

CABINET OFFICE: CONFIDENTIAL INVESTIGATIONS — NOW UNCLASSIFIED

8 September 2008 *

* *Note: Date mistyped on original letter above. This should read 8 October 2008.*

Leaks

Dear Mr Quick

I am writing to ask whether you will consider agreeing to an investigation into a series of leaks, probably originating in the Home Office, which is causing considerable concern to the Cabinet Secretary.

A number of recent leak investigations, including some conducted by your officers, have raised questions about the security of sensitive information in the Home Office. Whilst not all the leaks which concern us merit, taken individually, investigation by the police, we are concerned that there is an individual or individuals in the Home Office with access to sensitive material who is (are) prepared to leak that information. **We are in no doubt that there has been considerable damage to national security already as a result of some of these leaks and we are concerned that the potential for future damage is significant[†].** The risk of leaking is having an impact on the efficient and effective conduct of Government business, affecting the ability of Ministers and senior officials to have full and frank discussions on sensitive matters and undermining necessary trust. You will not be surprised to hear that we are also concerned that there must be risk to information about sensitive operations which, if leaked, could give rise to grave damage.

If you are content to agree to an investigation into these matters, my staff will be happy to brief your officers on the detail. Equally, I shall be happy to discuss with you any arrangements for the oversight of the investigation.

Knowledge of this request is held very tightly here, in the Home Office and in the Security Service and will continue to be so.

A copy of this letter goes on a personal basis to David Normington, Jonathan Evans and to Robert Hannigan and Ciaran Martin here.

Information contained in this document may be subject to exemptions under the Freedom of Information Act (in particular the National Security exemptions in sections 23 and 24). Before considering information in this document for release under the Act, you should contact the Intelligence and Security Secretariat in the Cabinet Office for advice.

Chris Wright

[†] *emphasis added*