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Director GCHQ



**SECURITY SERVICE**  
**MI5**

Sir Ken McCallum  
Director General MI5

**Rt Hon. Shabana Mahmood MP**  
**Home Secretary**

**Rt Hon. Yvette Cooper MP**  
**Foreign Secretary**

20 January 2026

*Dear Secretaries of State,*

### **CHINA EMBASSY AT ROYAL MINT COURT**

We understand your colleague, The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, will shortly take the quasi-judicial decision on the planning application for construction of a new Chinese Embassy at Royal Mint Court, London. MI5, GCHQ and other organisations provided evidence to the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (ISC) regarding the national security considerations which formed an important part of the decision-making process. We write not to repeat that secret evidence but to offer, given the high level of interest in this decision, our shared view in a form that you or your Ministerial colleagues might wish to draw upon once the decision is announced.

2. As made clear in DG MI5's annual threat speech last October, the UK needs both to defend resolutely against Chinese threats and seize the opportunities that demonstrably serve our nation. Our organisations have a clear role in the former, which aids the government of the day in taking decisions – often complex decisions – on the latter.

3. UKIC has worked closely with relevant government departments throughout the planning application for the new embassy. Together, we have considered the various national security concerns raised by the proposed build, and had the opportunity to raise these concerns at appropriate stages of decision making.

4. MI5 has over 100 years of experience managing national security risks associated with foreign diplomatic premises in London. For the Royal Mint Court site, as with any foreign embassy on UK soil, it is not realistic to expect to be able wholly to eliminate each and every potential risk. (And even if this were a practicable goal, it would be irrational to drive 'embassy-generated risk' down to zero when numerous other threat vectors are so central to the national security risks we face in the present era.) However, the collective work across UK intelligence agencies and HMG departments to formulate a package of national security mitigations for the site has been, in our view, expert, professional and proportionate.

5. As detailed in classified briefings given to the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament, the package of mitigations deals acceptably with a wide range of sensitive national security issues, including cabling. These mitigations will be subject to regular review through a cross-government process, led at senior level in the Home Office. Further, it is worth reiterating the new embassy will replace seven different diplomatically-accredited sites across London which China currently operates; this consolidation should bring clear security advantages.

6. The Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament has played a vital role in scrutinising the work of the national security community in this process, for which we are grateful.

7. We are copying this letter to the Chair and Deputy Chair of the ISC, the Security Minister, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Cabinet Secretary, Antonia Romeo, Olly Robbins, Sarah Healey, the National Security Adviser, Matt Collins, Michelle Haslem, Ailsa Terry and Hannah Thompson.

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