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Mr John Allman
Christians Against Mental slavery
98 High Street
Knaresborough
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Reference: T12849/3

12 December 2003

Dear Mr Allman,

Your letter of 30 October addressed to the Prime Minister, received on 26 November, about the non-consensual technological monitoring or influencing of human thought, was passed to the Home Office. The Home Office, as you know, has policy responsibility for deployment of covert investigation methods.

You asked the Prime Minister whether he would be prepared "to declare it the new policy of [his] Government that the non-consensual technological monitoring or influence of human thought ought soon to be declared a crime against humanity worldwide".

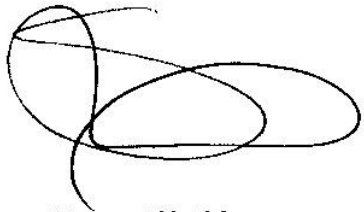
As I said to you in my letter of 20 November, for the Government to reach a firm view on such technology there would need to be evidence that the technology, which you claim exists, really were viable and practicable. At the moment it seems that the technological monitoring or influencing of human thought is merely a theoretical possibility. As a result it is impossible to undertake a full assessment of its potential drawbacks or its benefits, which you have previously admitted there may well be.

It is far too premature for the Government to consult publicly on the issue, and consequently to develop a firm policy position.

These surveillance powers are certified compliant with the Human Rights Act 1998 and must be used with regard to the provisions of the Human Rights Act, which incorporated the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into UK law. Article 8 of the ECHR provides that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence. That right is not absolute, although there can be no interference with that right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of, for example, national security or the prevention of disorder or crime. Article 9 of the ECHR provides that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

I cannot comment on the capability of law enforcement agencies and the intelligence services to undertake surveillance activities or the extent to which any capabilities are, or might be, considered to be thought influencing. I do not think you would expect me to do that. What I am able to say is that their use is regulated in accordance with the law and subject to independent oversight by the Office of the Surveillance Commissioners¹ and the Intelligence Services Commissioner respectively.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Watkin', written in a cursive style.

Simon Watkin
Covert Investigation Policy Team
Intelligence and Security Liaison Unit

¹ <http://www.surveillancecommissioners.gov.uk>