



Mr Tom Tugendhat
House of Commons,
London,
SW1A 0AA
UK

15/07/19

RE: Leak of private telegrams between the British Ambassador and the Foreign Commonwealth Office

Dear Mr Tom Tugendhat

We are writing in connection with the risks to national security from the leak of official diplomatic correspondence between the British Ambassador in Washington, Kim Darroch, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

We heard your strong words on Channel 4 earlier in the week when you said that ‘Leaks like this are fundamentally undermining the interests of the British people’. We agree. We were also pleased to hear your colleague Liam Fox on the Today programme on Tuesday saying that ‘Malicious leaks of this nature are unprofessional, unethical and unpatriotic’. Sir Kim’s subsequent resignation has left the UK looking weak and undermined the role of our diplomatic service.

We were glad to see that you took immediate action in holding a hearing of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs on 10th July to take urgent steps to investigate who was responsible for the leak of FCO secure communications. However, we believe the issues concerning the use of secret information to the advantage of foreign powers go wider than the immediate question of who was responsible for this leak.

The leaked information was sent to Isabel Oakeshott who has in the past been closely involved with Nigel Farage and other leading pro-Brexit politicians. She is employed by Michael Ashcroft - both have made frequent visits to Russia¹ and have close connections there. Oakeshott was privy to information about leaks between Arron Banks and Russian officials and businessmen², which she failed to release in spite of its significant importance for national security.

It is easy to dismiss drawing conclusions from such associations as the indulgence of conspiracy theory, but without a widespread investigation using the full powers of Parliament it is impossible to separate fact from fiction. It is essential for the public to have confidence that we do not have senior politicians in effect working in the interests of foreign powers. We would ask that you establish such an inquiry under the auspices of the Backbench Foreign Affairs Committee that you chair.

We look forward to receiving your response at your earliest convenience,

¹ <https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2015/05/lord-ashcroft-travels-to-russia-to-research-his-david-cameron-biography/>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/jun/11/profile-isabel-oakeshott-and-the-bad-boys-of-brexit>



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