic security falling into two categories; the elaborate 'physical apparatus and the observance of many routine safeguards in the handling of official documents', and what could be called a wider security culture; 'an attitude of mind' that appealed to officials' own sense of 'responsibility'.[9] It was the job of the Security Department to address both aspects of diplomatic security. Lord Strang set out the functions of the department as follows: 'Collate information and provide directives on all security matters concerning the Foreign Service. Advise on and ensure execution of measures arising therefrom, where necessary by inspection of posts abroad'. The department was also responsible for protecting the Secretary of State, and overseeing the maintenance of the system of 'passes, safes and

security equipment' and input into wider Whitehall security decision making.[10] While such 'ancillary' departments, Strang admitted, were the 'engineers and stokers in a ship: they do not navigate, and are seldom to be seen above decks', they were nevertheless important.[11]

Issues concerning security tend to be immediately relegated to the work of the security agencies, most notably the Security Service (MI5). Yet MI5 had little to no involvement with day-to-day departmental security, such responsibility falling on the Security Department staff. As such, the purpose of this article is to start to address this absence of security from the history of British diplomacy through a case study of the security procedures at the Foreign Office largely during the period 1940 to 1952. The article argues that while the Foreign Office throughout the period placed particular emphasis on maintaining British influence overseas, officials paid little attention to the protection of diplomatic secrets, with inevitable consequences. It also argues that while the formation of a fully-fledged Security Department in 1946 marked the start of a serious effort to protect British diplomats, the efforts of security officials within the department were often undermined by internal Foreign Office attitudes that shunned even basic approaches to security. These underlying issues were brought into sharp focus following the defection of Burgess and Maclean in spring 1951 that highlighted the Foreign Office's flawed thinking on security issues and forced a rethink on internal practices and organisational culture.

One former diplomat described the Foreign Office as having a 'long tradition of inefficiency and amateurishness' when it came to matters of security.[12] Prior to the recognition of security as a clearly defined function in 1940, security matters were handled on an ad-hoc basis, shifted around from department to department, depending on the latest organisational initiative. Shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, Permanent Under-Secretary Sir Arthur Nicholson established the new 'Parliamentary Department' of the Foreign Office, which took responsibility for ciphering and deciphering telegrams, a function that had previously been carried out by the various political departments of the Foreign Office themselves.[13] Although it worked well during wartime, the growing number of ciphered despatches, along with Treasury pressure for a reduction in Foreign Office personnel and the belief that a unified system of physical and telegraphed communications would be more effective, led to the ciphering staff being combined with the King's Messengers division of the Chief Clerk's Department, which was responsible for the transfer of the diplomatic bag to and from overseas posts, in 1919. The new section, the grandly named King's Messengers and Communications Department, became the Communications Department in 1923.[14] The work of this department was vital: all incoming messages were copied into the Communication Department's distribution room and circulated where necessary, while outgoing messages were enciphered before

despatch, thereby placing it at the heart of British foreign policy.[15] George Antrobus, who worked for the new department, recalled it as a hive of activity: 'we ... were at most times much too busy to think of anything but the race against time which our duties involved'.[16] On top of the already heavy workload, the Communications Department was also responsible for 'security in the Foreign Office both at home and abroad'.[17] In charge of this task was just one man. Referred to only as 'Mr. Cheeseman', Antrobus explained he:

> ... distributes all the cipher- and code-books, special circulars, and instructions – in itself a vast and complicated task. Moreover, he superintends the locks, keys, safes, strongrooms – in a word, the security of British Diplomatic and Consular property throughout the world. It is no wonder that he looks a little careworn, but he has a constitution of iron and thinks nothing of working twelve hours a day.[18]

A lock and safe section of the Foreign Office was subsequently formed to provide security advice, but this was unable to provide sufficient security coverage for the Foreign Office's growing inter-war diplomatic network.[19] Additionally, the Chief Clerk (renamed the Principal Establishment Officer from 1933 to 1940) involved himself with security matters.[20] Yet overall it appears that security remained a low priority both at home and overseas. Robert Cecil, who would later work with Donald Maclean, wrote: 'The pre-war Diplomatic Service had seen no need for security within its ranks, which were thought to be safeguarded by the tradition of public service in the class from which it was recruited. The Service had the compactness of family and, as in well-ordered families, there were areas into which one did not pry'.[21]

While much has been made of the importance of British diplomatic intelligence in the inter-war period, the irony is that Britain came 'bottom of the list' when it came to protecting its own secrets.[22] Foreign Office reliance on local staff left British diplomatic posts vulnerable to penetration by hostile agencies. In Rome, Italian intelligence was able to recruit the Costantini brothers, two long-serving chancery servants at the British Embassy, who were able to photograph important documents (including code and cipher books), and even provided their Italian handlers with duplicate keys to safes and presses. In 1924 Francesco Costantini also worked for Soviet intelligence, although he was sacked by the embassy in the early 1930s, whereupon he used his brother, Secondo, as a sub-agent. The Russians dropped Francesco in the late 1930s.[23] The Embassy in Berlin, under British Ambassador Sir Nevile Henderson, was equally lax. Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) officer Valentine Vivian discovered that Sir Nevile's German porter had full access to his official residence while he was out of Berlin. Though there was little evidence of a security breach, Vivian told the Foreign Office the Gestapo could easily use a 'number of lock-smiths and experts in safe-breaking ... [giving] continuous access to current

papers, telegrams and prints without leaving any trace'.[24] Embarrassingly, some of the worst breaches came from the Communications Department itself. From 1929, the Soviet Union was able to access highly secret Foreign Office cables from Ernest Oldham, a cipher clerk who was later dismissed for drinking in 1932, but still enjoyed access to the Office until he committed suicide in 1933. MI5 only discovered that he had been selling secrets to the OPGU, the Soviet Union's intelligence and state security service, after the start of the Second World War from the information provided by Soviet defector Walter Krivitsky.[25] In 1939, MI5 discovered that another Foreign Office cipher clerk, John Herbert King, had been passing documents from the Communications Department to the Soviets, leading to his arrest and subsequent imprisonment.[26] A year later, it was laid down that only 'established staff' should be employed on communications work in the Foreign Office, as opposed to temporary staff on long-term contracts.[27] The root cause of the troubles appears to have been the 'temporaries who were … employed by the Communications Dept. were ex-officers of the 1914–1918 war, two or three of whom got into financial difficulties, and two of them became traitors'.[28]

It was only with the outbreak of the Second World War that steps were taken to address security failings within the Foreign Office, through the appointment of a Chief Security Officer.[29] The impetus appears to have been an SIS report from January 1940, which revealed that 'secret documents' from the Foreign Office's Central Department had reached Germany during the previous summer. The news led Sir Alexander Cadogan, the Permanent Under-Secretary, to confide to his diary 'I can trust no-one'.[30] On 8 February, Cadogan met with William Codrington, a former member of the diplomatic service who had served in Tangiers before resigning in 1925 to become a director of Powell Duffryn Ltd. and the Sun Alliance Insurance Company.[31] Now employed at the Ministry of Economic Warfare, Cadogan offered Codrington the post of Chief Security Officer at the Foreign Office, which he accepted, officially becoming Assistant Under-Secretary of State in charge of the Communications Department.[32] While Codrington had direct access to Cadogan, he was unsalaried and had no permanent security staff to draw on. Rather, he was helped 'at various times' by two security inspectors, Robert Howe and Sir John 'Johnnie' Dashwood, an Assistant Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps who re-joined the Foreign Office in 1942 to help review security.[33] A number of 'temporary' security officers were also employed, perhaps the most notable being Arthur Askew, formerly a Metropolitan Police superintendent who had led the Met's CID between 1934 and 1938. Askew joined the Foreign Office in May 1940 and was involved in security as a senior security officer until 1951, retiring aged seventy.[34] In December 1940, a circular despatch to all diplomatic posts warned of the need for improved

security in wartime,[35] a sentiment Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden repeated just two months later:

> I continue to receive from many different quarters evidence of the intense efforts which are being made by the enemy to obtain possession of the vital information confided to this Department and to His Majesty's Representatives abroad … We are faced with a resourceful and highly organised adversary to whom, in matters of this kind, money is no object. It behoves each of us to be constantly on the alert.[36]

Despite greater awareness of the threat posed by poor security, the limited resources available to Codrington meant that security lapses continued to occur. These included the revelation that a valet employed by Britain's Ambassador to Turkey, Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, had leaked a substantial amount of secret information to German intelligence. This had been facilitated by the fact that Sir Hughe himself had ignored advice to keep documents in a safe, thereby allowing secret papers to be easily accessed and photographed.[37] Following the exposure of poor security at the Ankara Embassy, Dashwood reported that there was a 'lack of co-ordination of security measures and of security-mindedness on the part of some of the staff, both Diplomatic and Services'.[38] The affair led Guy Liddell, Director of MI5's B Division, to complain to his Director General, Sir David Petrie, that 'if H.M. Embassies and Legations abroad are as insecure as the one at Ankara appears to have been, much of the time and labour expended by the Security Service on keeping this country clean of enemy agents and preventing leakage of information is wasted'.[39]

Efforts to improve the situation were not helped by the fact that Codrington's relationship with MI5 was fraught. During an investigation into 'a leakage case' that saw Churchill's cook interviewed, Codrington repeatedly interrupted the investigators from MI5, Leonard Burt and Edward Cussen, and was consequently asked to 'desist'. As a result of this slight, Codrington became 'hostile' to MI5, and 'extremely cagey about all security matters affecting the F.O', leading Liddell to complain in his diary about the lack of information from the Foreign Office security team.[40] The antipathy was mutual; during a meeting to discuss leaks in Ankara, Liddell confided to his diary that Codrington had been 'inclined to treat the whole incident lightheartedly', and had as a result 'made a very bad impression'. For Liddell, this was 'the most glaring example of the inefficiency of the F.O. Security organisation and the futility of sending people like Johnny Dashwood to investigate cases of this kind'.[41]

Lack of resources, minimal staffing and attitudes of other officials all combined to create a poor security environment. In July 1945, it was reported that security in the Washington Embassy needed significant improvement. Security in the cipher room was especially 'slack … Instructions are definitely not adhered to – only recently I found one of

the cypher girls working alone on the night shift with the cypher room door unlocked'. Worse still, 'outside workers … continue, in spite of all instructions to the contrary, to be escorted through the cypher room'. It was also noted the burglar alarm was 'quite useless and perpetually out of order'.[42] Summarising the lessons learnt on Foreign Office security, Codrington wrote of the 'incontrovertible evidence that most serious cases of leakage have occurred in circumstances which show that those concerned did not sufficiently realise the degree of their vulnerability, with the result that foreign espionage services achieved most valuable results with undue ease'.[43]

Codrington retired in August 1945. Writing to Sir David Scott, the Deputy-Under Secretary responsible for administration,[44] Codrington was far from optimistic about the future of Foreign Office security. 'I have always maintained that security involves no specialised or technical form of witchcraft and is merely one aspect of good discipline and efficient administration', he wrote, but he 'did not believe that the organisation of the Foreign Service has yet developed sufficiently to combine the two'.[45] At the end of the war, security work was divided between the Chief Clerk's Department, the Librarian and the Personnel Department,[46] but, in August, shortly before he left, Codrington pushed for security work to be centralised under one individual, citing the lamentable 'record of the Foreign Service in regard to leakage of vital information in the past'.[47] The point that security should be under one individual appears to have been heeded; in August, Robert Howe was appointed an Assistant Under-Secretary, taking responsibility for 'all Security questions' while also supervising the Eastern, Egyptian and Communications Departments.[48] This arrangement did not prove satisfactory, and security lapses continued to occur. The Chief Counsellor, Ivo Mallet, later admitted to the Treasury that the system was 'not working well', as Howe was unable to 'spare the necessary time from his political work'.[49] This was exacerbated by a lax attitude towards security that continued to permeate the department: Sir Nicholas Henderson, assistant private secretary to both Anthony Eden and Ernest Bevin, later recalled that the Foreign Secretary's Private Office – the place where 'Minister and machine interlock' – was littered with 'telephones and boxes, the hardware of officialdom … the ceaseless ebb and flow of boxes – some red, some black, some blue and some yellow' but the room was 'always open to visitors' despite the continued stream of sensitive, often secret, material to the Foreign Secretary.[50]

The poor state of Foreign Office security was also starting to attract attention beyond the department. A review of Foreign Office procedure for handling signals intelligence, conducted by Edward Crankshaw on behalf of the Government Code and Cipher School (GC&CS) in September 1945, found that there was 'no attempt … [to] restrict distribution' of diplomatic intercepts and that most departments saw them, with top secret material 'likely to be

open to any visitor to these offices'.[51] Crankshaw pointed out that signals intelligence could be sent to departments not authorised to see it, while the contents of the Foreign Office red boxes could be read by anyone in possession of a standard key, which was easily available throughout the department thereby potentially compromising the ability of Britain to read the diplomatic traffic of foreign countries.[52]

The one area of security in which the Foreign Office did prove proactive concerned the security vetting of new recruits, though, even here, there were concerns over 'Gestapo methods' being applied in the Foreign Service.[53] By 1945, 'negative vetting' procedures – checks on individuals against records in MI5's registry – were applied to all new entrants to the diplomatic service,[54] although this did little to protect the Foreign Office against security threats posed by existing members of staff, or those who had not previously come to the attention of the security services.[55] Eden himself scribbled he had 'little confidence in M.I.5'. – despite being Minister responsible for the service since December 1943 – and had 'very little confidence' in the value of negative checks.[56] Until October 1949, vetting was the responsibility of the Personnel Department, which liaised with MI5 through the Permanent Under-Secretary's staff. The Security Department only saw 'adverse reports, but this may not always have been done in the early days of its existence'.[57] The blurred lines of responsibility between the Personnel and Security Department for vetting led, perhaps predictably, to internal squabbles over roles and responsibilities. Sir Patrick Reilly, the Assistant Under-Secretary who oversaw the Permanent Under-Secretary's Department (PUSD), later recalled that 'successive Heads of the Personnel Department' were 'reluctant to admit that the Security Department was properly concerned with personal security as well as with physical security, safes, locks, confidential bags, security procedures, etc'.[58]

The decision to establish a formal Security Department within the Foreign Office was taken in the summer of 1946. Chairing a meeting on the subject in July, Sir Orme Sargent, Permanent Under-Secretary, noted that the 'present system', whereby an Under-Secretary of State undertook security work alongside his normal duties, was 'proving unsatisfactory'. As such, 'it seemed desirable to create a separate Security Department'. It was agreed that 'the department should consist of a head, an assistant (both preferably from the Service), an expert seconded from C's organisation [SIS] … and a suitable secretarial and registry staff'.[59] Writing to John Winnifrith, the Treasury official responsible for security screening,[60] the Chief Counsellor, Ivo Mallet, noted that the Foreign Office was 'most anxious not to fall back in [sic] the old ways which were so open to criticism between the wars', and as such had been 'considering how we can best ensure a really high level of security at all our offices both at home and abroad', concluding that 'In view of the volume and complexity of the work we feel that the time has come to set up a small

department' that would deal with 'Physical', 'Restrictive' and 'Personal' security matters.[61] Mallet noted that 'Questions under each of these headings arise at all our posts abroad, in over a dozen Foreign Office buildings in London and at the Sigint stations in the country'. While some 'routine work on security matters' would 'continue to be handled by existing departments of the Office', in order to be 'treated effectively' a 'special department' was required.[62]

Winnifrith replied on 7 August, agreeing to the proposals made.[63] The next challenge was to find a suitable person to head the new department. At Sargent's meeting, it had been suggested that 'the head of the department should be recruited from outside the Service', with the name of John Almeric de Courcey Hamilton ('late of the Sudan Civil service and the Minister of State's Office at Cairo' who had just retired) being put forward.[64] Hamilton proved 'rather dithery' about taking the position, and so the search was broadened.[65] Three candidates were ultimately shortlisted and interviewed in early October, resulting in the appointment of Wing-Commander George Carey Foster. Initially suggested by Sir John Dashwood, Carey-Foster had enjoyed a long inter-war career in the RAF before commanding RAF Bomber Command's specialist electronic warfare unit, 101 Squadron, between July 1943 and January 1944 before being moved to the Air Ministry.[66] Carey-Foster had made a good impression during an earlier meeting with the Head of the Personnel Department, Edwin Chapman-Andrews, who noted that 'although he has had no previous experience of security work as such he is undoubtedly an impressive candidate . . . he represents well and is quite clearly alert and capable of taking responsibility. He is still some two years under 40 so has a lot of life left in him and this may be a good thing in a man who has such a vast job to build up'.[67]

The Security Department was formally established in October. A circular notified the office of the development in December, and all overseas posts were informed in February 1947.[68] Carey-Foster was assisted by an officer seconded from SIS, Rodney Dennys, while Sir John continued to act as part-time assistant until March 1947.[69] At the end of the year, the Lock and Safe section of the Communications Department was transferred to Carey-Foster.[70] Initially the responsibility of the Permanent Under-Secretary, in January 1947 the Security Department was placed under the Chief Clerk, before being transferred the following year to the Assistant Under-Secretary responsible for PUSD, the Foreign Office's link with the intelligence agencies, an arrangement that continued into the 1950s.[71] Officially, the department was, a Foreign Office circular noted:

> . . . a co-ordinating centre for collating information and for the provision of directives and expert advice on all security matters which concern the Foreign Service. It will also be responsible for superintending the execution of those measures which may be required to ensure the safety of the premises used by the Foreign Office and posts abroad

and for the security of official papers, print and cyphers kept therein or in transit. *Its functions are primarily advisory rather than executive.*[72]

The purely 'advisory' role of the department was to cause significant problems in the early history of the department, and the broad remit for the protection of officials, buildings and general security of papers put significant strain on a department that was understaffed and under resourced, with security officials earning 'less than the lowest grade of established civil servants'.[73] Contrary to suggestions that he was 'not very effective', Carey-Foster built up a small, but influential, team in a short period of time, and the growing importance of the Security Department, and the role of its head, suggest growing confidence and influence.[74] By 1951, the department consisted of six members of staff.[75] The Security Department was also quick to make inroads into the wider government machinery for security, ensuring that the Foreign Office was 'represented in an influential capacity'.[76] Alongside the new department, further measures to address security overseas were taken through a scheme for Regional Security Officers (RSOs) adopted in 1948, which aimed 'to improve and to maintain a high standard of security by obtaining the co-operation of all concerned'. The RSO scheme enabled 'staff at all posts to discuss security matters with somebody who can give time to their consideration and who can make recommendations to meet changes in policy, and from experience at other posts quickly see any weaknesses that may exist'.[77] New security officers were recruited by Carey-Foster, mostly from the now defunct 'Indian Services', and were reportedly of a 'high calibre', although contracts were initially temporary and due to 'terminate in 1951', by which point the Security Department had a chain of RSOs resident in Washington, Buenos Aires, Vienna, Cairo, Singapore and Wahnerheide (Germany) working to improve security at British diplomatic posts.[78]

While such organisational changes represented an effort to address the problem of security within the Foreign Office, they could only go so far in addressing the underlying problem: the attitude of Foreign Office personnel towards security, which could not be so easily changed. Despite wartime attempts to widen recruitment and develop a new breed of diplomat, such as the Eden-Bevin reforms of 1943, the Foreign Office remained far removed from the rest of Whitehall, the 'most patrician' part of the Civil Service, which retained the 'atmosphere of an exclusive club'.[79] Within this club, the Security Department was viewed with little short of outright hostility. On being appointed Senior Security Officer to Washington in 1948, Francis 'Tommy' Thompson was stunned by the lack of security on display: 'From even the most elementary Security standpoint the place was wide open, with offices unattended, papers everywhere, official despatch boxes lying in corridors'. From his arrival, Thompson encountered 'non-cooperation, deliberate delay, and obstruction' from Embassy staff.[80] Tensions may have stemmed from the

competing aims of diplomacy on the one hand and security on the other. 'Security and convenience do not go hand in hand', wrote Carey-Foster in December 1950, 'I think that it is true to say that in the handling of papers . . . convenience has generally prevailed over security'.[81] Other factors may also have played against the security officers; Thompson's background in the Metropolitan Police CID and RAF Special Investigation Branch immediately put him on a different social footing to senior British diplomats; in his memoirs, Thompson clearly displayed an intense dislike of Foreign Office practices. Even straightforward security procedures, such as providing periodic reports on members of staff, proved contentious. Sir Patrick Reilly, Carey-Foster's immediate superior following the Department's 1948 move, later recalled:

> . . . having to ask [Sir William] Strang to remind a very senior Ambassador that a report was overdue on a senior member of his staff, whose conduct had in fact given cause for concern. The Ambassador replied that surely we all knew X too well for it to be necessary for him to send a report on him . . . Strang insisted and a rather sketchy report was eventually forthcoming.[82]

Carey-Foster's successor as section head, Arthur de la Mare, later recalled how colleagues 'looked upon me as a latter day Judas . . . they would not have been displeased if I had come a cropper'.[83] Reviewing his career, de la Mare wrote in his memoirs:

> I am not particularly proud that for three years I was the Head of the Foreign Office 'Thought Police'. But I by no means regard that, as I know some of my colleagues did, as a shameful episode in my career. My association with security was not the happiest part of my career and I was glad when it came to an end. It was a mental relief to go back to straight diplomatic work. But Security [sic], like marriage, is a state honourable among men and if security work does not offend one's conscience, and it certainly never offended mine, them it is a duty which one should not try to avoid.[84]

Although one of de la Mare's successors suggested that tensions between the Security Department and the Foreign Office could be overplayed, even they admitted that officials were always 'wary' given the departments role in vetting and wider remit to report on security lapses. 'Everyone has something to hide', they recalled.[85] Even if de la Mare admitted there were positives – especially the 'right of access' to the Permanent Under-Secretary and senior leadership, 'bypassing the normal chain of command if the matter was of sufficient importance' – discussions on vetting cases, protecting overseas posts and security at the Foreign Office main building could always lead to conflict.[86] Another factor was money. As Codrington had earlier warned, 'Security is going to cost money . . . but not so much money as the lack of it has cost in the past!'[87] Despite the apparent effectiveness of the RSO scheme, suggestions that the Regional Security Officers should be made established members of Branch A of the Foreign Service were blocked for 'establishment reasons' and there

were 'serious delays in making replacements available' with officials found following the Burgess and Maclean defection, as the Foreign Office scrambled to quickly improve security.[88]

The consequences of both the structural and cultural issues upon security within the Foreign Office were brought into sharp relief in the aftermath of the disappearance of Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean in May 1951. Both men were already known to the fledgling Security Department by the time of their disappearance. Maclean was under investigation as a result of decrypted Soviet diplomatic cables between Moscow and KGB residences in New York and Washington, part of a joint Anglo-American project (initially codenamed BRIDE, later VENONA), which indicated that a Soviet agent codenamed HOMER had been able to obtain top secret information on a wide range of sensitive issues at the British Embassy in Washington between 1944 and 1945.[89] A long list of potential suspects was slowly narrowed down, leading to Maclean's identification as the prime suspect in early 1951, at which point Sir William Strang, Foreign Office Permanent Under-Secretary, and the Foreign Secretary, Herbert Morrison, were briefed about the investigation and Maclean was placed under surveillance by MI5.[90]

Foreign Office culture played directly into how Maclean was dealt with, which resulted in the Security Department not being informed about his breakdown while in Cairo in 1950, where he had been Head of the Chancery overseeing the day-to-day work of the Embassy from 1948. During one drunken incident, he had broken the leg of Lees (later Sir Lees) Mayall, First Secretary at the Embassy, yet formal notification of the incident failed to reach officials in London. In April 1950, following a two-day drinking session, Maclean had committed 'disaster after disaster' before hitting a junior official and 'throwing glass after glass against the wall'. The next day, he was helped to work by his friend and colleague Philip Toynbee who recalled that 'Donald was still rather drunk, but I forced him out of bed, sobered him up with a talk and took him all the way to his room at the Embassy' where he managed to become 'a good semblance of a Counsellor'.[91] Maclean's drunken behaviour went on to cause further problems. After drinking 'six bottles' of gin with a colleague, Maclean went 'girl-hounding' and smashed up a flat used by staff working at the US Embassy. Soon after, he was sent home for medical treatment.[92] The details of Maclean's behaviour only started to reach the Security Department in March 1950, nearly ten months after his recall, as this was believed to have been caused by 'drink and overwork', and not considered a security issue.[93] This, as Sir Patrick Reilly later observed, 'was a prime example of the family spirit of the old Diplomatic Service', which represented 'a main cause of the Maclean disaster'.[94] The subsequent investigation into Maclean also highlighted the problems caused by organisational structure, in particular the tensions between the Personnel and Security departments. Discussing the situation following his disappearance, MI5 officer

Dick White observed that 'if there had been complete pooling of information between the Security Department and the Personnel Department . . . he would certainly have been suspect somewhat earlier'.[95]

While not under such suspicion as Maclean, by the time the men absconded Burgess was already noted for his indiscreet and ill-mannered behaviour. Frederick Warner, a future Ambassador to Japan (1972–1975) who had worked with Burgess in the private office of Minister of State Hector McNeil, later told MI5 he was shocked by the 'shoddy and unkempt appearance' of Burgess, admitting 'he was a pretty poor specimen to be employed in the Foreign Service'. Known for his alcoholism and his regular *faux pas*, Burgess was, Warner admitted, 'extremely unpunctual and mentally untidy'.[96] He was also a homosexual, a fact known to those he worked with. Burgess was also well known to the Security Department.[97] Owing to his tendency towards indiscreet behaviour, there had been 'doubts about the reliability of Mr. Burgess since 1948'.[98] As Personal Assistant to Hector McNeil, Burgess had been 'taking home official telegrams to study at leisure . . . Far from pleading guilty to a serious breach on basic security, [Burgess] defended himself vigorously as a zealous martyr to duty'.[99] A year later, Burgess had fallen under suspicion 'in connexion with certain leakages of information' to Frederick Robert Kuh, an American journalist with close links to Soviet intelligence, who had been under surveillance from the 1920s, but 'no information which could enable positive action to be taken could be obtained in regard to this or any other incident'.[100] In its efforts to discipline Burgess, the Security Department found itself facing external pressure from both MI5 and SIS, on account of Burgess's extensive array of personal contacts and friendships. In January 1950, Carey-Foster approached Guy Liddell, now MI5's Deputy-Director General and a longstanding friend of Burgess, to discuss the possibility of prosecuting him under the Official Secrets Act for his alleged indiscretions. Liddell went so far as to defend Burgess, arguing that his friend 'was not the sort of person who would deliberately pass confidential information to unauthorised parties'.[101] Carey-Foster was also concerned about a further leak of information by Burgess during a visit to Gibraltar and Tangier in late 1949, during which he had not only disclosed 'extremely confidential information about H.M. Government's activities concerning illegal currency transactions', but 'he himself appears to have been guilty in this respect, even if only in a minor way'. Burgess had compounded his transgression by also disclosing 'other information about our secret organisations' and had gone on to openly criticise US policy and 'expressed great admiration for Mao Tse Tung'.[102] It was ultimately decided that the Head of the Personnel Department, Sir George Middleton, would meet with Burgess, to notify him that his prospects for promotion had been seriously damaged, and to warn him 'that any further indiscretions will mean his dismissal'.[103] Meeting with Middleton in early February, Burgess did not take the admonishment well,

making a 'complete denial of the allegations against him' and challenging the claim of indiscreet talk.[104]

Burgess, however, continued to 'deny the allegations', writing a long letter to Middleton, who remained unmoved.[105] Unwilling to let the matter drop, Burgess wrote again, this time noting that he wished 'to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the Foreign Service Regulations Chapter III, No. 10, to maintain and if necessary develop the explanation of the facts and denial of the charges as given to me'.[106] Irrespective of the fact that it was agreed that Burgess had been guilty of a security breach, Middleton felt that 'we must admit his right to appear before a Committee of the Promotions Board and must give him a chance to justify or explain his conduct, either orally or in writing'.[107] The Board met on 2 May Burgess was informed of the outcome two days later by the Chief Clerk, Ashley Clarke, who told him that 'the charge against you of repeating information prejudicial to the interests of security was substantiated'. The Board 'confirmed' the initial admonishment Burgess had received from Sir George. His prospects for promotion were diminished, and transfer to a different position would follow.[108] Three months later, Burgess was transferred to Washington 'where he worked in the Far Eastern section of the Embassy', before moving to the Middle East section later in the year.[109] His work was considered 'unsatisfactory' in both positions, and a formal complaint from the State Department about 'reckless driving' before a speaking engagement in South Carolina led British Ambassador Sir Oliver Franks to request that Burgess should be sent home pending disciplinary action. Two days after his return to London, Burgess was interviewed by the Head of Personnel, Sir Robin Hooper, who 'asked him to consider resigning from the Foreign Service and gave him a week or two to think things over'. During this time, while the Foreign Office considered 'the steps which should be taken if he refused to resign voluntarily', Burgess vanished.

Following the disappearance of Burgess and Maclean, Foreign Office security, and the conduct of members of the Foreign Service, became matters of concern at the highest levels of government. On 10 June, Prime Minister Clement Attlee requested a note from Morrison on Burgess and Maclean.[110] The Cabinet agreed that an enquiry was needed, which would provide the 'opportunity for restating the principles which govern the standards of personal conduct of officers in the Foreign Service'.[111] While considering the wider security implications of the affair to be the proper business of the experts, Foreign Office officials also favoured an enquiry, albeit for somewhat more self-serving motives.[112] On 12 June Ashley Clarke wrote to Strang, noting:

> There is . . . a good deal to be said for the idea of an enquiry by three independent persons into the two cases. It would forestall demands for much more far-reaching and disruptive enquiries, if we were to propose it ourselves it would to some extent disarm hostile criticism of the Service and finally it might . . . produce some useful rules for our guidance.[113]

The report requested by Attlee was drafted by Carey-Foster and another official, Edward Willan.[114] From a security perspective, it made for lamentable reading. The authors had little option but to admit that, since their disappearance and 'as a result of intensive investigation by the Security Service and of statements volunteered by friends and acquaintances . . . we have learnt a good deal about their character and personal behaviour which we did not know before'. The paper concluded by providing an assurance that 'The problem of how to keep an adequate check on the personal behaviour of members of the Foreign Service' was being given 'anxious thought'. Yet even at this point, the issue of personnel security remained a sensitive one. The parameters within which the Foreign Office was prepared to countenance reporting upon the behaviour of its staff were strict; any such procedure needed to be introduced 'without at the same time instituting a system of spying which would be both repugnant to our traditions and destructive of morale'.[115]

While any behaviour that could be construed as 'spying' was considered distasteful, those who had been aware of certain character traits, or particular incidents, that showed the men in a poor light, but had refrained from formally reporting them as matters of potential security concern, now had to face the consequences of their own lack of action. Writing to Strang from New York where he was British representative to the UN Security Council, Sir Gladwyn Jebb questioned:

> . . . whether I should not at an earlier stage have expressed to someone . . . my own doubts about Burgess's character. As you know, though I had no suspicion then that he was a positive menace, I always had the view that he was a deplorable selection for the Foreign Service and indeed for service in the Foreign Office at all.[116]

Despite Jebb's concerns, he had remained silent. His justification for making no official report provides an effective illustration of wider cultural attitudes within the Foreign Office: 'one never wants to blacken somebody's character if one can help it and to say nothing is often the line of least resistance'.[117]

With greater information about the two men at its disposal, Foreign Office attention shifted to the internal inquiry into the disappearance of the two diplomats, that had 'created disturbance in the public mind at home', and threatened the transatlantic special relationship.[118]. On 21 June, Morrison set out the parameters of the review in a letter to Attlee. The Committee was chaired by Sir Alexander Cadogan,[119] who had retired from his post as the first permanent British representative to the UN, who was asked by Strang to review Foreign Office 'security arrangements' during a meeting on 29 June.[120] Formally constituted on 7 July 1951, the Committee's terms of reference stated that it would study:

(1) The security checks applied to members of the Foreign Service

(2) The Security regulations and practice of the Foreign Service in regard to any matters which have a bearing on security;

And to report whether any alterations are called for.[121]

The committee held thirteen meetings, hearing evidence from six Foreign Office officials and four others from across government, including the Chief of SIS, Sir Stewart Menzies ('C').[122] Its final report was circulated on 1 November. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Foreign Office was cleared of blame; Strang informed Eden that the committee 'have not found anything radically wrong with the arrangements in the Foreign Office in the spheres covered by their terms of reference',[123] which came as a 'great relief'.

In contrast to Strang's comments, it can be suggested that the report highlighted significant flaws in Foreign Office internal security procedures, making several recommendations for changes to the existing procedures for security screening, the management and reporting of security issues and the conduct of members of the department. Having outlined the background to the case through an account of the recent histories of both Burgess and Maclean, the report turned to internal Foreign Office security, focussing on the security checks that had been implemented in wartime for a small number of posts dealing with secret work.[124] The fact that the Foreign Office had been ahead of other Whitehall departments in terms of vetting was useful in terms of offsetting criticism, but gaps remained. Despite the decision to extend vetting to cover all existing members of Branch A, taken in 1946, by 1951 less than half of these posts had been screened, along with a similar number of officials from Branch B (the 'Executive and Clerical' branches).[125] The committee recommended that all members of the Foreign Service, at home or abroad, should be vetted 'as soon as possible', though this attempted fix would increase further the already heavy administrative burden on MI5 and Foreign Office officials.[126] The committee recognised that even greater use of vetting provided no guarantee that an individual was reliable. The negative procedure was 'only a very mild precaution' with checks on Burgess and Maclean not producing 'any adverse result'.[127] Compounding matters, Foreign Office records were far from complete and, as Carey-Foster had acknowledged in February 1949, many records were lacking general information about an individual's 'parents or wife' and that MI5 'were not happy' about the situation.[128] Nonetheless, the report suggested that the system of 'positive vetting' needed to be extended to all members of Branch A and the senior grades of Branch B, though no mention was made of the administrative burden this would entail, or the considerable time needed to clear these branches.

The report also highlighted organisational issues, raising concerns about the relationship between the Personnel and Security Departments, and the division of responsibility which meant that both of which were concerned with

certain aspects of security; the Personnel Department had 'executive' control over the employment of individuals, while the Security Department had a limited advisory role which had a bearing on internal security issues. The Chief Clerk oversaw the work of Personnel, while Security was supervised on a day-to-day basis by the Assistant Under-Secretary responsible for PUSD. The latter would ultimately report to the Chief Clerk on significant issues, leading to a conflict of interest over employability issues and security, though both could appeal to the Permanent Under-Secretary if there was a substantial disagreement. The Committee felt that this division 'blurred responsibilities' and resulted in confusion over where the 'ultimate responsibility lies'. Yet even though the Committee acknowledged that information on an individual 'may be known to one department and not to another', it deemed the present setup satisfactory. It did, however, emphasise that contact between the two departments needed to be 'close and continuous and there must be no secrets between them', recommending that an Assistant Secretary should be appointed to the Security Department to liaise with the Personnel Department on security issues, and Personnel Department files should, in future, hold information on security matters.

In a similar manner, while existing procedures for reviewing members of the Foreign Service were given a clean bill of health, the Committee suggested that reports showing adverse behaviour during a candidate's probationary stage would make it easier to remove individuals on 'security grounds', and that reports on existing members of the service should be made every two years after the probationary period or transfer, rather than on transfer under current arrangements.[129] Despite concerns that more reporting could be considered to represent a 'witch hunt', Heads of Missions or departments needed to familiarise themselves with particular cases likely to bring embarrassment to the Foreign Service, and, given the Foreign Office's close links with SIS, 'C' had agreed, at the request of the Permanent Under-Secretary, for members of his service to report 'anything . . . which reflects on a member of the Foreign Service'.[130]

The committee also called for a sea change in the reporting of incidents likely to undermine the work of the service overseas. While acknowledging that the encouragement of eavesdropping on colleagues was 'contrary to all the traditions of the Service' and would undermine 'morale and efficiency', the report also recognised that 'we are now living in a state of international tension when a deliberate and skilfully directed attack is being made upon the minds and loyalties of our people . . . handling highly confidential matters'.[131] In future, there would need to be an institutional change in attitudes towards security which would, the report recommended, be the duty of 'any member of the Service' and that, despite the existence of the Personnel and Security Departments, all heads of sections should 'concern themselves with the security of the work . . . and the responsibility of their staff'.[132]

Having highlighted what could be considered to represent quite serious security failings, the report deftly pivoted to a different point of focus; rather than continuing to delve further into the machinery for reporting, or otherwise dealing with members of staff whose behaviour was a cause of concern, the report turned its attention to the issue of employing individuals likely to cause concern in the first place. The result was a number of recommendations in relation to the 'personal conduct' of members of the Foreign Service. Cadogan's report marked a significant shift in security vetting, moving it beyond political issues and into the lifestyles and characters of individuals.[133] It can be suggested that the focus upon homosexuality offered the Foreign Office a convenient scapegoat, in terms of preventing greater critical attention being devoted to upon departmental culture. Indeed, it is possible that this had been agreed at the outset. Writing in his diary on 7 July, on the day the Cadogan committee was formally constituted, Liddell confided to his diary: 'I had a talk with Dick [White], who tells me that there is to be a highly confidential enquiry in the Foreign Office about the security risks of employing homosexuals'.[134] The final report gave 'special consideration' to the issue of homosexuality for two reasons. Firstly, it was argued that homosexuality would 'give rise to public scandal or comment' and any homosexual officials would 'bring discredit on the Service and would no longer be fit to discharge the representational side of his duties'. Secondly, because homosexuality was illegal in Britain and elsewhere, 'homosexual' officials would be 'especially liable to blackmail, and on this account represents a serious security risk' the report suggesting that 'any member of the Foreign Service who is suspected of indulging in homosexual tendencies should be carefully watched'.[135]

Cadogan confided to his diary that, in his view, the report produced by his committee 'doesn't help much very effectively'.[136] In contrast Anthony Eden, who had replaced Morrison as Foreign Secretary following the 1951 election, felt that the 'report is very well done. The recommendations all seem well chosen [and] practical'.[137] The report was subsequently discussed on 3 February 1952 at an ad hoc committee meeting chaired by Ashley Clarke.[138] The increased vetting of Foreign Office employees was agreed, with the Personnel Department taking responsibility for managing a system of confidential reports on individuals posing a potential threat. The issue of homosexuality was given special attention, with the risk of public scandal, not security concerns, providing the main focus of attention, with future Foreign Office policy making it clear that 'practising homosexuals [would be] regarded as generally unsuitable to be members of the Foreign Service', and beginning a bar to 'homosexuals' in the Foreign Office that would only end in 1991.[139]

In November 1955, replying to criticism about security in his former department, Prime Minister Anthony Eden explained that the Foreign

Office had a 'correct and careful security procedure . . . its standards are of the very highest, either in this or any other country'.[140] In part, Eden was correct; the Foreign Office had adopted new security methods in line with Cadogan's recommendations on the vetting of staff, and had acknowledged both the importance of reporting incidents that could be considered to be of security concern and the need to overcome inter-departmental tensions, devoting particular attention to the issue of homosexuality. Yet Eden's remarks overlooked the long and painful process of security reform in the Foreign Office, and the fact that, despite the growing influence of the Foreign Office's security apparatus, challenges remained. From its formation, the Security Department struggled to affect change in security practices on account of the deeply engrained organisational culture of the Foreign Office. As Steiner has observed of the Foreign Office more generally, the Department was often slow and cumbersome in its efforts to adapt and change when necessary.[141] This proved to be the case even in such a serious area as security. As Cadogan's report identified, the general distaste in reporting suspicious behaviour ('in school parlance, to "blab" about them to the "Head"'[142]) and fears of 'spying' on follow diplomats, lay at the heart of the issue of security. As the defection of Maclean and Burgess revealed, colleagues in the Foreign Office already knew a lot about the conduct of the two men, which was finally brought to the attention of the Security Department subsequent when the scandal broke.[143] Yet even then, when Foreign Office behaviour came under closer examination, it proved easier to focus on the personal lives of the individuals concerned that the wider knowledge about them in the department. In this way, the issue of homosexuality became a convenient focus of attention that may have been more usefully directed elsewhere. Additionally poor relations with the Personnel Department, a lack of adequate funding for the RSO scheme, and, perhaps most importantly, tensions between security officials and the lower-level officials within the Foreign Office and overseas in diplomatic establishments were significant stumbling blocks which continued to affect diplomatic security. Looking back on his time as Senior Security Officer in Washington from 1948 to 1953, 'Tommy' Thompson pointed to organisational culture, and the continued unwillingness of the clerical staff to cooperate with security procedures. 'In general, the senior officials and diplomats among the staff were helpful and co-operative, and even put-up sound suggestions for improvement', Thompson explained, while 'opposition and rebellion came from the lesser fry of the administrative and clerical branches'.[144] Significantly, working for the Security Department continued to be a short-term appointment on a junior official's career ladder, rather than a viable long-term profession. As suggested earlier, de la Mare was not proud of his time as head of the Foreign Office 'Thought Police' and glad to return to diplomatic work, while his colleagues believed that security work

was even 'shameful' and the blot on the career of any aspiring diplomat.[145] As such, the deeply ingrained 'family spirit of the old Diplomatic Service' would continue to undermine the security of British diplomacy.

Notes

1 Hansard, HC Deb., 7 November 1955, Vol. 545 col. 1486.
2 Read Cmd. 9577, *Report Concerning the Disappearance of two former Foreign Office Officials*, September 1955.
3 Hansard, HC Deb., 7 November 1955, Vol. 545 cols. 1535–1540. On the context to the discussion, read Christopher Moran, *Classified: Secrecy and the State in Modern* Britain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 119.
4 References to security can be found in Christopher Kinsey, "Diplomatic Security in the United Kingdom: An Informal Approach?," in Eugenio Cusumano and Christopher Kinsey, eds., *Diplomatic Security: A Comparative Analysis* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019), pp. 57–74 and Martin Thomas and Rogelia Pastor-Castro, eds., *Embassies in Crisis: Studies of Diplomatic Missions in Testing Situations* (Oxon: Routledge, 2020) but there are no references to the FO Security Department.
5 George Carey-Foster, the Security Department's first head, provided a number of interviews to Andrew Boyle, Robert Cecil and Tom Bower before his death in January 1994, see: Andrew Boyle, *The Climate of Treason* (London: Hutchinson, 1979); Robert Cecil, *A Divided Life* (London: Coronet Books, 1990) and Tom Bower, *The Perfect English Spy: Sir Dick White and the Secret War, 1935–90* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995). Other published details can be found in the memoirs of Arthur de la Mare, Carey-Foster's successor. (Arthur de la Mare, *Perverse and Foolish: A Jersey farmer's son in the British Diplomatic Service* (Jersey: La Haule Books, 1994).)
6 This article uses archival material released to The National Archives (hereafter TNA). The article also uses documents previously released to the authors by the then Foreign & Commonwealth Office in answer to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. Efforts have been made to match documents released via FOI to the material now available at TNA, but where this has not been possible the article uses the reference 'FOI' for papers housed in the University of Salford's 'Intelligence and Security Studies FOI Collection'. For details and access, see: < https://www.salford.ac.uk/sites/default/files/library/archives/2019/IntelligenceSecurityStudies.xml > For a guide to FOI for research, read Christopher J. Murphy and Daniel W.B. Lomas, "Return to Neverland? Freedom of Information and the History of British Intelligence," *The Historical Journal*, 57 no. 1 (2014): pp. 273–87.
7 For just some of the literature exploiting file releases on the Cambridge Five, see Andrew Lownie, *Stalin's Englishman: The Lives of Guy Burgess* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2015); Stewart Purvis and Jeff Hulbert, *Guy Burgess: The Spy Who Knew Everyone* (London: Biteback, 2016); *Richard* Davenport-Hines, *Enemies Within: Communists, the Cambridge Five and the Making of Modern Britain* (London: William Collins, 2018); Roland Philipps, *A Spy Named Orphan: The Enigma of Donald Maclean* London: Vintage, 2019); Chris Smith, *The Last Cambridge Spy: John Cairncross, Bletchley Park Mole and Soviet Agent* (The History Press, 2019); Geoff Andrews, *Agent Moliere: The Life of John Cairncross, the Fifth Man of the Cambridge Spy Circle* (I.B. Tauris, 2020).
8 The Security Department existed as a stand-alone department from 1946 to 1985 when it became a joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office/Overseas Development Agency

department. By 1998, security came under the Personnel and Security Command and moved in 2000 to the Security Strategy Unit. Today, security falls within the remit of the Estates, Security and Network Directorate (Private Information).

9 Lord Strang, *The Foreign Office* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955), p. 92.

10 *Ibid*., p. 210.

11 *Ibid*., p. 158.

12 Geoffrey McDermott, *The New Diplomacy and Its Apparatus* (London: The Plume Press Ltd., 1973), p. 191.

13 John Tilley and Stephen Gaselee, *The Foreign Office* (London: G.P. Putnam's Sons Ltd., 1933), pp. 155–56. The name of the department acted as 'camouflage' for the ciphering and deciphering of messages.

14 Ephraim Maisel, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1919–1926* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1994), p. 29; FCO Historians, *From Telegrams to eGrams: A Potted History of FCO Communications*, p. 12; Nick Barratt, *The Forgotten Spy: The Untold Story of Stalin's First British Mole* (London: Blink, 2015), pp. 81–82.

15 Anthony Seldon, *The Foreign Office: An Illustrated History of The Place and Its People* (London: HarperCollins, 2000), p. 204.

16 George P. Antrobus, *King's Messenger, 1918–1940* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1941), p. 49.

17 TNA, FCO 158/24, "Foreign Office Security Organisation," 19 July 1951.

18 Antrobus, *King's Messenger, 1918–1940*, pp. 103–104.

19 TNA, FCO 158/24, "Security Department," 20 May 1948 (Anon).

20 The authors would like to thank Dr. Christopher Baxter for this observation.

21 Robert Cecil, "The Cambridge Comintern" in Christopher Andrew and David Dilks (eds.), *The Missing Dimension: Governments and Intelligence in the Twentieth Century* (University of Illinois Press, 1984), p. 181

22 John Ferris, 'Intelligence' in Robert Boyce and Joseph A. Maiolo, eds., *The Origins of World War Two: The Debate Continues* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2003), p. 320.

23 Massimiliano Fiore, 'Rome Confidential: deception and espionage in the British Embassy', *Intelligence & National Security*, July 2022, pp. 1–11.

See also David Dilks, "Appeasement and 'intelligence'" in David Dilks (ed.), *Retreat from Power: Studies in Britain's Foreign Policy of the Twentieth Century, Volume 1. 1906–1939* (London: The Macmillan Pess, 1981), pp. 150–5. See also Manuela A. Williams, *Mussolini's Propaganda Abroad: Subversion in the Mediterranean and Middle East, 1935–1940* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), p. 179. By 1939, SIS was also reporting that an 'especially delicate and reliable source' was providing information suggesting that German military intelligence had been able to obtain summaries of British policy towards Eastern Europe from the same embassy. (TNA, FO 1093/203, Vivian to Jebb, 19 July 1939.)

Full details of the Rome leakages only became clear in 1944. In December 1947, Minister of State Hector McNeil told the House of Commons: "This leakage was the subject of an investigation in 1944, which revealed that an Italian servant, I regret to say, had been able to remove documents from the Embassy in Rome over a considerable period. This servant, apprehended after the war, admitted what he had done and stated that he had received considerable sums of money from the Italian authorities" (Hansard, HC Deb., 8 December 1947, Vol. 445, cc. 758–9). The leak was also the subject of a statement in January 1958 (Hansard, HC Deb., 27 January 1958, Vol. 581, cc. 20–1).

24 Peter Neville, 'The Foreign Office and Britain's Ambassadors to Berlin, 1933–1939', *Contemporary British History*, 18 no. 3 (2004): p. 120.

25 Oldham was helped by lax security; despite having his employment terminated, he had, recalled the Soviet defector, Walter Krivitsky, continued to access Foreign Office material by "making use of his previous position there" and was "still allowed free access . . . to visit his friends". (TNA, KV 2/808, Extract from PF.R.4342 Supp. Vol. 2, Serial 55×, p. 44.) For more on Oldham, see Barratt, *The Forgotten Spy* (2015). On Krivitsky read Kevin Quinlan, *The Secret War Between the Wars: MI5 in the 1920s and 1930s* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014), pp. 139–78.

26 D. Cameron Watt, 'Francis Herbert King: A Soviet source in the Foreign Office', *Intelligence and National Security*, 3 no. 4 (1998): pp. 62–82; Richard Thurlow, "Soviet Spies and British Counter-Intelligence in the 1930s: Espionage in the Woolwich Arsenal and the Foreign Office Communications Department," *Intelligence and National Security*, 19 no. 4 (2004): pp. 610–31; Christopher Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story of Its Foreign Operations from Lenin to Gorbachev* (London: Hoddor & Stoughton, 1990), pp. 143–44.

King had been recruited and run by Hans Christian Pieck, a Dutchman who had visited Moscow in 1929 and joined Soviet intelligence. Pieck was tasked with penetrating the Foreign Office with Soviet intelligence, writes MI5's in-house history, devoting 'lavish financial resources and painstaking and successful preparation over a long period' (John Curry and Christopher Andrew (Intro.), *The Security Service, 1908–1945: The Official History* (Kew: Public Record Office, 1999), p. 189).

27 TNA, FCO 158/24, note by Carey-Foster, 13 December 1951.

28 TNA, FCO 158/24, note by Carey-Foster, 29 December 1951. In 1944, SIS officer John Curry noted: "This example demonstrates the danger of complacency in the implementation of disciplinary measures in government organisations and underscores that someone's dissolute lifestyle cannot be seen as something distinct from their official life" ('Memorandum by the Head of Section IX of SIS, Curry, on the operations of Soviet intelligence in the UK', in Nigel West and Oleg Tsarev, eds., *Triplex: Secrets of the Cambridge Spies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 247–8)

29 TNA, FCO 158/24, "Foreign Office Security Organisation," 19 July 1951.

30 Churchill Archives Centre (hereafter CAC), Cambridge: Cadogan diary, ACAD 1/9, entry for 26 January 1940.

31 CAC, Cadogan diary, ACAD 1/9, entry for 8 February 1940.

32 Codrington's qualifications for the post remain unclear. His brother, John, was an SIS officer and part of Claude Dansey's pre-war Z Organisation, later becoming a wartime head of station in Gibraltar (Philip H. J. Davies, *MI6 and the Machinery of Spying* (Oxon: Routledge, 2004), p. 111).

33 Cecil, "The Cambridge Comintern', p. 181. Further detail on Dashwood can be found in Sir Francis Dashwood, *The Dashwoods of West Wycombe* (London: Aurum Press, 1987).

34 "Guarding the Secrets of the Foreign Office', *Sunday Herald*, 23 September 1951; "Big Five Will Lose One: Superintendent Arthur Askew Retiring from Scotland Yard," *Hendon Times and Guardian*, 8 April 1938.

After his retirement, Askew went on to write a four part overview of his career, serialised in the Sydney *Sunday Herald*, and provided early expert commentary on the disappearance of Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean.

35 TNA, FO 370/2930, Y 156/12651 "Security," February 1941. There had been several circulars on security. In April 1937, Eden had drawn attention to 'the need for greater care in the observance of security measures designed to prevent the leakage of information and documents to foreign Powers'.

36 *Ibid*.

37 Christopher Baxter, "Forgeries and Spies: The Foreign Office and the 'Cicero' Case," *Intelligence and National Security*, 23 no. 6 (2008). For a more detailed overview of the case, see Richard Wires, T*he Cicero Spy Affair: German Access to British Secrets in World War II* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1999).
38 TNA, FO 370/2930, 'Alleged Leakage at Ankara', 9 August 1945.
39 TNA, KV 6/8, Liddell to Petrie, 6 August 1945.
40 TNA, KV 4/196, entry for 6 January 1945.
41 TNA, KV 4/196, entry for 24 May 1945. In September 1942, SIS's head of station in Tehran had, amongst other security related issues, complained that a security official attached to Dashwood had 'spent too much time in the company of a suspect cabaret girl'. Foreign Office staff had also disclosed the name of SIS's station chief and it was reported that a consul was friendly with a Nazi-sympathising German-born women, who had links to Spanish intelligence (see Keith Jeffery, *MI6: The History of the Secret Intelligence Service, 1909–1949* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), pp. 436–7).
42 TNA, FO 366/1514, "Security Report," July 1945.
43 TNA, FO 366/1514, "Security," August 1945, p. 2.
44 "Obituary of Sir David Scott: Green-fingered veteran of diplomacy," *The Times*, 23 August 1986.
45 TNA, FO 366/1514, Codrington to Scott, 10 August 1945.
46 TNA, FO 366/1762, Office Circular No.51: Security Questions, J.I.C. Crombie, 22 June 1945. The Chief Clerk's Department took responsibility for physical security ('lay-out of buildings, prevention of unauthorised access, etc'.); the Librarian dealt with 'restrictive security' ('access to confidential papers, handling of print in Missions, etc.), while Personal Security ('eligibility for employment, security discipline, supervision of Foreign Office Security Officers, etc'.) was dealt with by the Personnel Department.
47 TNA, FO 366/1514, Codrington to Scott, 10 August 1945.
48 TNA, FO 366/1762, Office Circular No.73: Appointment of Mr. Howe and Mr. Kirkpatrick to Foreign Office, D.J. Scott, 28 August 1945.
49 FOI, Mallett to Winnifrith, 31 July 1946.
50 Nicholas Henderson, *The Private Office Revisited* (London: Profile Books, 2001), pp. 10–11.
51 TNA, HW 64/80, Recommendations following investigation into security and distribution of signals intelligence in government offices.
52 TNA, HW 64/80, Distribution and security of signal intelligence in the Foreign Office. Tom Bromley, Cadogan's private secretary, admitted that the South American, North American, German, Eastern, Far Eastern, Egyptian, Northern, Southern, Reconstruction, General, Western and Economic Relations departments 'habitually' saw BJs (material from GC&CS distributed in distinctive 'Blue Jackets'), as well as staff from the Dominions Intelligence Department, Prisoner of War Department, Refugee Department, Relief Department, Treaty Department, Research Department and the Head of the Foreign Office News Department (TNA, HW 64/80, Distribution of BJs in the Foreign Office).
53 TNA, FO 366/1513, note by Codrington, 30 May 1945.
54 TNA, FO 366/1513, XP 2111/762/907, "Vetting by the Security Service of the Foreign Service," 27 April 1945.
55 This rudimentary system was expanded and formalised in line with the general ban on Communists and Fascists working in the Civil Service in March 1948, and the question of vetting all London based members of Branch A (the 'Administrative' branch) had been raised in December 1949 after it was discovered that the Foreign Office was not conforming to guidelines for the handling of signals intelligence (SIGINT). (TNA, FCO 158/24, ENQ/1, "Foreign Office Vetting Procedure," 19 July 1951).

In September 1945, GC&CS had already discovered that the Foreign Office's system for handling SIGINT was far from secure (see above). See also TNA, FCO 158/24, 'SIGINT SECURITY', 8 December 1949. In 1948, British-American officials attending a joint technical conference on the British-American 'COMINT Agreement' (formerly BRUSA) agreed that, except in special categories and individual cases agreed by the US-British SIGINT authorities, "personnel to be indoctrinated as recipients of Communication Intelligence ... shall be the subject of special security measures" (TNA, HW 80/7, 'Appendix B: Principles of Security and Dissemination').) A small number of posts were even subject to the new and still secret 'positive vetting' developments, combining checks against MI5's archive with departmental investigations into the character, background and relationships of an individual. (CAC: Strang Papers, STRN 2/8, Barclay to Strang, 15 December 1955). Even by 1955, despite the introduction of positive vetting (PVing) across government in 1952, the Treasury were reluctant to "reveal the fact that it was in existence before it was announced". For details on vetting in Britain, read Daniel Lomas, "Labour Ministers, Intelligence and Domestic Anti-Communism, 1945–1951," *Journal of Intelligence History*, 12 no. 2 (2013): pp. 113–33.)

Details of the Foreign Office branches can be found in Strang, *The Foreign Office*, p. 51. The personnel were divided into four branches of staff. Branch A, corresponding to the Administrative Class of the Home Civil Service; Branch B, to the Executive and Clerical classes; Branch C, staffed by short-hand typists and typists; Branch D, the 'messengerial grades' – chancery messengers, office keepers and night guards.

Vetting checks on Foreign Office staff may have gone on longer. The history of MI5's wartime vetting says: 'A pre-war commitment of considerable importance, which involves a security and police check of the credentials of all proposed employees, with the exception of those engaged on certain domestic duties. Up to a late stage in the war, all police checks were arranged by us, but the Foreign Office eventually agreed to pass enquiries regarding Irish connected candidates to Special Branch themselves' (KV 4/36, 'Foreign Office'). Between January and March 1942, the names of 229 Foreign Office officials were checked against MI5's records (TNA, CAB 98/48, analysis of submissions for vetting by Security Service, January – March 1942). These checks simply said there was 'Nothing Recorded Against' officials in MI5's records, a decision informed by an individual's links to known subversives. Nonetheless, Codrington recognised that individuals could be vulnerable to three classes of approach from hostile agencies: 'ideological, avaricious, and sexual' (TNA, FO 366/1514, 'Security', August 1945, p. 31).

56 FO 366/1513, notes for 1 June 1945 and undated note on XP 2111/762/907. Though he took little interest in the day-to-day work of MI5, Eden's period as Minister responsible marks the only time that the Foreign Secretary has been responsible for SIS, GC&CS and MI5. For details, read Daniel W.B. Lomas, "Facing the Dictators: Anthony Eden, the Foreign Office and British Intelligence, 1935–1945," *The International History Review*, 42 no. 4 (2020): p. 798.

57 TNA, FCO 158/24, ENQ/1, "Foreign Office Vetting Procedure," 19 July 1951.

58 Reilly Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford (hereafter BOD): MS. Eng. 6920, "Maclean: Burgess: Philby".

59 FOI, SD 3, 'Security'.

60 For details of his career, read Peter Hennessy, *The Secret State: Preparing for the Worst, 1945–2010* (London: Penguin, 2010), pp. 96–7; Peter Hennessy and Gail Brownfeld, "Britain's Cold War Security Purge: The Origins of Positive Vetting," *The Historical Journal*, 25 no. 4 (Dec. 1982): pp. 965.

61 FOI, SD 18, Mallett to Winnifrith, 31 July 1946.

62 TNA, FO 366/1763, Mallett to Winnifrith, 31 July 1946.

63 TNA, FO 366/1762, Winnifrith to Mallet, 7 August 1946. During later discussions about appointing the head of the new department, he noted "This is a very important post and the Treasury are willing to pay a high price to get an absolutely first rate man" (TNA, FO366/1763, Winnifrith to Caccia, 18 September 1946).

64 TNA, FO 366/1763, 'SECURITY'.

65 TNA, FO 366/1763, Minute, 31 July 1946.

66 On Carey-Foster's wartime service in the RAF, read 'George Arthur Carey-Foster, b. 18 November 1907, d. 14 January 1994' entry in *Who Was Who*; '101 Squadron Log' < http://www.156squadron.com/101Sqn/display_squadronlog.asp?yearz=1943&monthz=07 >; 'Squadron Commanding Officers, Nos 101–20 Squadrons' < http://www.rafweb.org/Squadrons/COs/OCs_101–120.htm >; Martin Middlebrook, *The Berlin Raids: R.A.F. Bomber Command Winter, 1943–1944* (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 107; 'Distinguished Flying Cross', *Supplement to the London Gazette* (21 April 1944), p. 1836.

Carey-Foster was promoted from Squadron Leader to Wing Commander in October 1942, and was appointed CO of 101 Squadron shortly after their move to RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire, in July 1943. 101 Squadron served as part of RAF Bomber Command's radio counter-measures effort and operated aircraft fitted with jamming equipment, and additional German speaking aircrew, to interfere with German *Luftwaffe* communications. Between November 1943 to January 1944, Carey Foster led the squadron through Bomber Command's campaign against Berlin that led to high losses and low morale in the squadron with several crews 'given a very severe talking to' for 'shaky' flight cancellations (read Middlebrook. On the strategic context, read Charles Webster and Noble Frankland, *The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany, 1939–1945, Vol. 2: Endeavour* (London: HMSO, 1961), pp. 190–98).

67 FOI, Note, 30 September 1946.

68 TNA, FO 366/1762, Office Circular No. 136, "Security Department," O.G. Sargent, 7 December 1946; TNA, FCO 158/24, Circular No. 025, "The Establishment of a Security Department within the Foreign Office," 10 February 1947.

69 Dennys's name was redacted from the Foreign Office FOI material, but his name (misspelt as Dennis) can be found in Liddell's diary (TNA, KV 4/468, entry for 6 November 1946). On his career, read P.L. Dickinson, 'Obituary: Rodney Dennys', *The Independent*, 16 August 1993.

70 TNA, FCO 158/24, "Security Department," 20 May 1948.

71 TNA, FO 1093/382, "Office Notice," 29 September 1949. On PUSD's formation, read Daniel Lomas, *Intelligence, Security and the Attlee Governments, 1945–1951: An uneasy relationship?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), p. 129. More detail on PUSC can be found in Daniel Lomas, "Profiles in Intelligence: an interview with Gill Bennett," *Intelligence & National Security*, 7 December 2022.

72 TNA, FCO 158/24, "The Establishment of a Security Department within the Foreign Office," 10 February 1947. The department was also responsible for coordinating the personal security of the Foreign Secretary. In 1946, MI5 reported that members of the Stern Gang, a militant Zionist group fighting for an independent Jewish state in Palestine, were intent on assassinating Bevin. The group almost succeeded in destroying the Colonial Office in April 1947, an attack only stopped by a faulty timer. Arthur Askew, a senior security officer, 'immediately tightened up the guard on Mr. Bevin … All strangers were escorted in and out of the Foreign Office … Corridors, toilets, and washrooms were searched every hour' (Arthur Askew, 'When Bomb Terrirusts Threatened Ernest Bevin', *Sunday Herald*, 7 October 1951).

73 Arthur Askew, "Guarding The Secrets Of The Foreign Office: Woman Communist Was Head of Air Ministry Department," *Sunday Herald*, 14 October 1951.

74 Richard Aldrich writes that Carey-Foster was 'not regarded by everyone as an effective figure'. The archival material suggests otherwise (Richard J. Aldrich, ed., *Espionage, Security and Intelligence in Britain, 1945–1970* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 154).

75 TNA, FCO 158/24, "Foreign Office Security Organisation," 19 July 1951. By July 1951 the Security Department included Carey-Foster, Lord Talbot of Malahide, Mr. Geary, Mr. Molland, Mr. Oglesby and an unknown officer seconded from SIS – possibly Dennys (TNA, FCO 158/24), 'Foreign Office Security Organisation', 19 July 1951).

76 FOI, VA95, "Foreign Service Security Organisation," Carey-Foster, 8 February 1950. In 1948, the Section Head 'took over the chairmanship of the Joint Intelligence Committee's weekly meeting of the Deputy Directors of Intelligence (Organisation and Security), and continued to hold the position into the 1950s. (TNA, FCO 158/24, 'Foreign Office Security Organisation', 19 July 1951; FO 1093/366, J.I.C. (53) 62nd meeting, 19 June 1953). The scope and high regard for Carey-Foster's work can be found in the minutes of the committee; shortly before his posting as HM Counsellor to Brazil in 1953, the Director of Military Intelligence's representative, Col. T.E. Williams, thanked Carey-Foster for his 'extremely able work … and also for the great help he, personally, had received … and his valuable advice at all times'. (TNA, CAB 159/14, J.I.C. (53) 73rd Meeting, 10 July 1953.

Carey-Foster served as Counsellor to Brazil (1953–1956), Warsaw (1955–1958) at the request of HM Ambassador Sir Andrew Noble, before serving as Consul General, Hanover (1958–1961) and The Netherlands (1961–1964). He was seconded to GCHQ to advise on security matters (1964–1968) and retired in 1968 (Private Information) In addition, he also represented the Foreign Office on the recently-formed Inter-Departmental Committee on Security. The establishment of Exchange of Military Information Committees in 1950 meant further work for the Department, which involved dealing 'with very complicated questions arising out of the exchange of military information of all sorts, including research and production information with the United States, Commonwealth and other Governments'. The Security Department also played 'a major part in drawing up the international security procedures and the subsequent work attached thereto' of the Brussels Treaty Organisation and NATO. (TNA, FCO 158/24, "Foreign Office Security Organisation," 19 July 1951). Carey-Foster was also one of a handful of people aware of the Anglo-American decryption of wartime Soviet diplomatic traffic later codenamed VENONA by the US and BRIDE in the UK. (TNA, KV 6/142, Carey-Foster to Mackenzie, 5 May 1951. In an ACORN/BRIDE coded letter on Maclean and the Washington Leakages, Carey-Foster referred to the work of 'Arlington Hall' – the home of the US Army's Signals Intelligence Service – and the intelligence obtained through signals intelligence.)

Despite his work in expanding the early Foreign Office security organisation, a report by Paymaster General George Wigg in 1966 gives a rather unflattering view of Carey-Foster as security officer in GCHQ. Wigg wrote: 'the Security Advisor (Mr. Carey Foster) does not arouse … confidence … To sum up the matter, it looks as if the Security Advisor works better at home than he does on the racecourse, an expression which I shall be happy to explain if its meaning is not clear to you' (Paymaster General George Wigg, to Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, enclosing "The organisation of security in the diplomatic service and Government Communications Headquarters," 17 August 1966, reproduced in Aldrich, ed., *Espionage, security and intelligence*, p. 156–7).

77 TNA, FCO 158/24, "Foreign Office Security Organisation," 8 February 1951; TNA, FCO 158/24, 'Foreign Office Security Organisation', 19 July 1951; TNA, FCO 158/24, Circular No. 53, "Regional Security Officers," 16 April 1948.

78 Ibid. Details of the Regional Security Officers scheme can be found in CIRCULAR No. 53, 'Regional Security Officers', 16 April 1948. Generally, their work consisted of screening local staff, reviewing access to strong rooms in overseas posts, liaison with military attaches and anti-bugging inspections.
79 See, David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (London: Pan Books, 1992), pp. 280–1. Details on attempts to reform the Foreign Office reform and internal culture can also be found in Peter Hennessy, *Whitehall* (London: Fontana Press, 1989), pp. 132–33 and James Southern, *Diplomatic Identity in Postwar Britain: Deconstruction of the Foreign Office 'Type', 1945–1997* (Oxon: Routledge, 2021)
80 F.J. Thompson, *Destination Washington* (London: Robert Hale Ltd., 1960), p. 162
81 TNA, FCO 158/83, note by Carey-Foster, 11 December 1950.
82 Reilly Papers (BOD): MS. Eng. 6920, 'Maclean: Burgess: Philby'.
83 de la Mare, *Perverse and Foolish*, p. 101.
84 *Ibid*., p. 109.
85 Private Information.
86 Private Information.
87 TNA, FO 366/1513, Codrington to Scott, 28 June 1945.
88 TNA, FCO 158/24, 'Foreign Office Security Organisation', 19 July 1951.
89 See TNA, KV 6/141, "Leakage of top secret Foreign Office telegrams in the USA: evidence and investigation," April 1949–March 1951. For VENONA, see John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *VENONA: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America* (New Haven: Yale Nota Bene, 2000), pp. 52–55; Michael Smith, *The Real Special Relationship: The True Story of How the British and US Secret Services Work Together* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2022), pp. 146–7.
90 Details about the identification of Maclean and the high-level handling of the case can be found in the papers of Herbert Morrison. (London School of Economics (LSE): MORRISON/8/5, memorandum, "Burgess and Maclean," 19 July 1963). A report by Foreign Office historian Rohan Butler commented that the investigation and defection proved to be an unwelcome distraction and dominated work 'to the exclusion of everything else', including the response of the British government to the loss of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's refinery at Abadan which sparked the Abadan crisis (see Gill Bennett and Richard Smith, *Britain and the Abadan Crisis, 1950–51*, Documents from the British Archives, No. 5, Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, 2022, pp. 190, 459).
91 Cecil, *A Divided Life*, p. 154.
92 *Ibid*., pp. 154–56.
93 TNA, CAB 301/120, Report of Committee of Enquiry, p. 11.
94 Reilly Papers (BOD): MS. Eng. 6920, 'Maclean: Burgess: Philby'.
95 TNA, FCO 158/24, "Record of 4th Meeting," 31 July 1951.
96 TNA, KV 2/4524, interview with Fred Warner, 4 December 1951.
97 Burgess was not believed to have any connection to the Washington issue: 'So far as the Foreign Office and the Security Service are aware, Mr. Burgess had no connexion with these leakages". (FOI, VA18) However, the Foreign Office had to concede that it was very probable 'that Mr. Burgess knew of Mr. Maclean's Communist associations'.
98 FOI, 'Mr G.F. DE M. BURGESS' (undated).
99 Information provided by Carey-Foster in Boyle, *The Climate of Treason*, p. 284.
100 FOI, 'Mr G.F. DE M. BURGESS' (undated). Details of the investigation can be found in TNA, KV 2/988: Frederick Robert KUH.
101 TNA, KV4/472, entry for 23 January 1950. Hill's reasons for going against a prosecution under the Official Secrets Act are omitted from Liddell's diary.

Burgess proceeded to meet Liddell on 16 February to discuss the allegations further. Once again, Burgess expressly denied knowingly disclosing secret information. Liddell recorded the meeting in his diary, but remained silent on whether he believed his old friend's protestations. The version of events described by Burgess soon began to unravel. The following day Liddell met with Kenneth Mills, MI5's local Defence Security Officer stationed in Gibraltar, and was told his account of what had happened. Mills recalled shortly before his death, 'Liddell cross-questioned me on most of the contents of my report, inferring I possibly had motives for slandering Burgess. I told him not to be so ridiculous. His most reluctant attitude to forwarding my report about Burgess to the Foreign Office astounded me. Here was a member of the Foreign Office behaving in a mad, wild and totally irresponsible manner abroad . . . I added that if Liddell did not accept what I had to say there were plenty of people in the Rock Hotel in Gibraltar who would more than willingly provide statements pertaining to Burgess's wild, decadent and insidious behaviour'.

Writing to Carey-Foster on 23 February, Bernard Hill enclosed a copy of Liddell's interview with Burgess. He also noted that further discussions between MI5 and SIS had taken place, and that Vivian had authorised him to provide the Foreign Office with a copy of the SIS report on 'the activities of BURGESS in Tangier'. While this report remains classified, Hill noted that 'in many respects the statements made by Guy BURGESS to our Deputy Director-General are in conflict with the facts stated in the M.I.6 report'. Based on the available information, the Foreign Office concluded that 'the case against Burgess was substantiated' and that he 'should be reprimanded', ruling out a promotion or transfer to a position with 'access to secret information'. The case was considered closed (FOI, Carey-Foster to Middleton, 28 February 1950; FOI, Carey-Foster to Middleton, 28 February 1950). For the views of Kenneth Mills and the allegation from Liddell he was 'slandering' Burgess, read Desmond Bristow, *A Game of Moles: The Deceptions of an MI6 Officer* (London: Warner Books, 1994), p. 213.

102 FOI, Carey-Foster to Middleton, 2 February 1950; Bristow, *A Game of Moles*, p. 211.

103 FOI, Carey-Foster to Middleton, 2 February 1950. Carey-Foster went on: 'In taking this action we bear in mind that (a) he has certain undesirable habits which may be a danger to security and (b) certain of his less desirable acquaintances may take advantage of his indiscreetness'.

104 FOI, G H Middleton, 4 February 1950.

105 FOI, Carey-Foster to Middleton, 28 February 1950; Burgess to Middleton, 6 March 1950.

106 FOI, Burgess to Personnel Dept, 4 April 1950.

107 FOI, Middleton to Chief Clerk, 14 April 1950.

108 FOI, Ashley Clarke to Burgess, 4 May 1950.

109 FOI, Draft, "Guy Frances de Moncy Burgess" (undated). On his role in Washington, see Lownie, *Stalin's Englishman*, pp. 198–216. Carey-Foster had warned the Embassy Security Officer, Sir Robert Mackenzie, of Burgess and his unpredictable nature (Kim Philby, *My Silent War* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1968), p. 126

110 TNA, PREM 8/1524, Attlee to Morrison, 10 June 1951.

111 TNA, CAB 195/9, Cabinet Secretary's Notebook, 11 June 1951; TNA, CAB 128/19, C.M. (51) 42nd Conclusions, 11 June 1951.

112 FOI, "Record of Conversation," Roger Makins, 8 June 1951.

113 FOI, Ashley Clarke to Strang, 12 June 1951.

114 FOI, "Messrs. Maclean and Burgess," E G Willan, 12 June 1951.

115 FOI, M106 Minute from Secretary of State to The Prime Minister, 13 June 1951.

116 FOI, B42, Gladwyn Jebb to William Strang, 22 June 1951.

117 *Ibid*.

118 Reports from the British Embassy in Washington had noted that the disappearance had 'created a major sensation' in the US and that, while several papers had reported the case in a 'reasonable' manner, some were openly critical of British security procedures, with *The Washington Post* openly asking why two officials of 'known dubiety' had been employed in the Foreign Office, especially in the aftermath of the cases of Klaus Fuchs and Bruno Pontecorvo. (TNA, PREM 8/1524, Washington to Foreign Office, 8 June 1951. For the *Washington Post* article, see TNA, FO 371/90931, 'Missing Diplomats', *The Washington Post*, 8 June 1951).

119 On the appointment, read Daniel W.B. Lomas and Christopher J. Murphy, 'Security or Scandal? Homosexuality and the Foreign Office, 1945–1991' in Dennis G. Molinaro, ed., *The Bridge in the Parks: The Five Eyes and Cold War Counter-Intelligence* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021), pp. 75–6.

120 CAC, Cadogan diary, ACAD 1/22, entry for 29 June 1951. Cadogan's name had appeared in Morrison's letter to Attlee along with the other members of the committee. Attlee had suggested that it was 'worth considering whether, if the appointment of the committee is to be made public, it might be wise to have some members drawn from outside the outside the Civil or Foreign Services e.g. two elder statesmen such as Halifax or Pethick-Lawrence' (TNA, PREM 8/1524, Morrison to Attlee, 21 June 1951). Certainly, the suggestion went no further. Lord Halifax may have been an unsuitable choice as he had been British Ambassador in Washington (1940–1946) at the time of the 'Washington leakage'.

121 TNA, CAB 301/120, Report of Committee of Enquiry, p. 1.

122 The Committee also heard evidence from Sir William Strang (FO), Ashley Clarke (FO), Roderick Barclay (FO), Reilly (FO), Carey-Foster (FO), Hooper (FO), John Winnifrith (Treasury), Sir Stewart Menzies (SIS), Dick White (MI5) and Ronald Howe (CID) (TNA, CAB 301/120, Report of Committee on Enquiry, Annex I).

123 FOI, Strang to Eden, 3 November 1951.

124 The committee had been provided with a general overview of security vetting by Sir John Winnifrith, the senior Treasury official responsible for Whitehall vetting, with a further document outlining internal Foreign Office vetting procedures (TNA, FCO 158/24, Record of 7th Meeting, 14 August 1951.).

125 Strang, *The Foreign Office*, p. 51.

126 TNA, CAB 301/120, Report of Committee of Enquiry, pp. 8–9. On the impact of vetting on MI5, see Christopher Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm: The authorised history of MI5* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), pp. 380–99.

The Foreign Office itself acknowledged that the small number of 'key posts' screened under the positive vetting process would be a "slow procedure'. In his memoirs, de la Mare recalled that the administrative burden of screening officials 'would take years" and 'went on increasing' with every new entrant as the Treasury was reluctant to fund more security staff. (de la Mare, *Perverse and Foolish*, pp. 99–101.) The administrative burden associated with enhanced screening proved to be a considerable strain on resources; early estimates had suggested that the new system would apply to fewer than 3,000 posts across government but, by March 1954, the figure had increased dramatically to 10,000 (CAC: STRN 2/8, Civil Service Security Procedure, March 1954.)

127 TNA, CAB 301/120, Report of Committee of Enquiry, p. 10. These flaws had been highlighted earlier in a report by the official Committee on Positive Vetting (GEN 183) which concluded that active security screening would not "yield substantial results" or detect crypto-communists at the heart of government. (TNA, CAB 130/20, P.V. (50)11, Committee on Positive Vetting: Report, 27 October 1950.).

128 TNA, FCO 158/24, Carey-Foster to Hayter, 23 February 1949.

129 TNA, CAB 301/120, Report of Committee of Enquiry, p. 15.
130 TNA, CAB 301/120, Report of Committee of Enquiry, pp. 16–17. MI5 would also report any adverse information to the Foreign Office (p. 17) and the FO's policy on reporting had been earlier communicated in July 1951 (TNA, FCO 158/24, Circular No. 66, Confidential Reports on Members of the Foreign Service, 12 July 1951).
131 TNA, CAB 301/120, Report of Committee of Enquiry, pp. 21–22. The impact of the wartime expansion of Whitehall is discussed in Peter Hennessy, *Whitehall* (London: Fontana, 1990).
132 TNA, CAB 301/120, Report of Committee of Enquiry, p. 23.
133 See, Lomas, "Labour Ministers," pp. 113–133.
134 TNA, KV 4/473, Entry for 7 July 1951.
135 TNA, CAB 301/120, Report of Committee of Enquiry, p. 20.
136 CAC, ACAD 1/22, diary entry for 11 October 1951.
137 FOI, Scribbled note by Eden, 21 December 1951.
138 The meeting was attended by Reilly, Sir Roderick Barclay, Bevin's former Principle Private Secretary and now Assistant Under-Secretary of State (Consular and Latin America), Hooper, Carey-Foster and Strang's Private Secretary, Campbell.
139 On the impact of the policy, read Lomas and Murphy, "Security or Scandal?," pp. 72–91; James Southern, Homosexuality at the Foreign Office, 1967–1991, FCO Historians, *History Notes: Issue 19*, October 2017.
140 Hansard, HC Deb., 7 November 1955, Vol. 545 cc. 1483–1611.
141 See Zara Steiner, 'The Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Resistance and Adoption to Changing Times', *Contemporary British History*, 18 no. 3 (Autumn 2004): pp. 13–30.
142 TNA, CAB 301/120, Report of Committee of Enquiry, p. 21.
143 In his 1955 *Spectator* essay on 'the Establishment', journalist Robert Henry Fairlie said "Somewhere near the heart of the patterns of social relationships which so powerfully control the exercise of power in this country is the Foreign Office . . . At the time of the disappearance of Maclean and Burgess, 'the right people' moved into action . . . No one whose job it was to be interested in the Burgess-Maclean affair from the very beginning will forget the subtle but powerful pressures which were brought by those who belonged to the same stratum as the two missing men" (Peter Hennessy and Kathleen Townsend, 'The documentary spoor of Burgess and Maclean', *Intelligence & National Security*, 2(2) (1987), p. 297).
144 Thompson, *Destination Washington*, p. 168.
145 de la Mare, *Perverse and Foolish*, p. 109.

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Notes on contributors

Daniel W. B. Lomas is Assistant Professor,International Relations, at the University of Nottingham. He is a member of the Centre for the Study of Subversion, Unconventional Interventions and Terrorism, and teaches on intelligence and national security. He is currently working on a history of UK security vetting.

Christopher Murphy is Senior Lecturer in Intelligence Studies, University of Salford. He specialises in intelligence and security, publishing extensively on the history of Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE) and media depictions of intelligence. He is author of Security and Special Operations: SOE and MI5 during the Second World War (2006) and has co-edited Intelligence Studies in Britain and the US: Historiography since 1945 (2013).