



PRIME MINISTER · PREMIER MINISTRE

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December 6, 1979.

My dear Colleague:

As you know, existing policy and procedures concerning personnel security screening are set out in Cabinet Directive 35, which was approved in 1963. A number of the provisions of the directive have been criticized over the years, for example, the requirement for a person needing security clearance to provide information about visits to communist countries, and information about relatives. Because of the questionable and offensive nature of some of the requirements, and the public interest in the subject, I think an early examination should be undertaken, and proposals submitted to Cabinet as soon as possible.

I understand that for some time the matter of personnel security screening has been under review as part of the development

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The Honourable Allan F. Lawrence,
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of a comprehensive security policy. The main thrust of this policy is, I believe to separate sensitive material of national security significance from material of other degrees of sensitivity, and to provide appropriate classification and personnel screening procedures for each category. This of course is a large and complex task which may take some time. Because of this, I think it is important that we give priority to examining the existing policy and procedures for screening for access to classified material as presently defined. I understand that a good deal of preparation work has been done, and therefore I would hope we can achieve appropriate revisions quickly. At the same time, work on the comprehensive policy can continue, and any revision of Cabinet Directive 35 can be incorporated into that policy as it is developed.

Would you please undertake responsibility for developing the necessary proposals for submission to Cabinet. These could appropriately be considered by Ministers in conjunction with that part of the study of the RCMP Security Service mandate relating to security screening which will shortly be submitted to the Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence. I would hope that recommendations could be presented, and decisions made, within the next four to six weeks.

Yours sincerely,

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ORIGINAL SIGNÉ PAR
JOE CLARK

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