



**Home Affairs
Committee**



Justice Committee



**Foreign Affairs
Committee**



**Joint Committee
on the National
Security Strategy**

16 October 2025

**Stephen Parkinson
Director of Public Prosecutions
Crown Prosecution Service
Via email**

Dear Stephen,

Thank you for your letter of 7 October providing information on the reasons why the charges against two individuals under the Official Secrets Act 1911 were dropped, and for meeting us in private on 15 October to discuss in further detail. We have now been able to examine the three witness statements from the Deputy National Security Adviser (DNSA) published later that day.

In view of the seriousness of the allegations, the implications for UK national security and foreign policy, and the need to support the integrity and independence of the criminal justice system, we believe that it is in the public interest for a fuller explanation for the dropping of charges to be provided. We have a number of further questions.

You explained in our meeting that the factor that changed and prompted you to seek further witness statements from the DNSA was the Court of Appeal's judgment in the *Roussev* case in July 2024,¹ which you interpreted as requiring the CPS to produce evidence that China represented a "current threat" to national security (i.e. current at the time that the offences were alleged to have been committed). This was based on the understanding that previously, "enemy", while undefined, was taken to include countries with whom the UK might go to war (as indicated in a case called *Parrott* from 1913²) and that the *Roussev* judgment narrowed this interpretation by adding the "current threat" requirement.

The relevant passage from the Court of Appeal's judgment states that neither the approach taken in the *Parrott* case, nor the trial judge's view that an enemy includes "any State which presently poses an active threat to the UK's national security", was

¹ *R v Roussev and others* [2024] EWCA Crim 808

² *R v Parrott* [1913] 8 Cr App R 186



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"laying down a comprehensive test." The Court of Appeal then confirmed that "There is no reason in our view why the term "an enemy" should not include a country which represents a current threat to the national security of the UK. That formulation may well involve issues of fact and degree which the jury would be well-placed to assess, on evidence." The judgment therefore appears to reject the existence of a "comprehensive test" and is permissive rather than prescriptive when stating that a country that represents a current threat to national security falls within the term "enemy". In this context, why was this judgment thought to impose a strict requirement to evidence a "current threat" from China?

- Can you confirm that the requests to the DNSA for further statements related to Government policy in the 2021-23 period? Can you provide further detail on the nature of the three requests for statements? Was there a request for information on the position of the current Government relating to China; to what extent was this considered relevant to the case?
- Can you set out what consideration was given to seeking evidence from other sources, either in addition to that of the DSNA or instead of, such as ministers in post at the time, or using intelligence material, so as to enable a jury to assess the extent and nature of the threat posed by China at the relevant time?
- What steps did you take to make ministers aware, in advance of your decision to drop charges, that without further evidence relating to the 2021-23 period the case would collapse? When did you take any such steps? What efforts did you make to ensure that the DNSA was absolutely clear that the evidential threshold his evidence was being measured against was that China was a "current threat to National Security" (i.e. current at the time that the offences were alleges to have been committed) and that the case would be dropped if such evidence was not available? Can you confirm that the reason for the dropping of the charges was that this evidential threshold was not met? What was the role of former and current Government legal officers in decisions relating to the case? Is it correct that you informed the Attorney General that the case was being dropped after the decision to do so had been made? Was this after the accused had been informed?

Thank you for agreeing to cooperate with committees in further work on this issue. We want to emphasise that nothing in this letter should be interpreted as being critical of any individuals involved; we are seeking information to help public understanding of what has happened, which will now be pursued in an inquiry by the Joint Committee on



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the National Security Strategy. In this context, it would be helpful to have a response to this letter by 24 October.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Dame Karen Bradley MP
Chair of the Home Affairs Committee

Andy Slaughter MP
Chair of the Justice Committee

Emily Thornberry MP
Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee

Matt Western MP
Chair, Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy

**cc The Rt Hon Lord Beamish, Chair of the Intelligence and Security
Committee**
**The Rt Hon Sir Jeremy Wright KC MP, Deputy Chair of the Intelligence
and Security Committee**