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Sir Robin Butler GCB CVO  
Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service  
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Dear Sir

#### SIR JOHN HERMON'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Sir John Hermon, who was Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary from 1980 to 1989, has passed to the NIO a copy of the draft autobiography which he has been working on. We do not know when the book will be published. Sir John wanted to ensure that his book did not breach his duty of confidentiality as Chief Constable.

David Fell and I are content that there is nothing in the draft which is directly against the national interest in terms of national security. However, I am writing to alert colleagues to the strong possibility of public comment and re-opening of old issues when the book is published, in particular in relation to the Stalker/Sampson affair.

We do not think it necessary to circulate the draft to colleagues (it has in any case been given to us in confidence). The book deals with Sir John's childhood and progress through the ranks of the RUC. However, I should draw colleagues' attention to the fact that there are some ill-judged references in the draft to former NI Ministers, the RUC, the Security Service and the DPP(NI). These could be objected to on the grounds that they may be breaches of courtesy, accuracy or confidentiality (though not such as to be a breach of national security). Such references, coupled with the re-telling of the Stalker/Sampson affair, may be picked up by the media and the public more generally.

In the event that such issues became the subject of press interest, we would of course give Ministers appropriate lines to take, making clear that the views which Sir John expresses in the book are entirely his own.



CONFIDENTIAL  
10 DOWNING STREET

David Fell and I agree that we should not seek piecemeal deletions or amendments to the text; it would be better to offer no suggestions rather than a small number which could be taken as implying that we find the rest of the book unobjectionable. In responding to Sir John Hermon, we will of course make it clear that in refraining from making suggestions we are not confirming the accuracy of the book or the desirability of its publication.

I am copying this to Wednesday Morning colleagues and to Alex Allan.

Yours ever,

John