



Government Communications Headquarters

Oakley, Priors Road

Cheltenham GL52 5AJ

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Press Release

1. As the Heritage Secretary made clear in the House of Commons this afternoon, the Heads of all the Security and Intelligence agencies have given categorical assurances denying any involvement in intercepting, recording or disclosing telephone calls involving members of the Royal Family. However there are certain incorrect statements in this evening's Evening Standard article which call for comment by GCHQ.

2. Firstly, the Interception of Communications Act 1985 applies to any interception of calls on a Public Telecommunications Network, whether by any of the security and intelligence agencies or by the police, or by anyone else. It is incorrect to claim that GCHQ is in some way able to circumvent the Act. GCHQ abides by the provisions of this and all other UK laws. The Commissioner appointed under the Act has access to all relevant papers and, in response to earlier allegations of illegality by GCHQ, reported that there was not the slightest truth that the law was being bent by them.

3. Secondly, the Director of GCHQ is responsible to the Foreign Secretary for all aspects of GCHQ work, and warrants for interception are signed by the Secretary of State. It is simply untrue to say that there is no Ministerial control of GCHQ's activities.

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