

from: [REDACTED]

Hidden cc: [REDACTED]
cc: [REDACTED] without
[REDACTED] enclosures

136A

(MAC) PTF

PERSONAL PROTECTION FOR MR CALLAGHAN

This is a brief for the Home Secretary's meeting with Mr Callaghan at 4.00 pm on Tuesday 25 October.

2. The story so far is contained in the following papers, copies of which are attached for ease of reference:

- a. the Home Secretary's letter of 24 June to Mr Callaghan;
- b. Mr Callaghan's reply of 30 June;
- c. your letter of 22 July [REDACTED]
- d. [REDACTED] reply of 26 July;
- e. the Home Secretary's letter of 26 July to Mr Callaghan;
- f. Mr Callaghan's replies of 1 and 4 August;
- g. the Home Secretary's letter of 11 August to Mr Callaghan;
- h. Mr Callaghan's reply of 23 August;
- i. [REDACTED] letter to me of 25 August.

3. The Home Secretary may wish to be reminded of where we now stand on personal protection for other individuals. [REDACTED] protection has been removed without protest. The removal of [REDACTED] protection prompted one or two rumbles but those seem to have subsided. [REDACTED] retains full personal protection at least until a further review at the end of January. There have been no difficulties in relation to [REDACTED] whose personal protection was removed immediately after the election. [REDACTED] position is to be reviewed again at about Christmas. [REDACTED] received a letter of 26 July from the Home Secretary identical to that to Mr Callaghan of the same date. [REDACTED] had a difficult meeting with him on 29 July and [REDACTED] has not replied to the Home Secretary's letter. Meanwhile, like Mr Callaghan, he retains full personal protection.

4. The Home Secretary may wish to begin by asking Mr Callaghan to state his point of view. It seems likely that he will advance the case for no change based more on status grounds than because of real anxiety about his safety. He will make

full play of [REDACTED] success in retaining personal protection from 1979-83 in the face of a threat assessment which did not justify it. If he does not mention it, the Home Secretary may wish to ask Mr Callaghan whether he feels that full protection should be retained at the farm in [REDACTED]. Before the election [REDACTED] who has since retired as a chief constable, told us that he thought that Mr Callaghan would be glad to see it withdrawn (see also paragraph 8 below).

5. In response the Home Secretary may wish to promise Mr Callaghan a firm decision at a later date, to allow time to consult the Prime Minister (who has not been involved since July) and to allow time to digest what Mr Callaghan has to say. But Mr Callaghan will expect some reaction and the Home Secretary may wish to prepare the ground for what he judges will be the eventual decision. With some small refinements (see paragraph 8 below) the choice is between sticking to what was offered in July or agreeing that the present level of protection should be retained while Mr Callaghan remains in the House of Commons even if the police's assessment of the threat suggests a lesser level of protection. Whatever is decided for Mr Callaghan will have to apply also to [REDACTED] and to any future former Prime Ministers in the House of Commons. The formal acceptance that the professional threat assessment does not finally determine whether protection is provided may lead in time to further difficulties with other VIPs including Ministers, former Ministers, diplomats and visitors to the country.

6. The case for giving in to Mr Callaghan is to avoid a nasty, public row involving both him and [REDACTED]. The Commissioner is likely to live with whatever Ministers decide though the Met. may look for some appropriate, financial quid pro quo. On the other hand it is not unthinkable to stand firm:

- a. there may turn out to be little media and public sympathy for Mr Callaghan and [REDACTED], particularly because the issue cannot be presented as personal protection or no personal protection;
- b. as some personal protection is to continue, come what may, and that can be made clear publicity does not amount to an invitation to terrorists to attack Mr Callaghan or [REDACTED] with impunity at any time they choose.

7. Either option is unattractive. On balance, I would suggest that the Home Secretary stands firm bearing in mind the cost and the knock-on effects of giving in.

8. Mr Callaghan may turn out to be particularly concerned about foreign trips where he is likely to meet other former heads of government receiving protection on a lavish scale. As a refinement to the option of standing firm it should be possible to offer him very sympathetic consideration on the question of accompaniment by his protection officer unless a trip is entirely private and unpublicised. If the Home Secretary is minded to agree with Mr Callaghan that the present level of protection should be retained generally and Mr Callaghan has indicated that he would accept the removal of a uniformed police presence at his [redacted], the Chief Constable of Sussex would be pleased if we could at least agree to vary the present arrangements to that extent.

[redacted]
19 October 1983

F4 Division