

RESTRICTED - PERSONAL

From: Richard Riley
PS/Permanent Secretary
Private Office
3rd Floor, Peel Building
☎

cc William Nye

9 August 2006

Home Secretary

MPS ARRESTS – 8 AUGUST

You asked for a note on what we were told of yesterday's arrests by the Metropolitan Police in connection with an investigation into unlawful access to voicemails.

2. The Commissioner telephoned David Normington yesterday morning to report that the MPS had arrested two individuals – the Royal Correspondent of the News of the World and a security consultant - in connection with an investigation into alleged targeting of the voicemails of members of the Royal household (not members of the Royal family themselves but rather their staff). The Commissioner reported that PACE search warrants had been served at the premises of News International. He also mentioned that there was a suspicion that the voicemails of other public figures may have been targeted. The Commissioner mentioned [REDACTED]. If this proved to be the case, the Commissioner would personally inform [REDACTED].

3. The Commissioner's call (at 10.00 am yesterday) was the first that we had heard of this operation/investigation. The Commissioner acknowledged that if it were proved to be the case that the MPS had come across a loophole re: access to voicemails, this would have implications for telephone security. The MPS were already in contact with relevant phone companies about this.

4. Simon Wren, No.10 and your office were all informed yesterday of the bare facts of what we knew (except for the possible [REDACTED] connection which had not been confirmed). TPU colleagues were informed separately by the Met at around noon of the investigation. This was the first time they had been told of this activity.

Points to note

- We have not received precise details of the investigation but if there is an offence here – it is likely to be one of the unlawful interception of a communication in the course of its transmission: which is an offence under Part 1 of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). This carries a penalty of up to two years imprisonment.
- TPU colleagues are urgently seeking a meeting with Commander Loughborough, head of Royalty and Diplomatic Protection at the MPS to discuss the investigation.
- There are no indications that there is a terrorism aspect to any of this.

RESTRICTED - PERSONAL

RESTRICTED - PERSONAL

Lines to take (noting that this is an ongoing operation)

- This is an operational matter for the Metropolitan Police;
- Unlawful interception of communications is a criminal offence – we put in place legislation to tighten up this area of the law;
- We are urgently seeking to learn whatever lessons are necessary from what is alleged to have happened.

Richard Riley

RESTRICTED - PERSONAL