

24.167 It is clear that by this stage Nelson's supposed role in saving lives had been dropped as an argument but in its place came a reinforced attempt to outline the dangers that would arise from the public disclosure of sensitive information. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland led the discussion, citing the "view of the DCI, and senior officers in the RUC and Army" who felt that prosecution would be a setback and that "lives would be lost as a result".<sup>106</sup>

24.168 The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Peter Brooke, explicitly raised the prospect of "kidnap attempts" against Security Service officers (even though the Director General had emphasised in his prior discussions with the Attorney General that he did not wish to exaggerate such threats). This is all indicative, in my view, of a rather **frantic** effort to avoid the prosecution of Brian Nelson.

24.169 The record shows that both Peter Brooke and Tom King remained opposed to a prosecution, with David Waddington, the Home Secretary, also expressing some concern on behalf of the Security Service.

24.170 The Prime Minister himself appears to have taken the middle course. The records suggest that the Prime Minister did not offer a firm view either for or against the prosecution. The minute of the meeting recorded that:

*"The Prime Minister said he was very torn. His instinct was that where a charge could be brought with a reasonable prospect of success, it should*