PREM 19/279

SECRET

PART 5

Confidential Filing

The Situation In Northern Ireland
Northern Ireland Conference in Belfast

IRELAND

Part 1: May 1979
Part 5: December 19

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
~~7.12.79~~		3.3.80					
~~10.12.79~~							
~~11.12.79~~							
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~~11.2.80~~							
~~21.2.80~~							
25.2.80							
— Ends —							

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PART 6 begins:-

Washington Tel 1046 12.3.80

PART 5 ends:-

K. Stowe to RTA 7.3.80

TO BE RETAINED AS TOP ENCLOSURE

Cabinet / Cabinet Committee Documents

Reference	Date
CC (79) 26th Conclusions, Minute 2 (extract)	20.12.79
CC (80) 1st Meeting, Minute 4	10.1.80
JIC (80) (N) (IR) 1	17.1.80
CC (80) 3rd Conclusions, Minute 4	24.1.80
CC (80) 4th Conclusions, Minute 4	31.1.80
CC (80) 5th Conclusions, Minute 4	7.2.80
CC (80) 7th Conclusions, Minute 4	21.2.80
CC (80) 9th Conclusions, Minute 4	6.3.80

The documents listed above, which were enclosed on this file, have been removed and destroyed. Such documents are the responsibility of the Cabinet Office. When released they are available in the appropriate **CAB** (CABINET OFFICE) CLASSES

Signed______________________________ Date__________________

PREM Records Team

CLIVE WHITMORE

Ireland

CONFIDENTIAL

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Permanent Under Secretary

K R Stowe CB, CVO

PUS/L/2052/

7 March, 1980

R Whitmore

Hidden Copies:

Mr. W. Bell - M
Mr. Marshall
Mr. Hannigan - M
Mr. Moriarty
Mr. Wyatt - M
Mr. Chesterton
PS/PUS - M

Sir Robert Armstrong, KCB, CVO,
Cabinet Office,
WHITEHALL,
London SW1

Dear Robert,

When the Secretary of State reported to the Prime Minister on Wednesday evening, 5 March, about progress at the last six days of meetings of the Conference on Northern Ireland, he suggested and the Prime Minister agreed that we should prepare a paper setting out proposals for further action and development from the Conference, for consideration by the group of Ministers under the Home Secretary's chairmanship which prepared the Working Document for the Conference.

I have set in hand the preparation of a paper which will first, assess where we have got to in the Conference to date and the implications of the Parties' present position; secondly it would set out for consideration a possible procedure for continuing discussion after the Conference (or after its temporary adjournment) which would in particular provide for bilateral discussion at an appropriate point with the OUP; and thirdly it would indicate so far as we can at this stage, the main thrust of such proposals as the Government itself might make public after the Conference to keep discussion going and provide a basis for further negotiation. As I indicated to you on Wednesday evening, I would welcome it if we could have a meeting of the Official Committee on Northern Ireland to discuss such a paper before it was put to the Ministerial Group. I would hope to have the paper ready by the end of next week i.e 15 March. I should be grateful if your office would consider the possibilities for such a meeting as soon as conveniently thereafter - I am

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afraid that I shall myself be a constraint because of my attendance at the Conference but our offices can no doubt crack that nut.

I am copying this letter to Clive Whitmore for his personal information.

Yours ever.

Ken Stowe.

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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Michael Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
London
SW1.

7 March 1980

f.a. 7/3

Dear Michael,

NORTHERN IRELAND CONFERENCE: FIFTH AND SIXTH WEEKS' SESSIONS (18 and 27/29 FEBRUARY, AND 3/5 MARCH 1980)

Roy Harrington's letter of 8 February set out developments during the sessions in the fourth week of the Conference. Since then the Conference has met for one isolated day in mid-February, and gone on to a block of 9 sessions over a period of 6 working days. During those sessions it has completed the long spell of presentation, with discussion, by each party in turn of its proposals regarding the modus operandi of a devolved administration (item 6 on the Agenda). We then had a short period of discussion of the place of committees in a devolved administration (item 7), to the extent that this had not been discussed under item 6. There then began under the heading of item 8 - role of minorities - a discussion which to a considerable extent traversed again the ground covered under items 6 and 7. This discussion is still not quite completed.

This series of discussions of interlocking matters connected with the main theme of the Conference - how to give the minority community a positive part in a devolved administration - has made the positions of the three parties clearer to each other and to us. But it has not produced any sense of a readiness to explore middle ground (if indeed there is middle ground to explore). A wide gap divides the UDUP with their insistence on the principle of majority rule, with opportunities for participation by the minority in a system of committees where their influence would be limited and majority rule would apply, from the SDLP and Alliance party who each, in their different ways, insist on a devolved administration in which power is shared among all the participating parties. Though different points have been made in many different ways, they can all be seen as variations on that theme.

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There are a number of items on the Agenda yet to be discussed, some of them quite substantial - for example financial arrangements; how to test the acceptability of proposals for devolved administration; and the question of its permanence. Also, there are aspects of earlier items on the Agenda which need to be gone over again. There has been the usual difficulty in fixing dates for meetings, and the only days that we have been able to agree between now and Easter are 19, 21 and 31 March. So we look like being some way from finishing business by Easter. We hope to use some of this vacant time to explore bilaterally with the parties whether they have a greater readiness to compromise, or at least to accept something less than their full demands, than they have displayed at the Conference table.

There has been some progress with the "parallel talks" on matters outside the scope of, but linked with, the subject matter of the Conference, which were agreed to at the beginning of the Conference when the scope of the Agenda was being discussed. There have been two meetings with the SDLP at which they have presented their rather critical views on the security situation and how it is handled. There is to be a further meeting with them next week on economic matters (on which they have already published one paper criticising the Government's record), and there will also be an initial meeting with the Alliance party on security. The DUP rejected the invitation to take part in these discussions.

A number of exchanges during the Sessions just ended underlined the feelings of anxiety and resentment on the part of the three parties taking part about the Official Unionist Party. These were sparked off by local Press reports that the Conference would shortly be adjourned so that there could be bilateral talks with the OUP. The parties at the Conference are concerned lest the OUP, having spurned the opportunity of taking part in the Conference and submitting their ideas to cross examination, should now be given a privileged position in passing judgement on the outcome of the Conference. The Secretary of State gave them an assurance that, while it was necessary for him to maintain contact with the OUP as with other political groups in Northern Ireland, he had no intention of discussing Conference matters with them while the Conference was sitting, and the OUP had been given no promises.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Private Secretaries to other OD Members and to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely
Mike Hopkins

M W HOPKINS

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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

(2)

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Prime Minister

Rather a pity that Sterling Arms could not have been brought to raise this Session six or nine months ago.

Michael Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
London
SW1.

6 March 1980

Dear Michael,

At Cabinet on 20 December the Home Secretary undertook to set in hand an examination of the apparent inability of British arms manufacturers to produce an adequate substitute for the American Ruger Magnum revolvers which the Police Authority for Northern Ireland were having difficulty in obtaining for the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). It was later agreed that the examination should be conducted by the Northern Ireland Office in consultation with the Home Office and the Ministry of Defence.

Further enquiries confirmed that no British arms manufacturer currently produces a hand gun which would be an adequate substitute for the Ruger Magnum revolver preferred by the RUC. But one British firm, Sterling Arms, is considering manufacturing a Magnum revolver, and the RUC have recently seen representatives of the firm to discuss the likely performance of this weapon. If it lives up to all that Sterling Arms are promising, it might well be a very good replacement for the Ruger, and the RUC are sufficiently keen on it to want to defer any final decision on a new gun until they have seen production copies of the Sterling weapon, and have been able to test them thoroughly. Mr. Atkins supports them in this judgement since, inter alia, we should clearly give priority to directing our orders to British industry if we can. On the other hand we must be careful not to press the RUC into buying a weapon until they are certain that it will perform adequately. Production copies will not be available for full testing until about September this year - but the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary is satisfied that the force can absorb the operational problems of having to wait that long for a decision on the new gun.

Mr. Atkins naturally hopes that the Sterling Magnum revolver will turn out to be as good a weapon as its manufacturers intend. But we must be prepared for the possibility that it will not turn out so well. If that happens, the RUC's next preference, on operational grounds, is for a .38 Special revolver. Magnum revolvers, such as the Ruger and the Sterling, have the advantages

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of being revolvers (as opposed to automatic pistols) and of firing high velocity cartridges. A .38 Special revolver also has all the advantages of being a revolver (and is operationally much more satisfactory than the Walther automatic which the RUC has at present) but it uses a lower velocity cartridge which has less penetrating power than the ammunition fired by a Magnum. The .38 Specials originally evaluated by the RUC were of American origin, but the RUC have been engaged since Christmas on a fresh evaluation of non-American guns. The testing of these non-American .38 Specials will be completed before September, and will give us a fallback position in the event of the Sterling proving unsatisfactory.

All this of course assumes that the suspension on the supply of Rugers will not be lifted in the foreseeable future and that, for the reasons I have outlined (including the Sterling's potential), the eventual choice will be between the Sterling and the .38 Special. We shall, however, continue to monitor the situation in the United States, through the FCO, in case of disappointment over the Sterling and a change of heart over the Ruger.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries of all other members of OD and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely

Mike Hopkins

M. W. Hopkins

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

6 March 1980

Thank you for your letter of 6 March warning me that there will be a little delay in the submission to the Prime Minister of the report on the area review of South Armagh.

I am sure that this is all right. It is plainly important that your Secretary of State should have the views of the Chief Constable and the GOC before he puts anything to the Prime Minister.

I am sending copies of this letter to Brian Norbury, George Walden and David Wright.

C. A. WHITMORE

Roy Harrington, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office.

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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Clive Whitmore Esq
10 Downing Street
London SW1

6 March 1980

Dear Clive,

In my letter of 17 January, I explained that we expected the area review of South Armagh to be completed within 5 or 6 weeks. It was a little difficult to predict the timetable, because this was the first such review that Sir Maurice Oldfield and his team had undertaken.

The basic report is now completed, but I thought I should warn you that my Secretary of State will not be in a position to report to the Prime Minister until after 18 March: it is essential for the Chief Constable and the GOC to have an opportunity to consider it, and for the Secretary of State then to discuss it with them, and that discussion cannot take place before that date.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Brian Norbury, George Walden and David Wright.

Yours ever,

Roy Harrington

R A HARRINGTON

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Ireland

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

3 March 1980

I have shown your letter of 25 February to the Prime Minister. She was grateful to you for letting her have this report of your talks with Irish officials.

I am sending copies of this letter to Robert Armstrong and Michael Palliser.

G.A. WHITMORE

K.R. Stowe, Esq., CB CVO

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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
STORMONT CASTLE
BELFAST BT4 3ST

Telephone Belfast (0232) 63011
Telex 74272

PERMANENT UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
K. R. STOWE C.B. CVO

25 February 1980

PUS/1139/B

Prime Minister,

Interesting and mildly encouraging.

27/2

C Whitmore Esq
Private Secretary to
The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Dear Clive,

I visited Dublin on Thursday 21 February for meetings with officials. The talks were useful and there were some interesting matters arising of which you should be aware.

First, it was clear that the new Taoiseach, his near-Presidential style of government, and his thinking about Northern Ireland (he described it as "his first political priority") were exercising the minds of officials. They seemed to be aware that his policy towards Northern Ireland had a large element of sleight of hand in it particularly as regards his declared intention to take an international initiative. I was specifically asked by Dermot Nally to convey to you, with regard to this, the Taoiseach's present view that (notwithstanding what he said in his Ard Fheis speech and press conference afterwards) he envisages only that he will see Mrs Thatcher and have a few words privately with her in the margins of the next European Heads of Government meeting and would suggest then that the next Anglo/Irish bilateral meeting might take place in late April. I deliberately did no more than receive this message and say I would pass it on to you.

Secondly, the discussions on security were satisfactory. Irish Government officials were content, as we were, with the substantial increase in Garda/RUC cooperation. The message was very clear that so far as the new Taoiseach was concerned he was expecting the competent authorities and in particular the Gardai to deal rigorously with crime, including terrorism, wherever they found it without waiting for Ministerial guidance. They had noted the positive speeches which the Chief Constable and the GOC had made in Northern Ireland recently which

/complemented....

C Whitmore Esq (contd)

complemented their attitude, namely that the professional heads of the security forces were getting on with the job without any overbearing from local politicians.

We established in the security discussions that the Republic's Government was reviewing the effectiveness of its law relating to crime and terrorism, just as we were in the North, and agreed that it was desirable for further contact to be made about this so as to avoid one government either getting left behind or pushed out in front of the other.

We spent some considerable time explaining to the officials the nature of the Conference in Northern Ireland and sought particularly to convince them (and may have succeeded in so doing) that the Government was determined to make progress in this matter and it was engaged in serious negotiation with the Parties attending without having a pre-conceived plan to be imposed behind a Conference facade. We took them to task for the Republic's Government's dismissive approach to the Conference and they sought to assure us that it would be wrong to assume that it was in fact dismissive; it was rather, as Dermot Nally put it, that the Conference was inadequate because of its exclusion of Irish unity. We pointed out that if we had not excluded Irish unity from the Agenda there would not have been a Conference at all - they may have taken the point.

Arrangements are being considered for meetings between the Foreign Minister Mr Lenihan and Lord Carrington and, later, my Secretary of State. The Ambassador, Sir Robin Haydon, and I concluded that the Secretary of State's meeting might profitably be put back until the end of March, so as to be distant from the next substantial spell of Conference meetings early in March. We also had in mind that if - as may happen - the Republic wish the Taoiseach's flight of fancy about an international initiative on Irish unity to glide slowly into something less significant, it would be in our interests to allow this to happen. It will be interesting to see whether Mr Lenihan helps such a process by not referring publicly to the "initiative" when he sees Lord Carrington or whether he re-awakens interest by stirring up renewed speculation about a meeting between the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister to discuss Northern Ireland which we should

/then...

C Whitmore Esq (contd)

then have to put down. What is clear and without question is that however Mr Lenihan plays it can be assumed to be how the Taoiseach wants it played.

I am copying this letter to Michael Palliser and Robert Armstrong. My Secretary of State has, of course, seen it.

Yours ever,
Ken Stowe

K R STOWE

Ireland

NORTHERN IRELAND: ADVANCE COPIES

PS

PS/SIR I GILMOUR

PS/PUS

MR FERGUSSON

HD/RID

PUSD (2)

HD/IPD

HD/OID (2)

NEWS DEPT

Sir A Acland

RESIDENT CLERK

N IRELAND OFFICE - PS TO SEC OF STATE
RM 66 A/2 GGS

N IRELAND OFFICE [4 copies]

MR K STOWE

MR MARSHALL

MR P W J BUXTON

CABINET OFFICE - SIR R ARMSTRONG
MR R WADE-GERY
DIO

NO 10 DOWNING STREET

GRS 330

Read in full

CONFIDENTIAL
FM WASHINGTON 252335Z FEBRUARY 1980
TO PRIORITY F C O
TEL NO 832 OF 25 FEBRUARY
INFO NIO BELFAST, NIO LONDON, DUBLIN, BIS NEW YORK,
INFO SAVING BOSTON, CHICAGO, LOS ANGELES, SAN FRANCISCO.

NORTHERN IRELAND: ST PATRICK'S DAY STATEMENT BY THE FOUR HORSEMEN.

1. SPEAKER O'NEILL'S OFFICE HAVE INDICATED THAT WE CAN EXPECT ANOTHER ST PAATRICK'S DAY STATEMENT BY THE FOUR HORSEMEN (O'NEILL, KENNEDY, MOYNIHAN AND CAREY) THIS YEAR.

2. SINCE THEIR FIRST STATEMENT IN 1977 THE FOUR HORSEMEN, WHILE CONSISTENTLY HOSTILE TO THE TERRORISTS AND THEIR IRISH AMERICAN SUPPORTERS, HAVE BECOME PROGRESSIVELY MORE CRITICAL IN THEIR STATEMENTS ON ST PATRICK'S DAY OF BRITISH POLICY AND PERFORMANCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND. LAST YEAR'S STATEMENT (WASHINGTON TEL NO 799 OF 1979), WHICH COINCIDED WITH MISLEADING LEAKS ABOUT THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE BENNETT REPORT AND THE IRWIN AFFAIR, SAID SOME HARSH THINGS ABOUT THE BRITISH HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD AND HMG'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE LACK OF POLITICAL PROGRESS.

3. THE SITUATION THIS YEAR IS MORE PROPITIOUS. ALLEGED BRITISH VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ARE NOT IN THE NEWS: THE MOUNTBATTEN MURDER OPENED MANY AMERICAN EYES TO THE TRUE NATURE OF THE PIRA: AND THE CONFERENCE OF NORTHERN IRELAND POLITICAL PARTIES HAS BEEN SEEN HERE AS AN EARNEST OF HMG'S COMMITMENT TO POLITICAL PROGRESS.

4. AGAINST THIS, THERE HAS BEEN NO LET-UP IN THE IRISH NATIONAL CAUCUS'S PROPAGANDA AND LOBBYING: AND ITS SYMPATHISERS IN THE CONGRESS (WHO DO NOT, OF COURSE, INCLUDE THE FOUR HORSEMEN) ARE SIMPLY BIDING THEIR TIME. O'NEILL MAY WANT TO TAKE CREDIT IN THIS YEAR'S STATEMENT FOR THE SUSPENSION OF SALES OF ARMS FOR THE RUC, AND MR HAUGHEY'S REMARKS ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND IN HIS ARD FHEIS ADDRESS COULD ENCOURAGE THE FOUR HORSEMEN TO DISCOUT THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE AS INADEQUATE TO COME OUT IN SUPPORT OF THE CONCEPT OF A JOINT ANGLO/IRISH/AMERICAN INITIATIVE AIMED AT ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARDS IRISH UNITY (HAUGHY'S SUBSEQUENT MORE RESTRAINED STATEMENTS IN THE DAIL APPEAR TO HAVE GONE UNNOTICED HERE).

5. IT WOULD HELP US TO STEER THE DRAFTERS OF THIS YEAR'S ST PATRICKS DAY STATEMENT IN CONSTRUCTIVE DIRECTIONS IF THERE WERE A SUBSTANTIVE STATEMENT ON NORTHERN IRELAND IN THE NEXT WEEK OR TWO ON WHICH WE COULD DRAW AS EVIDENCE OF HMG'S SERIOUSNESS OF PURPOSE E.G. A STATEMENT POINTING TO PROGRESS IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL TALKS (IF SUCH WERE INDEED THE CASE), AND/OR A REMINDER THAT, AS PRIME MINISTER SAID IN HER INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN THE NEW YORK TIMES ON 12 NOVEMBER LAST, THE GOVERNMENT ARE DETERMINED TO SEE POLITICAL PROGRESS AND WILL NOT LET MATTERS REST EVEN IF THE PARTIES THEMSELVES ARE UNABLE TO REACH AGREEMENT.

6. WHILE THE AMERICAN ANGLE IS ONLY ONE FACTOR IN DETERMINING WHAT CAN BE SAID, I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE A PITY IF HAUGHEY'S ARD FHEIS ADDRESS WERE TO STAND AS THE LAST SUBSTANTIVE STATEMENT ON NORTHERN IRELAND ON THE RECORD BEFORE ST PATRICK'S DAY. IT WOULD HELP TO REDRESS THE BALANCE IF THE ATTENTION OF THE FOUR HORSEMEN COULD BE GAINED BY A POSITIVE STATEMENT BY A BRITISH MINISTER BEFORE THEY FINALISE THEIR OWN STATEMENT. THE CONFERENCE SESSIONS SCHEDULED FOR 3 - 5 MARCH MIGHT PERHAPS PROVIDE A TIMELY OPPORTUNITY: INDEED, A STATEMENT MADE AFTER THE FIRST WEEK IN MARCH MIGHT COME TOO LATE FOR THIS PARTICULAR PURPOSE.

HENDERSON

NNNN

E.R.

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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE MEETING - 22 February 1980

The Note of the Northern Ireland Office Meeting which took place in London Friday, 22 February 1980 is attached.

B A BLACKWELL
Secretary
25 February 1980

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SECRET

E.R.

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NIOM(80)2

NOTE OF A MEETING HELD IN THE NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE ON FRIDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 1980 AT 12.00PM

Present

Mr Marshall	Chairman
Mr Burns Mr Moriarty Mr Buxton Mr Ledlie Mr Bridges Mr Blackwell Mr Benger	NIO
Mr Stephen Mr Stephens Mr Farthing Col Sincock Col Wilson Capt Ramsey	MOD
Mr Newington	FCO

Force Levels

Mr Stephen said that NIO would by now have received Mr Cousins' letter of 19 February proposing that the 8 Brigade roulement unit west of the Foyle should be withdrawn, leaving two resident battalions to cover the Brigade area. It was proposed that this reduction could be achieved by the middle of the year if the Scots Dragoon Guards, who were due to arrive in Northern Ireland between 7 and 10 July, were not despatched. The unit would need to be informed that it was not going to Northern Ireland by 25 March at the latest if it was not to begin its Northern Ireland training. This in turn would require ministerial approval by 21 March and official agreement on the line to put to Ministers would be necessary by 17 March.

Mr Burns said that he would be taking the lead in Belfast and would ensure that a reply was sent to MOD as soon as possible. It would be necessary to obtain a current threat assessment and to consult the RUC which would take about a week; he would then reconvene the Working Group on Force Levels, on which MOD were represented. MOD

would therefore have advance warning of any problems which might arise.

AREA REVIEWS

Mr Ledlie said that the review of the security situation in South Armagh was nearing completion. The original intention was to put the first draft to Sir Maurice Oldfield by 7 March but there had been indications that the procedure might need to be accelerated, in which case the report could be submitted by the end of next week. It was most important that both the Chief Constable and the GOC were given a chance to consider the paper and the Secretary of State would wish to consider what further action, if any, was called for before the paper was put to the Prime Minister and other Ministers. To summarise, he estimated that about two weeks would elapse between the date on which the report was first submitted and the date on which it emerged from Belfast in its final form. Once the South Armagh review had been completed, it was hoped that the three other area reviews, on Londonderry, East Tyrone and Belfast, could be completed rapidly; the aim was to produce the three reports in April, May and June respectively.

In response to the Chairman's question as to how these reviews would tie in with the GOC's review of forces, Mr Stephens said that there would need be no conflict. The GOC's review was taking place in two stages; the first stage covered South Armagh and should be available in mid-March while the general review ordered by CGS should be completed by the end of April. This general review was to be undertaken from the Army's point of view although account would be taken of the views of the RUC and NIO.

IRISH-NAMED REGIMENTS

The Chairman said that the position appeared satisfactory.

Mr Stephen confirmed that no decision on the TAOR for the unit had

yet been taken and that NIO would be consulted.

THE YELLOW CARD

Mr Farthing said that the draft was now with the Treasury Solicitor. The Law Officers were content and the draft had also been sent to the senior Crown Solicitor in Belfast. Mr Newington asked whether there were to be any changes in content. The Chairman replied that there were not; the aim was to make the card more readily understandable for soldiers. He then asked whether the RUC had been consulted. Mr Burns confirmed that the RUC were content; they had examined the issue both with regard to their own Force Orders and with regard to whether the legal position of soldiers using firearms would be altered.

HELICOPTER OVERFLIGHTS

The Chairman said that the arrangement should be operational as from the evening of 22 February; the issue of the air-safety net had been put to one side and it was hoped that an appropriate incident would soon arise to demonstrate the importance of the agreement.

THE TAIOSEACH'S SPEECH AT THE ARD FHEIS

Mr Newington said that he had just been presented with a copy of the speech by the Irish Embassy; no further comment had been made at this meeting. Our primary concern was the impact of the speech on the progress of the Conference and no appreciable impact had been made, although, naturally, there were parts of the speech with which we would not agree. Nothing would be gained, however, by pressing the issue as we had to recognise the Taioseach's political imperatives; he had to appear "greener" than Mr Lynch without unduly antagonising the British, and he had succeeded in this task. Although a new sense of urgency seemed to have been injected into the topic, Mr Haughey had drawn back from this during debate in the Dail and had confirmed that he would not discuss Northern Ireland with the Prime Minister at the forthcoming EEC conference. It seemed that little would come of the proposed approach

to other members of the EEC and the United States. Mr Newington also said that he had a note to the Dublin Embassy in hand and that we had requested that Mr Lenihan should meet Lord Carrington during March. So far, no reply had been received to the Secretary of State's suggestion that he visit Dublin.

THE POLITICAL CONFERENCE

The Chairman said that the Conference had moved from procedural to substantive matters. The SDLP had initially declined to take part until the role of the minority (item 8) was discussed but had decided to take part when item 6 (the modus operandi of government) was reached. Each party was putting forward their ideas and progress had been slow. Alliance had proposed a system of committees with no Cabinet and discussions had taken 2½ days; the DUP made most of the running. The SDLP had proposed a variation on the 1974 scheme and discussion of this proposal had terminated on Monday (18 February). The conference would resume on Wednesday, 27 February and meet on six successive working days. The DUP proposals on item 6 would be discussed first followed by the other items; some of which had been partly covered during discussion of item 6.

The discussions outside the Conference had also begun. There had been two meetings with the SDLP, and Alliance had indicated that they would like to attend. The SDLP had discussed security, the first time that they had agreed to face to face discussions on this topic, and had developed their theory that consensus in government was essential before security could be improved. They had also made allegations of brutality and sectarian partiality against the RUC and the UDR. Mr Burns said that although the first meeting had progressed satisfactorily, the second had degenerated into negative comment on the past. The Chairman said that there was likely to be some disagreement at the next meeting as the SDLP had claimed that the Secretary of State had agreed with the points which they made on security; a fact which we would dispute. The meeting would concern the economy of Northern Ireland and the SDLP

had already published their paper on the subject.

Visit by PUS and Mr Hannigan to Dublin

Mr Newington said that he understood from PS/PUS that the visit had gone well with no surprises.

Date of next meeting

It was provisionally agreed that the date of the next meeting should be Friday, 21 March. This would be confirmed in due course.

CABINET OFFICE

With the compliments of

Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO

Secretary of the Cabinet

C.A. Whitmore, Esq.

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS
Telephone: 01-233 8319

SECRET

Ireland 14

CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 8319

From the Secretary of the Cabinet: Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO

25th February, 1980

Ref. A01513

FMI
26th

Political Developments in Northern Ireland

Thank you for your letter dated 11th February. I understand that the Conference is due to have a number of consecutive sessions at the end of February and beginning of March. Until these have taken place it is probably too soon to reach conclusions on the programme for further progress.

I shall look forward to taking stock with you on the position which has been reached at the end of the first week in March, with the expectation that this is a matter which OD should address before the end of that month. At this stage I should only like to sound one warning note: your programme provides for a good deal of activity in Whitehall between then and Easter, at a time when senior Ministers will be preoccupied with the Budget and with the run up to the meeting of the European Council at the end of March. No doubt you will have that in mind as you look ahead.

I am copying this letter to Michael Palliser, Frank Cooper, Brian Cubbon and Clive Whitmore.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

K.R. Stowe, Esq., CB, CVO

SECRET

Ireland.

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GRPS 560A
CONFIDENTIAL
FM DUBLIN 211300Z FEB 1980
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 90 OF 21 FEBRUARY 1980
AND TO IMMEDIATE NIO (BELFAST)
INFO ROUTINE WASHINGTON BIS NEW YORK AND MODUK

OPENING SESSION OF THE DAIL: QUESTIONS TO THE TAOISEACH

1. WHEN THE DAIL REASSEMBLED YESTERDAY, MR HAUGHEY WAS QUESTIONED ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TOWARDS NORTHERN IRELAND AND CROSS BORDER SECURITY COOPERATION. IN VIEW OF HIS SPEECH AT THE ARD FHEIS ON 16 FEBRUARY AND HIS SUBSEQUENT COMMENTS TO POLITICAL CORRESPONDENTS, THE TONE AND CONTENT OF HIS REPLIES SEEMED SURPRISINGLY RESTRAINED.

2. MR HAUGHEY SAID THAT HE HAD NO PLANS FOR AN EARLY MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER TO DISCUSS NORTHERN IRELAND BUT ADDED THAT HE EXPECTED TO MEET HER IN THE NORMAL WAY AT THE NEXT EUROPEAN COUNCIL AT THE END OF MARCH. HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD USE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE THEIR POLICY DIRECTLY AND THROUGH MINISTERIAL, DIPLOMATIC AND POLITICAL CHANNELS SO THAT, IN COOPERATION WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, AND THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTH THEY COULD BRING ABOUT A JUST, PEACEFUL AND LASTING SOLUTION. DR FITZGERALD, THE FINE GAEL LEADER , PRESSED MR HAUGHEY TO SAY WHETHER HE INTENDED TO INVOLVE THE NORTHERN POLITICAL PARTIES IN ANY DISCUSSIONS HE HAD WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ABOUT THE FUTURE OF NORTHERN IRELAND. MR HAUGHEY SAID THAT HE COULD NOT AT THIS STAGE LAY DOWN PRECONDITIONS BUT THAT THE ELECTED PARTIES WOULD HAVE TO BE FULLY INVOLVED. (MR AUSTIN CURRIE WAS IN THE DAIL AND IS EXPECTED TO MEET MR HAUGHEY SOME TIME TODAY).

3. MR CLUSKEY, THE LABOUR PARTY LEADER, PRESSED MR HAUGHEY FOR A BRITISH DECLARATION OF INTENT TO WITHDRAW AS LAID DOWN IN THE OCTOBER 1975 POLICY DOCUMENT. MR HAUGHEY SAID THAT HE DOUBTED WHETHER AN OPPORTUNITY FOR DETAILED DISCUSSIONS ON THE NORTH WOULD ARISE AT THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL. DR FITZGERALD THEN ASKED HIM WHAT HE INTENDED TO DO ABOUT THE STUDY PAPERS PREPARED BY THE FIANNA FAIL PARTY ON NORTHERN IRELAND. MR HAUGHEY DISMISSED THESE, AND

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/BY

BY IMPLICATION THE 1975 POLICY DOCUMENT, BY SAYING THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON NORTHERN IRELAND WAS QUOTE CLEARLY AND SPECIFICALLY ENUNCIATED UNQUOTE AND QUOTE ENTHUSIASTICALLY ENDORSED UNQUOTE AT LAST WEEKEND'S ARD FHEIS.U

4. MR CLUSKEY RAISED THE QUESTION OF CROSS BORDER SECURITY COOPERATION BY ASKING WHETHER MR HAUGHEY INTENDED TO SEEK A MEETING WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO RENEGOTIATE ALL OR PART OF THE AGREEMENT ON BORDER SECURITY MADE BY HIS PREDECESSOR. MR HAUGEY SAID THAT NO CHANGE WAS CONTEMPLATED. (THE IRISH TIMES REPORT ADDS THE QUALIFYING PHRASE QUOTE AT PRESENT UNQUOTE.)

5. DR FITZGERALD SUGGESTED THAT THE TAOISEACH HAD BEEN UNWISE IN APPEARING TO BE DISMISSIVE TOWARDS THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE IN HIS SPEECH AT THE ARD FHEIS. THE TAOISEACH REPLIED THAT HE HAD BEEN VERY CAREFUL TO BE IN NO WAY DISMISSIVE TOWARDS THE CONFERENCE AND ADDED THAT THIS WAS APPRECIATED BY A LARGE NUMBER OF THOSE INVOLVED. DR FITZGERALD WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE TAOISEACH HAD IGNORED THE QUOTE SECOND-LEVEL DISCUSSIONS UNQUOTE WHICH THE SDLP HAD HAD TO NEGOTIOATE SO HARD TO GET. MR HAUGHEY SAID THAT HIS INFORMATION INDICATED THAT THE SDLP LEADERSHIP WAS QUITE SATISFIED WITH HIS ARD FHEIS SPEECH.

6. WE WILL NOT RECEIVE THE FULL TEXT OF MR HAUGHEY'S REPLIES UNTIL THE DAIL RECORD IS RELEASED NEXT WEEK. MR HAUGHEY'S ANSWERS IN THE DAIL DIFFERED HARDLY AT ALL FROM THE KIND OF ANSWERS WHICH MR LYNCH WOULD HAVE GIVEN TO SIMILAR QUESTIONS. IF ANYTHING, HIS APPROACH WAS CRISPER AND LESS WOOLLY. HOWEVER, IT IS TOO SOON TO DRAW DEFINITE CONCLUSIONS.

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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Permanent Under Secretary

K R Stowe CB, CVO

1159/PUS/L/

11 February, 1980

Prime Minister,

This sets out my view the possible timetable for developments in N. Ireland which Mr Atkins sketched out at his last meeting with you. As Ken Stowe emphasises, it is all very speculative.

AJ
12ii

MT.

Sir Robert Armstrong, KCB, CVO,
Cabinet Office,
WHITEHALL,
London SW1

Hidden Copies: Mr. Marshall
Mr. Hannigan
Mr. Wyatt

Dear Robert.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

You will have seen the summary reports on the activity (or lack of it) at the Conference.

I have been giving thought, with the Secretary of State, to how we proceed following the Conference, and think it might be useful to you and other recipients of this minute to know how we see the possibilities. I emphasise that these thoughts are very tentative, wholly dependent upon as yet unforeseeable developments at or arising from the Conference and, of course, open to substantial amendment, if e.g there are adverse developments on the security front or by way of political unrest.

A working assumption is that (as the Prime Minister put it to my Secretary of State at one of their recent meetings) we will neeed to have a Bill ready for the new session of Parliament in November 1980. Another assumption is that it will be essential, certainly from the stand-point of the Conservative Party itself, to have engaged the Official Unionists in significant discussions about the substance of the Government's proposals at a stage that they will still believe to be formative, i.e when they can be confident that their views will be listened to and taken account of. With these two assumptions in mind it is possible to envisage a programme along these lines:

i) By middle or late March the Conference might be brought to at least an interim conclusion, with a

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Contd.....

reports on its discussions and on the issues of difficulty arising which would be put to Cabinet colleagues and, perhaps in a different form and at a later stage, made public.

ii) The Ministerial Committee (OD) would subsequently consider the report and decide on the next steps, desirably before Easter but subject to progress on (iii) below. There might need to be 2 or 3 meetings to allow for this.

iii) To assist Ministers in their decision, further talks, informal and bilateral would be undertaken with each of the 4 main parties including the OUP.

iv) It would be necessary at about the same time to ensure that the Opposition and Dublin and Washington were adequately briefed on where matters stood.

v) The Government might then (after Easter) publish a White Paper which

a) reports the outcome of the Conference;

b) sets out the substance of the main and/or outstanding issues (it is clear that the Conference's own papers will at least serve this purpose);

c) indicates possible solutions to them, and

d) sets out a procedure and timetable for further consultations designed to enable a Bill to be prepared for introduction in the next session of Parliament.

vi) This White Paper could (depending on public reaction and the Parliamentary timetable) be used as a basis for a general debate on the issues in Parliament during May.

vii) Thereafter bilateral discussions would be initiated or resumed (depending upon action taken at (iii)) with the 4 main parties in order to establish whether it is possible to move them closer together (the obvious assumption being that the Conference itself had ended with a substantial gap identified but unresolved). Depending upon the progress of these bilateral discussions, in which the OUP would again need to be included, it might then be desirable and practicable to re-convene the Conference at the end of June or early in July for an intensive period of consultation, i.e not on the open-ended basis of the present Conference, for a further attempt at resolution of the problems before OD and Cabinet

take final decisions at the end of July. The hope would be that the OUP would then participate.

viii) In order to prepare a Bill, with a covering White Paper, for introduction in November, decisions would be needed before the House rose for the summer recess. Bearing in mind that the next elections take place in Northern Ireland, in any case, in May 1981 for local government, there may yet be a case for deferring publication of the Government's Bill so that it did not intrude significantly into those elections - of course there may be arguments emerging which point in precisely the opposite direction, i.e in favour of early introduction of a Bill which could be brought to Royal Assent before the elections took place, so that it was a 'fait accompli'.

I emphasise that this is all very speculative.

We shall need to review all the options as the Conference proceeds, but my guess is that my Secretary of State would in any case need to consult colleagues about mid-March; and it would then be desirable to have a meeting of the official Committee first.

I am copying this letter to Brian Cubbon, Frank Cooper, Michael Palliser and (in connexion with the Secretary of State's regular meetings with the Prime Minister to debrief on the Conference) to Clive Whitmore.

Yours ever.

Ken Stowe.

K.R. STOWE

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

Ireland

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Michael Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
London
SW1.

8 February 1980

Pl. Mark 8/2

Dear Michael,

NORTHERN IRELAND CONFERENCE: FOURTH WEEK'S SESSIONS (4 - 5 FEB 1980)

The Conference met for two full days, which it devoted to serious and detailed discussion of what is in effect the heart of its Agenda - how to give the minority community a positive part in a devolved administration.

Of the four sessions, the first was devoted to finishing the examination of the Alliance Party proposals for a committee-style partnership administration. The Alliance plan, though it can be subjected to serious criticism, is well worked out and has stood up well under scrutiny; their moderate and thought-out approach has served as a valuable catalyst to the proceedings of the Conference.

The remaining three sessions were spent on an exposition and subsequent examination of the SDLP proposals, which are for a Cabinet-style partnership administration, similar to, but distinguishable from, the 1973/4 power Sharing Executive. With some prompting from the chair, the SDLP have laid out a good detailed case and have answered questions equably and with some skill and confidence.

In the course of their exposition they made some telling criticisms of the unwillingness of many Unionist dominated District Councils to share power with representatives of other parties, in contrast to the more generous approach of District Councils where the Unionists are not in the majority.

The UDUP have still not had to lay their cards upon the table, and have been playing an increasingly defensive game. They unsuccessfully attempted to force the SDLP to declare whether

their power-sharing proposals were conditional upon acceptance of links with the Republic. Understandably the SDLP are not yet showing their hand in this respect.

The Conference does not meet again until Monday 18 February, when there is a single day's meeting only. But in the following week we have been able to pursuade delegates to meet on Wednesday, Thursday (morning) and Friday, 27 to 29 February (though some of the talks will for some sessions be represented by a deputy). There will also be meetings on Monday to Wednesday of the following week (3 to 5 March), giving a clear run of 6 days in which we hope to make substantial progress, notably in getting the UDUP to present their proposals for examination. By 5 March it should be easier to gauge what are the prospects for agreement at the Conference and in what kind of time scale.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Private Secretary to each member of OD Committee and to David Wright.

Yours ever,

Roy Harrington.

R. A. Harrington

Ireland

Original in G/R

MRS

cc NIO.

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

6 February 1980

Dear Jim,

Thank you for your letter of 25 January about the Conference on the Government of Northern Ireland.

I am glad to say that the Conference is making steady progress in the thorough examination of the difficult matters before it, and the circumstances envisaged in your letter did not arise. It is certainly not the case that legislation is already being prepared or that the content of such legislation is already settled. The Government will formulate its own proposals for legislation in the light of the outcome of the Conference, and its other discussions.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Thatcher

James Kilfedder, Esq., M.P.

PS TO PM

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Prime Minister
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STATE DEPARTMENT REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS:
UNITED KINGDOM.

1. THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS ON HUMAN RIGHTS WORLDWIDE IS PUBLISHED TODAY. WE HAVE BEEN ASKING FOR A COPY OF THE SECTION ON THE UNITED KINGDOM FOR SOME TIME BUT THE STATE DEPARTMENT SAY THEY WERE PREVENTED BY CONGRESSIONAL RULES FROM GIVING IT TO US UNTIL THIS MORNING. THEY HAD HOPED TO TELEGRAPH THE TEXT TO THE US EMBASSY IN LONDON IN ADVANCE BUT PRODUCTION DIFFICULTIES APPARENTLY MADE THIS IMPOSSIBLE.

2. THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT (WHICH HAS TO BE SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS EACH YEAR UNDER THE TERMS OF THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT) COVERS VIRTUALLY EVERY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD. AS IN THE PAST, THIS YEAR'S REPORT ON THE UNITED KINGDOM DEALS PRINCIPALLY WITH NORTHERN IRELAND. IT IS FACTUAL, BALANCED AND UNPOLEMICAL IN TONE. THE MAIN DIFFERENCES COMPARED WITH 1979 LIE IN DESCRIPTIONS OF EVENTS OVER THE LAST YEAR, EG THE BENNETT COMMITTEE REPORT AND SUBSEQUENT ACTION AND THE HANDLING OF THE MAZE PRISON PROTEST. THERE IS ALSO A SECTION ON THE NORTHERN IRELAND ECONOMY AND MORE DETAILED COVERAGE THAN HITHERTO OF LEGISLATION COVERING CIVIL AND POLITICAL LIBERTIES, INCLUDING RACIAL DISCRIMINATION.

3. THE REPORT OPENS WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE LEADING ROLE PLAYED BY BRITAIN IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES. IT SAYS THAT THE LONG TRADITIONS OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE ON MATTERS OF FAIR PLAY, LEGAL SAFEGUARDS AND INDIVIDUAL

RIGHTS ARE QUOTE BROUGHT TO A TEST BY THE SITUATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND, WHERE THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT STRIVES TO PRESERVE PUBLIC SAFETY AND COMBAT TERRORIST VIOLENCE WITHIN A SHARPLY DIVIDED COMMUNITY WHILE ENSURING RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS FOR THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND UNQUOTE. THE REPORT DESCRIBES THE CASES BROUGHT AGAINST THE UNITED KINGDOM BY THE IRISH GOVERNMENT IN THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, THE COURT'S REJECTION OF CHARGES OF TORTURE AGAINST THE UK, AND THE BRITISH UNDERTAKING THAT THE QUOTE FIVE TECHNIQUES UNQUOTE WOULD NOT BE USED AGAIN. A SECTION ON THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND BENNETT REPORTS DESCRIBES THE DECISIONS OF THE DPP IN THE CASES HIGHLIGHTED BY BENNETT AS WELL AS THE ACCEPTANCE BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT OF THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON POLICE PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES AND THE FACT THAT THESE QUOTE HAVE BEEN OR ARE IN THE PROCESS OF BEING IMPLEMENTED UNQUOTE. THE REPORT ALSO DESCRIBES THE ALLEGATIONS MADE BY DR ROBERT IRWIN, TOGETHER WITH THE STEPS TAKEN TO INVESTIGATE DR IRWIN'S CHARGES.

4. THE REPORT DESCRIBES IN SOME DETAIL THE ABANDONMENT OF SPECIAL CATEGORY STATUS AND THE ORIGINS OF THE MAZE PRISON PROTEST. IT BRINGS OUT CLEARLY THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN STATUTORY RIGHTS AND NON STATUTORY PRIVILEGES AND THE STRICT ADHERENCE TO PRISONERS' RIGHTS TO TAKE EXERCISE. IT NOTES THAT THE POSITION ADOPTED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS SUPPORTED BY PARLIAMENT AND BOTH MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES. IT DOES NOT GIVE DETAILS OF THE QUOTE DIRTY UNQUOTE PROTEST, BUT CONCLUDES QUOTE PRISON AUTHORITIES ROUTINELY ROTATE PRISONERS TO CLEAN CELLS, TO REDUCE THE RISKS FROM UNHYGIENIC CONDITIONS, WHICH, AS THEY POINT OUT, ARE CREATED SOLELY BY THE ACTIONS OF THE PRISONERS THEMSELVES UNQUOTE.

5. UNDER THE HEADING QUOTE ARBITRARY ARREST OR IMPRIOSONMENT UNQUOTE THE REPORT COVERS THE WORKINGS OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND (EMERGENCY PROVISIONS) ACT OF 1973 AND THE PREVENTION OF TERRORISM (TEMPORARY PROVISIONS) ACT OF 1976. IT NOTES THE DECLARED INTENTION OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND STANDING ADVISORY COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONSIDER THE CONTINUING NEED FOR EMERGENCY POWERS BUT MAKES NO (NO) REFERENCE TO THE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMISSION AS DESCRIBED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON 11 DECEMBER.

/6. A NEW

6. A NEW SECTION IN THE REPORT ON THE NORTHERN IRELAND ECONOMY TALKS OF QUOTE STRONG ALLEGATIONS OVER THE YEARS OF SUBSTANTIAL VARIANCES BETWEEN THE ECONOMIC STATUS AND PRIVILEGES OF THE PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND UNQUOTE AND STATES THAT, DESPITE EFFORTS BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO REDRESS THE IMBALANCE, QUOTE THE PROTESTANT PART OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND COMMUNITY CONTINUES TO BE MORE PROSPEROUS, TO BE ON THE AVERAGE MORE HIGHLY SKILLED, AND TO CONTROL MOST OF THE ECONOMY UNQUOTE. MENTION IS MADE OF LARGE ECONOMIC SUBSIDIES TO NORTHERN IRELAND AND TO WHAT IS DESCRIBED AS THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S EXPECTATION THAT AN IMPROVED ECONOMIC SITUATION WILL HAVE A FAVOURABLE IMPACT ON THE POLITICAL PROBLEM. BUT THE REPORT CONCLUDES THAT QUOTE THE LONG TERM ECONOMIC PROSPECT IS STILL UNCERTAIN UNQUOTE.

7. THE SECTION IN THE REPORT ON RACIAL DISCRIMINATION REFERS TO QUOTE OCCASIONAL AND WELL-PUBLICISED DISTURBANCES ARISING FROM RACIAL FRICTIONS UNQUOTE, BUT ADDS THAT RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN ALL FIELDS IS EFFECTIVELY BARRED BY LEGISLATION AND CONCLUDES THAT THERE IS NO MAJOR DISTINCTION BETWEEN LEGAL NORMS AND PRACTICES REGARDING MINORITY RIGHTS.

8. PRESS ATTENTION ON THE REPORT HERE HAS SO FAR FOCUSSED ON IRAN AND ON THE REPORT'S CRITICISM OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES SINCE THE OVERTHROW OF THE SHAH. THE STATE DEPARTMENT ANTICIPATE LITTLE INTEREST IN THE SECTION ON THE UNITED KINGDOM ALTHOUGH THE IRISH NATIONAL CAUCUS WILL PROBABLY AS USUAL, ATTACK THE REPORT AS A WHITEWASH.

/9. WE

9. WE IMAGINE THAT ANY CRITICISM OF THE REPORT AT HOME IS LIKELY TO CENTRE IN THE FACT THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT ARE COMMENTING AT ALL ON OUR AFFAIRS. WITHOUT GETTING INTO SUBSTANCE, IT MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE FOR NEWS DEPARTMENT TO SAY THAT THEY UNDERSTAND THE STATE DEPARTMENT ARE REQUIRED BY LAW TO SUBMIT AN ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT TO CONGRESS: THAT BRITAIN IS INCLUDED ALONG WITH OTHER NATO COUNTRIES (AND ALMOST EVERY OTHER COUNTRY IN THE WORLD): THAT THIS YEAR'S REPORT FOLLOWS THE PATTERN OF PREVIOUS YEARS IN GIVING A FACTUAL AND BALANCED ACCOUNT OF DEVELOPMENTS OVER THE LAST YEAR AND THAT IT HIGHLIGHTS THE LONG TRADITIONS OF RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

10. FULL TEXT FOLLOWS BY BAG.

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13

Ireland

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

5 February, 1980.

Protection of Security Forces in Northern Ireland

The Prime Minister has seen your letter to me of 4 February on this subject and its enclosure. She is grateful for the trouble put into the preparation of the report. She has made no comment on its substance.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Roy Harrington (Northern Ireland Office), and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

D.B. Omand, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

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12

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-~~218 7022~~ 2111/3

MO 19/3

4th February 1980

(2)

Prime Minister

Dear Michael,

PROTECTION OF SECURITY FORCE BASES
IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Thank you for your letter of 28th January about the threat from mortar attacks on Security Force bases in Northern Ireland. The Prime Minister's views were of course conveyed to the GOC Northern Ireland who asked the Commander Land Forces to prepare a report for the Prime Minister on this subject.

I attach a copy of Major General Glover's report. I hope that it will provide reassurance on the one hand that all reasonable steps are being taken to counter the threat of mortar attacks, and on the other hand that there has certainly been no complacency in attitudes to this threat either on the part of commanders in Northern Ireland or of the MOD and its R and D establishments which have been working on this problem.

If the Prime Minister would like to have any of this material further developed, we would of course be very ready to arrange this.

I am sending copies of this letter and enclosure to Roy Harrington (Northern Ireland Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,

David Omand

(D B OMAND)

M Alexander
10 Downing Street

SECRET

MORTAR PROTECTION FOR SECURITY FORCE BASES

BACKGROUND

1. There are a total of 19 'border' Security Force (SF) bases in the Province, ten of which are police stations in which soldiers are stationed to provide protection. Each one of these bases is a potential target for a heavy mortar attack. To date (30 Jan 80) there have been 74 mortar attacks of all varieties against SF bases throughout the Province, since December 1972. The newest mortar, the Mark 10, was used against RUC Newtownhamilton on 19 Mar 79, resulting in the death of one soldier and the wounding of 5 soldiers and 2 RUC from shrapnel.

2. In October 1976 the decision was made to provide mortar protection at RUC Crossmaglen. This decision arose from the mortar attack on the Crossmaglen base on 31 August 1976 in which 6 members of the SF were injured.

3. The work started in November 1976. One troop of Royal Engineers has been continually involved in the build since then. Phases 1 and 2 of a 4 phase build are now complete. The current phase (3) is the rebuild of the RUC station on behalf of the Dept of Finance. The complete build is due to be completed in 1981.

4. As a result of a mortar attack on RUC Forkill on 23 January 1978 in which 10 members of the SF were injured, it was decided that mortar proof accommodation be built there also. To date Phase 1 of a 3 phase build has commenced. This build is also due to be completed in 1981.

AIM

5. The aim of this paper is to outline the mortar threat to SF bases and to describe the measures taken to counter this threat.

THE THREAT

6. The introduction of the Mark 10 mortar, firing a bomb weighing 100 lbs containing 40 lbs of explosive, poses an increased threat to all SF bases. The blast effect of the bomb is equivalent to 12 lbs TNT; the mortar protection of Forkill and Crossmaglen buildings required some strengthening to counter the increased kinetic energy of the weapon.

7. The Scientific Adviser to the GOC Northern Ireland (SCIAD) has estimated that the greatest weight of bomb likely to be used would be about 150 lbs all up weight and would contain up to 80 lbs of HME.* This would give a blast equivalent of 24 lbs TNT. SCIAD has agreed that it would be most unlikely for technical and supply reasons for PIRA to use commercial explosive for their mortars. As a result the maximum blast effect which needs to be considered

* Home Made Explosive

is 24 lbs TNT and the maximum weight of the bomb is 150 lbs. These two parameters constitute the "design threat".

8. PIRAs use of heavy mortars (Marks 8-10)have been confined to date to the border areas:

Base	No of attacks		
	Mk 8	Mk 9	Mk 10
Crossmaglen	1+1 NK	1	
Forkill		1	
Bessbrook	1		
Newtownhamilton			1

9. Use of the heavy mortar usually starts with a hijacking of a suitable flat bed lorry and supporting cars in the border area or in the Republic. The lorry is then fitted out with the mortar, and a prefabricated base plate and firing mechanism. Within about 3 hours of the hijacking the lorry is brought to within range of the selected target, an operation that requires up to 20 men in supporting roles. The lorry is parked at a previously selected base plate position, the mortar initiated electrically according to a timed programme and the PIRA team make their escape to the Republic. Because of the complexity of the operation and the number of men involved, it is unlikely that a heavy mortar would be used so far from the border that the escape of the supporting team would be prejudiced.

OPTIONS IN THE LIGHT OF THE THREAT

10. The PIRA mortar threat poses options, which are themselves not mutually exclusive. These are:

a. To deter an attack.

b. To save lives should an attack occur.

DETERRENCE

11. In considering deterrence, it is first necessary to list the basic factors that govern whether or not an attack is likely to take place. An attack is only likely to take place if:

a. There is a suitable firing point (that is a firing point at the desired range, with suitable aiming marks, and concealed from view from those within the base).

b. Terrorist escape routes are clear (that is a route exists offering a run, free of interference, to a safe point by the time the first bombs have been fired, or shortly after this time).

12. From these two points it is apparent that a reasonable prediction may be made of those bases vulnerable to attack, and the way in which they might be attacked. Deterrent measures may then be considered. Essentially, such measures will fall into one of two categories:

a. Protective surveillance of probable mortar firing points.

b. The tasking of external patrols and blocks to disrupt any contemplated attack.

13. The Surveillance Cell HQNI has carried out a survey to assess the mortar threat to all border bases. An example of such a survey carried out at Newtownhamilton is at Annex A.

14. These surveys are based on a system of logical analysis:

a. First. Areas of hard standing within mortar range of a base that could form mortar base plate positions are plotted.

b. Second. Those areas within the arc of fire of occupied sangars are disregarded.

c. Third. Those positions remaining are examined to see which are within sight of some aiming mark in the base (such as a radio mast) or a similar prominent mark on line to the base.

15. From this analysis can be worked out the remaining most likely firing positions. A combination of patrols, surveillance devices and barriers can then be deployed to cover these areas or deny access to them.

16. Therefore if deterrent measures are considered carefully, the mortar threat can be reduced to a low probability. Some element of risk will always remain, but that risk will be reduced as much as possible.

PROTECTION

17. No deterrent system can offer a guarantee of immunity from attack. It is therefore necessary to consider how lives may be saved, or injuries reduced, in the event of an attack. In considering this, the options are:

a. Full mortar protection (vide Crossmaglen and Forkill).

b. Limited protection.

c. Tactical considerations.

18. Full Protection. Full protection is expensive in terms of engineer resources and in terms of real costs; and such a construction programme takes a long time to complete. This solution has now been rejected for any base other than Crossmaglen and Forkill; to which regular resupply convoys carrying engineer stores are deployed. These operations last up to 5 days and involve major Brigade picket and route clearance operations.

a. Crossmaglen.

(1) The Phase 1 building has a weldmesh stand-off screen to catch and detonate bombs. This screen required strengthening to cope with the increased kinetic energy of the design threat described. MVEE designed and trialled a suitable screen consisting of an 8mm mild steel plate supported on 1.7m high scaffolding towers and covered with a layer of sandbags. The material for the screen was readily available and cost about £10,000. This cost was met by Engineer funds already allocated. No additional resources from outside the Province were needed to complete the project. The erection of the screen is now complete.

(2) PSA (DCES) who designed the Phase 2 building advised that the roof of the building would also require strengthening to cope with the design threat. Consequently the MVEE[a] designed screen was extended over both the Phase 1 and 2 structures.

b. Forkill.

(1) The walls of the Forkill building were designed to provide protection against a Mark 9 mortar bomb exploding one metre away from them. Such a mid-air explosion is considered by RARDE[b] to be most unlikely. Without redesign these walls afford complete protection against the design threat[c] exploding 2m away. In view of the unlikelihood of such a detonation it is considered that this level of protection is adequate.

(2) Minor strengthening of the sacrificial storey cladding[d] and the base blast wall was necessary to meet the design threat. There will be no significant increase in the cost of the project and no increase in the time scale.

c. Risk. During the building of the bases above, a greater number of soldiers are concentrated and therefore at greater risk in the short term. As the build continues the target area increases.

19. Limited Protection. Limited Protection covers a wide range of measures from construction short of full protection to, at the simplest level, the provision of blast wall and open shelters. It is clear at once that no common design could be envisaged as standard protection for any base. It is also clear that a survey of any base would lead to the suggestion of a number of simple, effective protective measures which could reduce casualties in the event of a mortar attack. A study on limited protection was carried out by Commander Royal Engineers. Work is now complete in providing blast walls and shelter trenches at all bases assessed to be under threat in that study.

Notes: a. MOD Military vehicles and Engineering Establishment, Chertsey
b. Royal Armament R & D Establishment, Fort Halstead
c. This is the threat described in para 7 above.
d. See plan at Annex B

20. Tactical Considerations. The mortar threat to border bases, particularly in South Armagh, is treated extremely seriously. In order to reduce this threat a 24 hour patrol coverage of the immediate area is a standing operational procedure. In Forkill, for example, this deterrence presence requires a dedicatedplatoon, and in Crossmaglen two platoons are required. This manpower, committed purely to the defence of the base, is a permanent requirement. There is consequently the danger of dissipating one's effort on purely defensive tasks. Too little local patrolling and the bases are in danger of mortar attack. Too much patrolling and the patrols themselves, and not the bases, become the target for snipers and bombs. There is therefore a fine balance to be drawn on the level of local patrolling carried out. This balance is the decision of the local commander, based on the threat and intelligence available at the time.

SAFETY DRILLS

21. Drills required to take cover from a mortar attack are well known to all soldiers; they are taught during pre-Northern Ireland training and rehearsed in all the border bases. An attack warning system exists in every border base. In combination with the simple limited physical protection of blast walls and the like, such drills will save lives.

CONCLUSIONS

22. The threat of mortar attack is markedly reduced by selective patrolling and the use of surveillance devices. The costs are minimal compared to the costs of full mortar proofed accommodation (something in the order of £12,000 per base against £900,000 per base).

23. Should an attack occur, casualties are limited by:

a. Simple, low cost protection against blast, as has been used effectively in the past (as a matter of normal soldiering) against such a threat.

b. Local patrolling to deter the terrorist or make it necessary for him to engage the target from an unsatisfactory position.

c. Adopting well thought out and well rehearsed anti-mortar drills in the event of an attack.

ANNEX
A. Surveillance Survey - Newtownhamilton

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ANNEX A

1039/4/1

SURVEILLANCE SURVEY
NEWTOWNHAMILTON

INTRODUCTION

1. The Newtownhamilton SF base was mortared from a lorry parked as shown on 19 Mar 79. (Annex A).

2. Two areas, The Common and Newry Road, are considered to be the most likely mortar firing points as:

a. They cannot be seen from existing sangars.

b. They can see aiming marks within the base.

c. The lines of fire do not pass over occupied buildings.

3. The firing points in Rathole Lane and the northern end of Armagh Street are considered possible but unlikely for the lines of fire pass over occupied buildings.

REQUIREMENT

4. The surveillance requirement is to provide observation over The Common and Newry Road.

PROPOSED CORNER SANGAR

5. OC D Company 3 QUEENS has requested that a sangar be built within the base at the corner at the junction of Shamble Lane and Newry Street:

a. To improve the view of possible mortar FPs east of the Fire Station.

b. To improve the close protection of the permanent VCP outside the SF base.

6. Comment

a. There is already a sangar at ground level on the southwest side of the junction of Shamble Lane and Newry Street. Its field of view and fire along both is adequate for the close protection of the VCP. It is understood however that the sentry is also required to spot for Vengeful as so becomes distracted from his primary protective task during periods of heavy traffic.

b. The cover from view screen at the corner is approximately 10 m high. From its top Newry Road between the shop and the Masonic Hall cannot be seen. The view onto the corner from a sangar at that height would be very restricted and a sentry in it would not be able to assist in the close protection of the VCP. He would be able to see the Newry Road beyond the Masonic Hall, but the range of 200 m would prevent him using his weapon effectively at targets there.

CCTV

7. From the top of the cover from view screen (10 m above ground level) at position A it is possible to see most of The Common (as shown) and the roofs of cars moving down Newry Road between the Shops and the Masonic Hall.

8. A steerable camera on this site, but elevated to 20 m above ground level would be able to see at street level in this area. Complete coverage of The Common would still not be possible but the coverage would be better than now.

9. To obtain complete coverage of the Common a second camera would be required in position B. It is understood that this has already been investigated but that there are legal and CR difficulties over the proposed site.

10. The CCTV already covering the helipad cannot see any of these areas nor can it be modified to do so. It is already monitored in the Ops Room, but if a second TV is to be placed there, the Helipad monitor should be in the Guard Room.

SUMMARY

11. Observation is required of The Common and Newry Road beyond the Fire Station.

12. The proposed corner sangar would not be able to observe Newry Road.

13. A CCTV camera at A would cover all Newry Road and most of the Common.

14. A CCTV camera at B would cover the whole of the Common but there are problems in acquiring its site.

15. The security of the VCP could be improved by double manning the sangar at the junction of Shamble Lane and Newry Street at busy periods; one man to spot for Vengeful, one man to act as cover sentry.

RECOMMENDATION

16. A CCTV camera (specification at Annex B) should be erected at A to observe Newry Road and most of the Common.

17. As a second priority, and after the installation and evaluation of the camera at A, the installation of a camera at B to cover the whole of the Common should be considered.

18. The control position for the Helipad CCTV should be moved to the Guard Room.

IMPLEMENTATION

19. This CCTV system will be included in the consolidated requirement under preparation within this HQ.

N H H ADAMS
Major
GSO 2 Surveillance

30 Apr 79

Annexes:

A. Approaches to Newtownhamilton SF Base. (Map)
B. Proposed CCTV Specification - Newtownhamilton.

/TC

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ANNEX A TO 1039/4/1
DATED 30 APRIL 1979

NEWTOWNHAMILTON SF BASE APPROACHES

LEGEND

Possible mortar FPs, not visible to existing sangars

Effective Mortar Range

SF Base Perimeter

Existing Sangars

Camera Position B

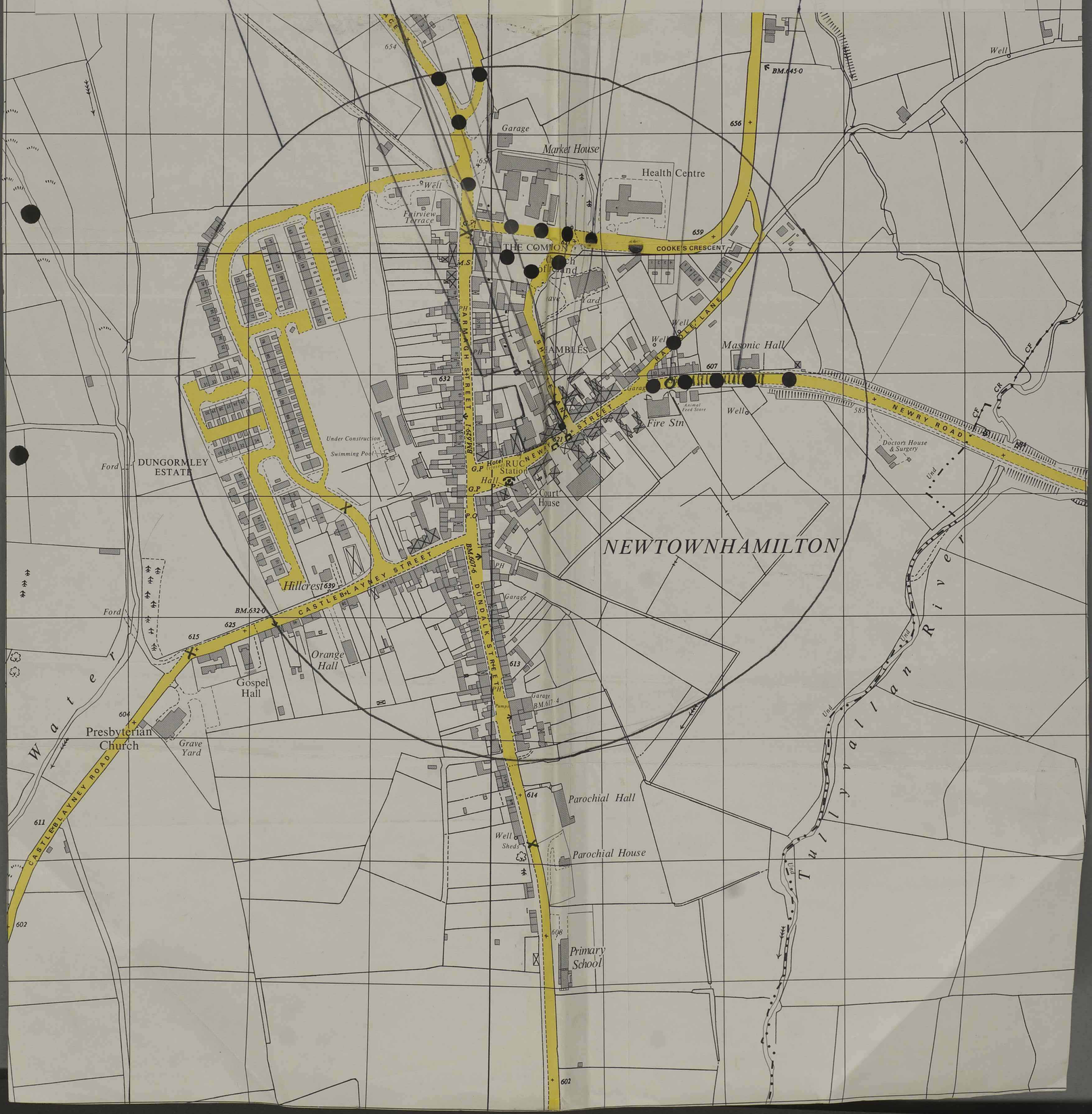
Left Limit of Visibility over The Common from A

Camera Position A

Proposed Corner Sangar

Mortar FP used 19 Mar 79

Area not visible from proposed Corner Sangar



ANNEX B TO 1039/4/1
DATED APR 79

PROPOSED CCTV SPECIFICATION
NEWTOWNHAMILTON

1. Camera. COTRON NIGHTGUARD.

2. Lens. CANON 15 - 150 mm zoom with x 2 converter.

3. Remote Control. MOLYNX BOXER pan and tilt head.

4. Environmental Housing. MOLYNX housing with washer, wiper and demister.

5. Monitor. COTRON PM 24B. Monitor and remote control position in Army Ops Room.

6. Camera Mounting. The height of the vertical girder at the north end of the fence beside Shamble Lane, beside the rear gate, should be extended to 20 m above ground level. The camera should be mounted on top of it with:

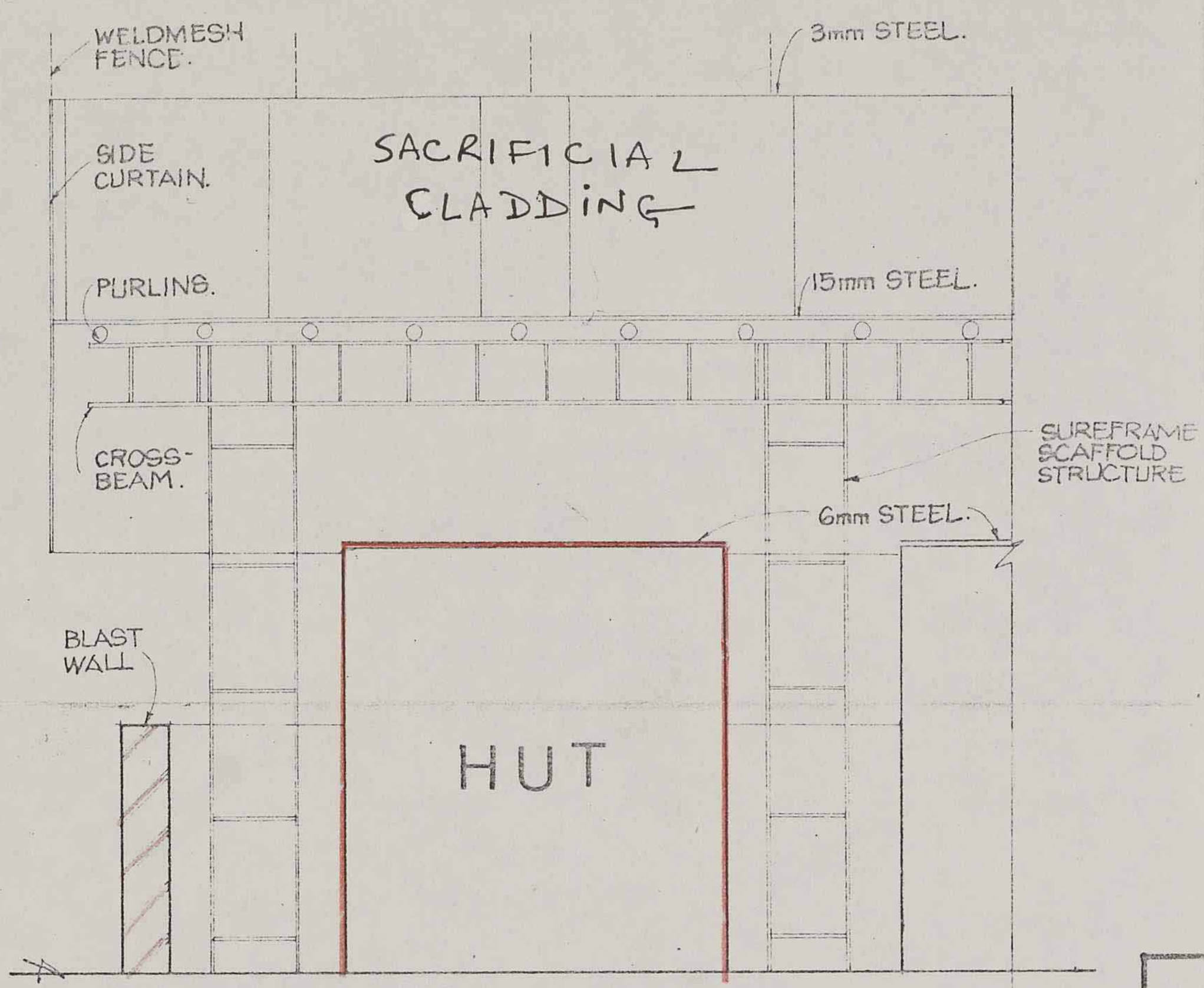
a. Traverse. As near 360° as possible. Dead arc to be centred on 260° grid.

b. Elevation. Plus 30° to minus 80°.

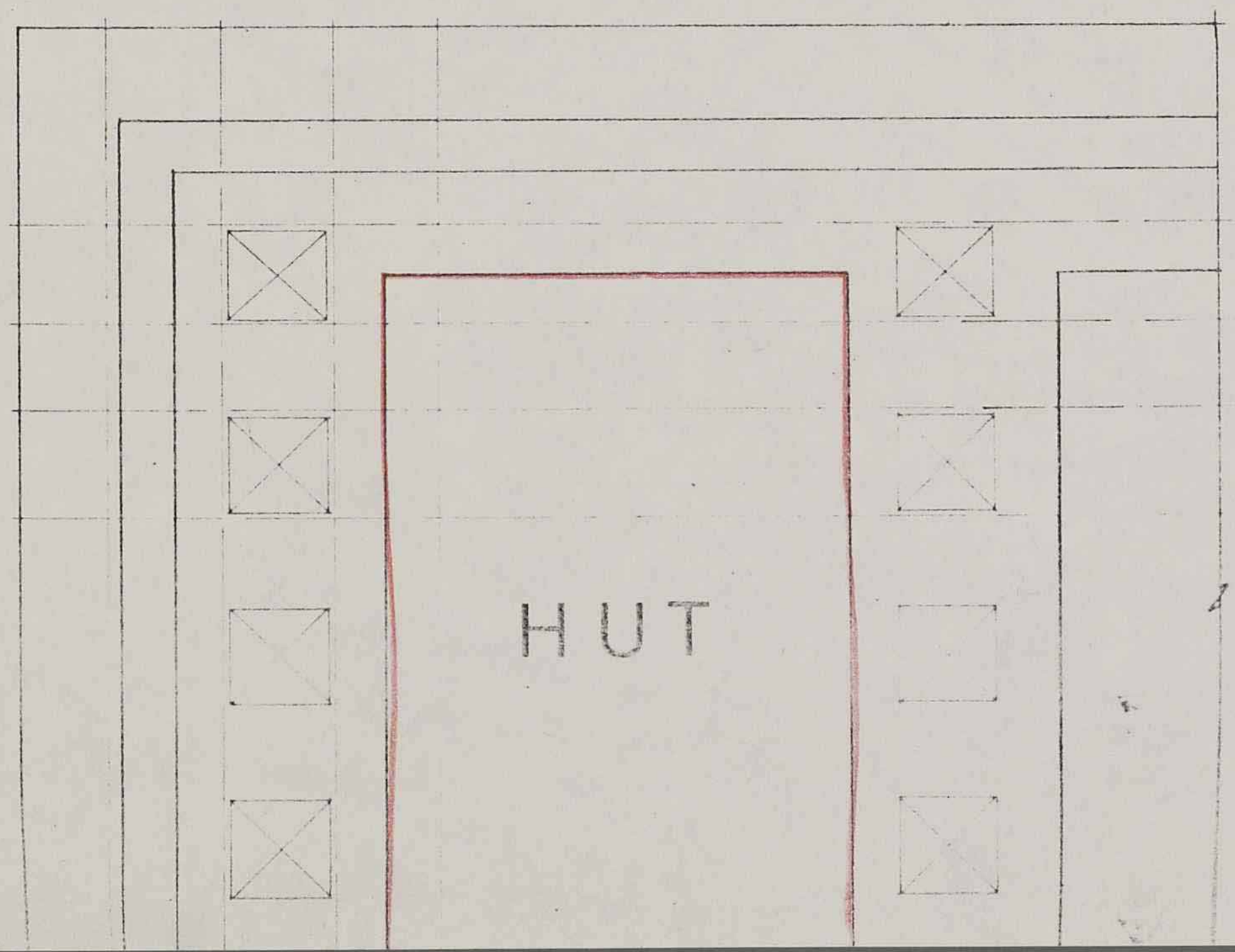
7. Power. Mains power is to be provided to the camera.

8. Video Cable. Approximately 100 m from camera site to Army Ops Room.

ANNEX B



TYPICAL ELEVATION
NTS



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N IRELAND OFFICE [4 copies]

MR K STOWE

MR MARSHALL

MR P W J BUXTON

CABINET OFFICE - SIR ~~J HUNT~~ A ACLAND

MR R WADE-GERY

DIO

NO 10 ~~DOWNING STREET~~

MG

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FM WASHINGTON 311825Z JANUARY 1980

TO IMMEDIATE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

TELEGRAM NUMBER 489 OF 31 JANUARY 1980,

INFO PRIORITY DUBLIN, B I S NEW YORK, N I O LONDON, N I O BELFAST.

DUBLIN TELEGRAMS NUMBERS 46 AND 47: ARMS FOR THE R U C

1. THE IDEA THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER FOR THE U S GOVERNMENT TO HAVE USED ITS BAN ON ARMS FOR THE R U C AS A BARGAINING COUNTER FOR THE CLOSURE OF CASTLEREAGH MAY CONCEIVABLY HAVE BEEN PUT INTO DR FITZGERALD'S MIND BY PEOPLE HE SAW HERE. BUT I DOUBT IT REFLECTS THE THINKING OF SPEAKER O'NEILL (WHO, AS YOU KNOW, REMAINS THE KEY AMERICAN FIGURE ON THIS ISSUE) AND IT DID NOT, AS FAR AS WE CAN ESTABLISH, COME FROM HIM.

2. O'NEILL TOOK THE 1978 AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT VERY BADLY AND WAS ONLY MARGINALLY REASSURED BY H M G'S POSITIVE REACTION TO THE BENNETT RECOMMENDATIONS. BUT HIS OBJECTIONS TO PROVIDING U S ARMS FOR THE R U C REST ON WIDER GROUNDS THAN ALLEGATIONS OF IMPROPRIETIES AT CASTLEREAGH. IT REMAINS MY VIEW, BORNE OUT BY WHAT PEOPLE CLOSE TO HIM HAVE TOLD US, THAT O'NEILL MIGHT CONTEMPLATE MODIFYING HIS POSITION ON THE ADVICE OF SOMEONE LIKE JOHN HUME SPEAKING AS

AT CASTLEREAGH. IT REMAINS MY VIEW, DURING GUY BY WHAT PEOPLE CLOSE TO HIM HAVE TOLD US, THAT O'NEILL MIGHT CONTEMPLATE MODIFYING HIS POSITION ON THE ADVICE OF SOMEONE LIKE JOHN HUME SPEAKING AS A MEMBER OF AN ELECTED EXECUTIVE IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

3. THE ARMS ISSUE DID NOT COME UP IN FITZGERALD'S DISCUSSIONS WITH CONGRESSMAN LEE HAMILTON, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE MOST CLOSELY CONCERNED. NOR WAS IT RAISED AT THE N S C. AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT DR FITZGERALD TOLD ONE OFFICIAL PRIVATELY THAT THE R U C WAS GREATLY REFORMED, BORE NO RESEMBLANCE TO THE R U C OF TEN YEARS AGO, AND NOW WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE POLICE IN THE REPUBLIC. HE ADDED THAT THE R U C NEEDED THE WEAPONS FOR WHICH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAD ASKED.

4. THE ONLY PUBLIC REMARKS DR FITZGERALD MADE ON THE ISSUE WERE TO A SMALL GROUP OF JOURNALISTS AT A BREAKFAST MEETING WHERE HE SAID THAT, UNLIKE THE BRITISH ARMY, THE R U C HAD NOT USED ARMS AGGRESSIVELY. HE DID, HOWEVER, ADD THAT HE BELIEVED THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT COULD HAVE ARMED THE R U C WITH BRITISH-MADE WEAPONS AND THAT THIS FACT HAD GIVEN RISE TO AMERICAN SUSPICIONS THAT WE WERE TRYING TO ALIGN THE UNITED STATES FIRMLY ON OUR SIDE BY SEEKING THE WEAPONS HERE. AT THE SAME MEETING DR FITZGERALD APPARENTLY CRITICISED THE RECENT ROLE OF THE ARMY IN NORTHERN IRELAND AS UNDERMINING THE PRIMACY OF THE POLICE AND ASSERTED THAT THE APPOINTMENT OF SIR MAURICE OLDFIELD HAD STRENGTHENED THE ARMY AT THE EXPENSE OF THE POLICE.

HENDERSON.

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Ireland

From THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Michael Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
London
SW1

31st January 1980

Dear Michael,

Northern Ireland Conference

This letter is to report progress at the third week's sessions of the Conference, which consisted of 5 half-day sessions on 28-30 January.

The Conference has now reached the heart of the matter: the role to be assigned to the minority community in a devolved administration. Most of the time has been devoted to this subject, and there is still some way to go. Discussion has been serious and detailed.

Three positions have emerged:

(i) The Alliance party favour a partnership administration based upon a system of committees, with membership and chairmanships in proportion to representation in the elected Assembly.

(ii) The SDLP favour a partnership administration based on a power-sharing cabinet-type executive on the 1973/74 model. They are also keen on some kind of UK/Irish guarantee of the integrity of such an administration.

(iii) The DUP want cabinet-style majority rule; there would be some safeguards for the minority, but they have not so far set out what these might be.

So far the Alliance proposal has been the most fully expanded, and has been subjected to detailed examination by the Conference. The intention is that, when this examination has been completed, there will be a corresponding examination of the proposals of the other 2 parties. Some restiveness is developing over the reluctance of the DUP to show their hand, and over suggestions being made in leaks to the media that they will not be willing to do so unless the SDLP concede the principle of majority rule.

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The 2 main parties remain a long way apart, and the prospects of a high level of agreement between them cannot at present be rated as good. Nevertheless, and despite some skirmishing in the media (despite the 'self-denying ordinance'), they seem to want to keep the Conference going. There is a good deal more "Working Paper" ground to cover, and it could take some time yet - it would be a mistake, at least at the present stage, to try to force the pace.

After next Monday and Tuesday (4/5 February) there are substantial gaps in the Conference programme because of other commitments (European Parliament in particular). This is a pity but seems inescapable.

The first of the "wider talks" offered (to meet the SDLP request) took place on Wednesday 30 January. This first one was on security matters, with the SDLP alone. Further sessions seem likely, on this and other topics; the Alliance party are considering the invitation and may join in the talks at the next stage. The other parties (DUP and UUP) are not willing to join in.

My Secretary of State hopes his colleagues in OD Committee, to whose Private Secretaries this letter is copied, will find this information useful. It remains confidential, for the reasons emphasised in my previous letters on this subject.

Yours ever,

R A Harrington

R. A. Harrington

cc NIO
Original in C&R.
Ireland

cf.

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

30 January 1980

Dear Alderman Robinson,

Thank you for the letter of 16 January from yourself and Councillors Bleakes and Morrison asking for a meeting to discuss security in Northern Ireland.

I am glad of your recognition of the Government's determination to put an end to terrorism. We remain steadfast in our resolve and will take all appropriate measures to achieve this objective.

I am, of course, aware of the resolutions passed by a number of District Councils last autumn. The points raised were fully dealt with in letters sent to the appropriate Councils on behalf of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and, in some cases, myself.

As you know I held meetings with the leaders of the Democratic Unionist and Official Unionist parties late last year at which the security situation in Northern Ireland was fully discussed. (You attended the first of these.) I suggest that if you and your colleagues have fresh proposals to make on security you should put them to the Secretary of State.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Thatcher

Alderman Peter Robinson, M.P.

tlc

ds

Ireland

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG
CABINET OFFICE

Conference on the Government of Northern Ireland

The Prime Minister has seen your minute to me of 24 January on this subject and is content.

MICHAEL ALEXANDER

28 January 1980

Pe

SECRET

Ireland

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

28 January 1980

4/2/80

The Prime Minister has seen your letter to me of 23 January about precautions against mortar attacks on security force bases in Northern Ireland. The Prime Minister is, I fear, not satisfied that adequate measures are being taken to minimise the chance of further successful mortar attacks by the PIRA.

She has commented against the points made in paragraph 3 of your letter about protective measures that her own impression is that the early warning system is not effective. The soldiers she met at Forkill seemed to think that they would be helpless in the face of a mortar attack. She adds that she does not believe the quick-reaction forces can get out in time.

The Prime Minister thinks this problem is being treated too casually. She has asked that it should be re-considered further and that she should receive a further report as soon as possible.

I am sending copies of this letter to Roy Harrington (Northern Ireland Office) and to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

David Omand, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

SECRET

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Michael Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
London
SW1.

25 January 1980

Prime Minister (2)

Dear Michael,

Thank you for your letter of 24 January enclosing Mr Molyneaux's answer to the question whether his party's paper should be laid before the Conference.

Just for the record, we entirely agree with your view that no reply is needed. You are evidently as conscious as we are that it would harm the credibility of the Conference on the government of Northern Ireland if Mr. Molyneaux were to discuss with the Prime Minister matters which he has declined to discuss at the Conference.

Yours ever,

Roy Harrington.

R. A. Harrington

M.T.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION OR REFERENCE
TO CONTENT BEFORE TIME OF DELIVERY

Extract from speech by the Rt. Hon. J. Enoch Powell, MP to the Annual General Meeting of the South Down Unionist Association at Glenloughan, Kilkeel, Co. Down. at 8 pm, Friday, 25th January 1980

I expect I am not the only person to be staggered by the volume of sheer bad advice which appears to be tendered to the Secretary of State. In small things and in great, in matters of timing and manner as in matters of policy, he has from his earliest days in office made a series of gaffes and blunders from which any ordinarily competent department would have saved him. From the gaucheries of getting himself tied up with the Mayor of New York or being on holiday at the most delicate time of the Ulster year to his evident incomprehension of the respective political forces in this province and their intentions, one is bound, with the best will in the world and with all due allowance for inexperience and ineptitude, to ask oneself what it is about the Northern Ireland Office that makes it so different from all the other departments of state.

Once one puts the question, the answer is not far to seek. It is an important one, and it points to a reform which ought to be undertaken in the interest of all concerned.

When a minister goes to any normal office, he finds there, to advise and help him, a wealth of experience, built up over many years. Most of the officials will have spent much, if not the whole, of their career in that department. Few, even those at the top who may have had recent experience in other ministries, will have come to the Department as complete strangers; and even they will have at their elbows colleagues and juniors who 'know the form' from A to Z. One might suggest that sometimes departments can become unduly 'in-grown' as a result; but of one thing any minister can be sure - while he himself may be a tyro, those advising him and executing his policies will not be.

Now, to all this the Northern Ireland Office - the office of the Secretary of State as the cabinet Minister responsible for the

affairs of Northern Ireland - presents a unique and total contrast. I am obliged regretfully to add that the contrast is not an accidental or unintended one. It is not because there exists no Northern Ireland Civil Service. Indeed, there does, and an excellent one too, composed very largely of Ulster men and women thoroughly experienced in their work and, in my judgment, fully on a level with their opposite numbers in Great Britain. This civil service staffs the Northern Ireland departments over which the junior ministers preside. They, in contrast to their chief, are surrounded with the benefits of wide local knowledge and deep experience of the Ulster scene. Not so the Northern Ireland Office itself.

When that Office was set up in 1972, you might have expected that the Government would have been keen to avail itself of the wealth of talent and knowledge that was ready to hand on the spot. Such, however, was the suspicion and even hostility towards Northern Ireland of the then Government, that the Northern Ireland Office was constructed de novo out of personnel seconded from other Whitehall departments, not forgetting, of course, besides the Home Office, the Foreign Office plus its former Commonwealth and Colonial Service elements. Nor, once the Office had been formed, have officials been left there to continue their career and build up the requisite experience. On the contrary, and as a matter of policy, their tours of duty are limited to two or three years, as a precaution against their becoming too much assimilated to those who, in the jargon of the Northern Ireland Office, are contemptuously referred to as "the natives" - that is to say, you and me.

Just try to imagine the Scottish Office or the Welsh Office being deliberately manned with birds of passage whose supreme qualification for advising and assisting their respective Secretaries of State was to be as far devoid as possible of any experience of Scotland or Wales and of any sympathy with it. Or think what would be said if the Chancellor of the Exchequer was given a new

department thrown together from the denizens of other ministries, from transport to social security, who had been picked for their lack of experience in finance and who would move on again shortly before they could possibly get the hang of the Treasury. Small wonder if the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland so frequently talks and acts as if he were the man in the moon paying us a visit, and commits the most egregious blunders apparently unawares and unadvised.

This is a position which is fair neither to Northern Ireland nor the Northern Ireland Civil Service. If the United Kingdom is the rightful heritage of all the people of Northern Ireland, the civil servant in Northern Ireland has a right to the full scope and opportunities available to the civil servant in any other part of the kingdom. The time has come - indeed, it has been with us for long already - when the civil service in Northern Ireland should be an integral part of the Civil Service of the Crown throughout the United Kingdom. No doubt, as with other departments of state, those serving the administration in Northern Ireland would still choose to spend most or all of their careers here. No doubt, all the existing vest rights and expectations of Northern Ireland civil servants would be preserved and guaranteed. But the civil servant in Ulster should be able to look forward as he approaches the apex of his profession, to filling any top position in the U.K. no less than his peers in other departments; and the devastating dichotomy between the Northern Ireland Civil Service and the Northern Ireland Office would be removed.

All this is in no way bound up with the question of future local government here or even future devolution. When the last parliament framed a Bill for Scottish home rule, complete with a Scottish Assembly, one thing it resolutely refused to do was to divide the Civil Service and hive part of it off to Scotland. The unity of the Civil Service was perceived to be an attribute of the

unity of the realm. The Ulster civil servant has a right to the same United Kingdom status as the Scottish civil servant. To continue to deny this - indeed, to treat the question itself as if it did not exist - is not only to perpetuate the disastrous isolation and separation of the Northern Ireland Office from those for whom Parliament and Government are responsible through the Secretary of State. It is a standing practical denial of that integral position of Ulster in the United Kingdom, to which both Parliament and Government purport to be committed.

copy 2 of 4

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Source: Regular and reliable * ~~~ *

UUP: Views of James MOLYNEAUX (early January 1980)

1. James MOLYNEAUX MP, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), speaking to a meeting of about sixty members of the UUP East Belfast Constituency Association on 4 January, explained his decision not to attend the constitutional conference convened by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

. . . . . .

3. MOLYNEAUX claimed that the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister were 'innocents abroad' during the present round of talks. He said he did not believe they wanted to deny Ulster the basic democratic rights of majority rule. He said that the real niggers in the woodpile were unnamed but powerful members of the Northern Ireland Office and of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He said that these men for reasons of international and European politics wanted to reform the system of government in Ulster and prepare the way for the eventual unification of Ireland. He said that one of the main objectives of these officials was to deflect the Conservative Party away from their manifesto pledges to the people of Ulster.

4. MOLYNEAUX concluded by saying that he and his party would not be trapped in the same way as the DUP. He said that he and other members of the party at Westminster intend to continue pressing for discussion of Ulster's affairs at Westminster. He made it clear that he would not take part in any debate of Ulster's future outside Westminster. He also indicated that he thought the UUP still had powerful friends amongst Conservative back-benchers at Westminster.

. . . . . .

* ~ * Words deleted and retained under Section 3(4) DPA England 28 October 2010

Irish News, Wed 16 Jan 1980

Thatcher has plan on ice for the North

by Political Correspondent Tom Samways

A blueprint for the future government of Northern Ireland has already been prepared and will be submitted for approval to the Westminster House of Commons by the Secretary of State later this year with such amendments as he considers necessary after the "parallel" devolution talks at Stormont.

Regardless of whether agreement is reached by the main political parties on any part of the Working Paper prepared by the British Government for discussion, or what degree of conflict exists on recognition of the Irish dimension, it was learned, last night, that the Southern Government's role in British settlement plans has an important place.

Mr Humphrey Atkins is committed to reporting to Prime Minister Mrs Margaret Thatcher and her Cabinet on the outcome of the formal conference with the leaders of the SDLP, DUP and Alliance Party, before Easter.

In advance of this and in anticipation of a "hung" formal conference and participation by only the SDLP and the Alliance Party in the concurrent informal discussions, no time has been lost in getting a devolution document prepared which can have the afterthoughts grafted on to it.

Mr Atkins has sent out the invitations to the leaders of the Official Unionist Party, the SDLP, DUP and Alliance Party to the informal meetings. And all three subjects on the agenda have a very big Irish dimension.

The Secretary of State said the meetings away from the formal constitutional conference will deal with security, the economy and the European Community.

Mr James Molyneaux, leader of the Official Unionist Party, declined to attend the start of the devolution conference and is now expected to also boycott the "parallel" meetings.

The Rev. Ian Paisley, the DUP leader, was at the opening of the formal constitutional conference, which, in its first three days, got down to nothing but a fierce procedural battle. He declared, in advance of the invitation being sent to him, that he would not be a party to the second-tier discussions.

This leaves only the SDLP and the Alliance Party to discuss with Mr Atkins the very issues on which the Loyalists have put most emphasis. Security is at the top of the concurrent conference agenda and the DUP won't be there.

Yet the Rev. William McCrea, chairman of Magherafelt district council and Mr Paisley's adviser at the formal conference, has written to the leaders of the other political parties, including Mr Hume and Mr Napier, inviting them to take part in a security march to Stormont.

The Official Unionists have already had a security picket on the Stormont Parliament Buildings.

Triumph

Now, they will be watching from the wings as Mr Hume and Mr Napier, inside the Stormont building, discuss with the Secretary of State the security of Northern Ireland in co-operation with the Republic and the major issues of the economy and EE membership as part of the ne devolved government plans.

It has become clear that M Atkins — with the way out of th political impasse clear to him an the Westminster Governme and a document all-but-ready fo the British Parliament's approv — is not worried about who wil or will not, talk. He is in th position of not pleading for participation in any talks by any o the Party leaders but is giving them the opportunity of being heard if they are so inclined.

All this is seen as a triumph for Mr Hume and the SDLP in that their own policy document will be discussed in detail with the Secretary of State and their viewpoint will be considered by the British Government although much of what Mr Hume had been demanding should be discussed was apparently already being given due recognition at least in part in drawing up the proposals for a devolved government for the North.

Sincerity

SDLP leaders are delighted that they have put, and can continue to put, all their views on the table for the British Cabinet's consideration.

The Party's deputy leader Mr Seamus Mallon said, last night, that the refusal of the DUP and Official Unionists to go to the Secretary of State's conference to discuss the wider issues including security clearly affected the whole community and brought into question the sincerity of these Parties.

Their daily demand, over the past 10 years, had been for stronger security. They had barraged the 26 district councils with motion after motion on security, yet now when Mr. Atkins invited them to discuss the matter seriously, both refused to attend.

Explanation

One could not escape the conclusion that they were more concerned about which was the strongest party than with creating stability, "Ian Paisley and Jim Molyneaux," he said, "owed their electorate and, indeed, all the people of Northern Ireland a convincing explanation as to why they could not see fit to discuss serious matters like security with the other Northern Ireland Parties and representatives of the British Government.

Meanwhile, yesterday four of the smaller political groups reiterated their own claim to be included in the inter-Party discussions.

Ambiguous

Mrs. Anne Dicjson, leader of the UPNI, Alderman Seamus Lynch (RCTWP), Mr. Alistar Keery (United Labour Party) and Mr. Hugh Smyth (Progressive Unionist Party) signed a letter to Mr. Atkins which was delivered to the Northern Ireland Office.

They referred to a letter from Mrs. Atkins received last week after a meeting with the Secretary of State and described it as "ambiguous" and said it "ignored the clear undertaking by you to put the matter of our representation to the conference.,

The letter added: "We are given to understand that the Party leaders concerned were not consulted by you as you had undertaken to do in an attempt to achieve some semblance of Democratic representation at these talks.

"The meaningless statements issued by your appointed spokesman have reinforced our fears that a solution will be worked out behind locked doors, this excluding a section of democratically elected opinion and the wishes of the Northern Ireland people, who have an absolute right to know what is being said and done on their behalf.

"As we are totally dissatisfied with the contents of your letter, we belejve we have a right to a we believe we have a right to a matter of urgency and certainly before the meeting of the conference next week."

(2)

CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister

Ref. A01223

MR. ALEXANDER

Conference on the Government of Northern Ireland

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland's Private Secretary wrote to you on 15th January to report on the opening of the Conference.

2. This seems to have got off to a quiet but reasonably encouraging start. If all continues to go well, the Secretary of State expects to be in a position to report to OD in early March. Before that I will hold a meeting of my Official Committee on Northern Ireland to take stock with the various senior officials concerned. In the meantime the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland will report orally to Cabinet when any significant developments take place.

3. This seems a satisfactory way of handling the present situation.

(Robert Armstrong)

24th January, 1980

TMP

C file

24 January 1980

I enclose a copy of a letter which the Prime Minister received yesterday evening from Mr. Molyneaux in reply to her letter to him of 11 January. As you will see, Mr. Molyneaux has rejected the suggestion that he should place his document before the Conference.

Mr. Molyneaux does not suggest a further meeting with the Prime Minister. Unless you advise to the contrary, I would see no need for the Prime Minister to take the correspondence any further at this stage.

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

Roy Harrington, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Michael Alexander Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
London
SW1.

24 January 1980

Dear Michael,

Conference on the Government of Northern Ireland

Although my Secretary of State will have given the Cabinet this morning an oral report on progress at the Conference on its second week's sessions (21-23 January) I thought it might be helpful if I continued the practice begun in my letter to you of 15 January of letting the Private Secretaries to OD Members have a note of how things have gone.

Within its limits the second week of the Conference went reasonably well: progress was better than might have been expected in the light of experience of the first week.

The agenda was settled without undue difficulty or delay. Basically it is the same as the list of questions on page 11 of the Conference Working Paper published by the Government in November (Cmnd 6673); but the order is slightly different and there are 2 additional items, which derive from the Working Paper but were prompted by the initial submissions of the Parties to the Conference. The first of these is the question whether any arrangements agreed on for devolved government should be seen as permanent or temporary; the other is arrangements for testing the acceptability of any agreement, including the use of a referendum.

Unfortunately the SDLP, though they agreed to the agenda, announced when substantive discussion began that they would not be taking any part in the discussion until the Conference reached what to them is a crucial question - the role to be given in a devolved government to the minority. Underlying this unwelcome posturing is their determination, shared by the Alliance Party, not to be manoeuvred into agreeing on some matters unless there is agreement on all matters. On this crucial point we are essentially in agreement with them: an agreement (as was the 1975 Constitutional Convention) on some aspects of devolved government which did not include the basic question of the role of the minority would be no use at all.

CONFIDENTIAL

The immediate result was that the SDLP played no part in a number of quite meaty and sensible discussions of agenda items. From these discussions, the following particular points emerged:

(1) There is no support for a "local government" type of solution: the Parties, including (we know from their general position) the SDLP, want maximum devolution to a proper regional government.

(2) They want the range of subjects that are transferred to that government to be no less than was transferred in 1973 (or even, the DUP would say, than in the original 1920 Constitution). Interest was expressed in giving a devolved administration some voice in matters - eg EEC - which in principle would have to remain a Westminster responsibility.

(3) The devolved government should have power to legislate as well as administrative responsibilities: there is a strong feeling that devolution without legislative power is of little value in meeting Northern Ireland's particular needs.

(4) There is general agreement that election to an assembly should be by some form of proportional representation, though there are differing views on what form it should take.

We have therefore quite a lot to show in terms of ground covered. But the non-participation of the SDLP has limited its usefulness, and looming ahead is the critical question what will happen when we reach a point at which the SDLP will put forward their views on the role of the minority in a devolved administration. The risk is that at this point the views of the Parties will prove so irreconcilable, and they will conduct themselves in such a way, that the Conference breaks up. The Secretary of State's object in handling next week's session will be to avert any such breakdown while exploring the question of the role of the minority as fully as the Conference will agree to do.

One ground for concern is the obvious SDLP suspicion, which is being increasingly strongly expressed, of the bona fides of the UK Government. They believe, quite wrongly, that the Conference is a mere "charade" on the conclusion of which the Government will impose a "secret plan" already prepared. We are doing our best to dispel this illusion.

The Conference meets for 3 days next week, and 2 days in the following week; but thereafter there are problems in agreeing dates because of other commitments (especially the European Parliament) and, assuming that the Conference continues in being, progress in February is bound to be slow.

Finally, to pick up the point made in the previous report, although there has been some leaking to the press the "self denying ordinance" has to a surprising degree held up so far. Indeed, the Conference even decided not to continue with a Conference press spokesman, because of the difficulty of his avoiding being drawn into answering supplementary questions. It follows that discretion is important in drawing on the contents of the above.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Private Secretaries of all OD Members and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever,

Roy Harrington.

R. A. Harrington

To be replaced

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref. A01223

MR. ALEXANDER

Conference on the Government of Northern Ireland

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland's Private Secretary wrote to you on 15th January to report on the opening of the Conference.

2. This seems to have got off to a quiet but reasonably encouraging start. If all continues to go well, the Secretary of State expects to be in a position to report to OD in early March. Before that I will hold a meeting of my Official Committee on Northern Ireland to take stock with the various senior officials concerned. In the meantime the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland will report orally to Cabinet when any significant developments take place.

3. This seems a satisfactory way of handling the present situation.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

(Robert Armstrong)

24th January, 1980

From JAMES H. MOLYNEAUX, J.P., M.P. for Antrim, South.

House of Commons,
London S.W.1.

23 January, 1980.

Dear Prime Minister

Thank you for your letter of 11 January.

I note what you say in your second paragraph; but in the light of the view which this Party has taken of the conference from the start, I do not think it would be appropriate that my submission to you should be placed before it.

As I said in my previous letter, I shall at all times be at your disposal if you wish to discuss any aspect of it.

Yours ever
Jim

The Right Honourable Mrs Margaret Thatcher, MP.,
10 Downing Street,
London, SW1.

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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-~~930 7022~~ 218 2111/3

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MO 19/3

23rd January 1980

(2)

Prime Minister

Dear Michael,

You asked in your letter of 18th January for a note on the precautions being undertaken by the Army in the light of the assessment in JIC (80)(N)(IR)1 that there may be further mortar attacks on security force bases.

Although paragraph 5 of the JIC assessment refers to the Provisional IRA having tested mortars "recently", the Army in Northern Ireland had in fact identified a particular threat of further mortar attacks some weeks ago. All border bases were made aware of the assessment at that time.

Mortar attacks have of course been a continual threat, particularly at such bases, for a number of years. The measures which are taken to counter this threat rest upon a fairly detailed knowledge of the Provisional IRA's expertise in this field. We know, for example, from captured weapons that their latest, largest and most dangerous mortar, the "Mark 10", has a useable range of about 150 metres (although in laboratory conditions its absolute maximum range is about 500 metres). The Army is thus able to design its protective measures and its early warning system to cover the area around the bases from which the greatest threat comes. At Forkill a picquet is permanently in a position from where it can observe possible mortar firing points and can direct quick-reaction forces to the right area. Crossmaglen has a Closed Circuit Television System which views the Market Square. Newtownhamilton is similarly equipped with CCTV. At all border bases patrols visit all possible firing points at frequent but irregular intervals. The bases at Crossmaglen and Forkill are also

This doesn't stand up. They told me they were helpless against mortar attacks.

They can't get outside wire.

/ being ...

Have seen but they are always worried about mortar attacks.

M Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street

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SECRETARY OF STATE

by 1911

being mortar-proofed, as was explained in our letter of 10th January. In general we are satisfied that adequate measures are taken to minimise the chances of further successful mortar attacks by the Provisional IRA. I am not.

If, despite the preventive measures I have outlined above, terrorists do manage to stage an attack, soldiers in the bases are well versed in immediate action drills to move into positions giving the best possible protection whilst at the same time enabling them to return fire and protect the base offensively.

I am sending copies of this letter to Roy Harrington (NIO) and to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,

David Omand

(D B OMAND)

I think MoD is taking this matter much too casually — as this letter records. Please reconsider further and report again

MT.

E.R.

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NOTE OF A MEETING HELD IN THE NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE ON FRIDAY 18 JANUARY 1980 AT 1200PM

Present

Mr Marshall	Chairman
Mr Moriarty Mr Buxton Mr Jones Mr Benger	NIO
Mr Stephen Mr Stephens Mr Rotheram Mr Williams Lt Col Bateman Capt Duff Capt Ramsey	MOD
Mr Heaton	Home Office
Mr Newington	FCO

Force Reductions

Mr Stephen said that the Government should be prepared to comment on the fact that the number of major units in the Province was being reduced despite the fact that the Press had not yet picked the matter up. If anything needed to be said, it should be on the lines that redeployment of Army Units within Northern Ireland had been looked at again, and it had been found possible to dispense with one major unit. The Spearhead Battalion could be despatched to the Province immediately if needed. If it became necessary to call in the Spearhead Battalion frequently this would indicate that the force levels were too low, on the other hand if there was no need to call on the battalion it would show that existing force levels were adequate. It had not been so needed for a long time. The Chairman said that NIO was examining whether to take the initiative to let news of the force reduction become known; naturally MOD would be consulted before any action was taken. Essentially the problem was political in that it was difficult to pass the matter over in silence at a time when the Secretary of State was in frequent touch with the local political leaders in the Constitutional Conference, particularly as Mr Paisley had only consented to attend the Conference after receiving assurances on security. It was possible that the Secretary of State might elect to inform Mr Paisley personally in the margins of the Conference. Mr Moriarty thought it possible that the issue might arise in connection with the modifications to arrangements for protecting the Civilian Search Unit in the Belfast segment. The Chairman mentioned that the "Irish Press" had stated that the Army's claims that there were 13,000 soldiers in Northern Ireland might be inaccurate. Mr Stephen said that MOD would disclose the current number of troops to anyone who asked. He thought that it should be clearly stated that no force level was sacrosanct and that ultimately Ministers, and not local politicians, decided on the force levels appropriate.

Reviews of Security Policy

Mr Stephens said that three separate strands in the consideration of force levels should be kept linked. Firstly there was Sir Maurice Oldfield's study of four 'hard' areas which was bound to be concerned with force levels. Secondly, the Chief of the General Staff had instructed the new GOC to review force levels, deployment and tactics throughout the whole Province with a view to reporting within six weeks. Clearly these two studies would overlap but not completely. Finally there were the matters arising out of the Prime Minister's visit to MOD on 4 January when she had queried deployment in South Armagh and force levels generally. The Chairman said that NIO had just commented on the letter of 10 January from MOD to No 10 about the Prime Minister's visit. Sir Maurice Oldfield's conclusions would no doubt come before OD, which would give an opportunity for Ministerial discussion.

The Yellow Card

The Chairman said that NIO would wish to give careful thought to the terms of the revised draft Yellow Card before commenting; a reply would be sent as soon as possible.

Irish Named Regiments

The Chairman said that a reply would be sent shortly; it was likely that it would be favourable.

Arms for the RUC

The Chairman said that the Prime Minister's visit to Washington had not produced a satisfactory result on this issue and it had to be assumed that no arms would be supplied in the immediate future. A review of the various options, which included obtaining supplies from West Germany or France or simply holding our hand for a further year, had been instituted. Mr Newington concurred that it was unlikely that export licences would be issued in the foreseeable future given the current political situation. Given the Irish Government's clear disapproval of both NORAID and the INC it might well better not to stir things up by further insistence on the issue of licences, which carried political risks without prospect of practical results.

Possible Meeting between Secretary of State and Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs

The Chairman said that it had been 3½ months since the Secretary of State had met the Minister for Foreign Affairs. As in that time the Government, and the Minister had changed, a further meeting was desirable despite the fact that the Conference was now in session. It would be necessary to consider cross-border security and in that context it would be helpful if the issue of air-safety when helicopters crossed the border could be resolved beforehand. Mr Newington wondered - seeing that we had raised the issue ourselves - whether we could not take the position that no formal agreement was necessary; we could undertake not to fly during bad weather conditions (night flights being precluded anyway). Mr Stephens said that MOD would inquire into the matter as soon as possible.

Meetings between the GOC and politicians

Mr Stephen said that the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Army would be visiting Northern Ireland in the near future, and it

should be possible for the GOC to hold a drinks party at Lisburn to which local politicians could be invited; he would be grateful if NIO could provide a list of suitable invitees. /Mr Burns has undertaken to pursue this/. The Chairman said that it was important that local politicians should not have access 'by right' to the GOC and that the GOC should remain firm on the position that he would discuss particular incidents factually but decline to discuss security policy which was a matter for Ministers. Mr Stephen agreed and said that the new GOC would be reminded of this.

BBC Series on Camberley

Mr Stephens said that the third programme on this series would refer to Northern Ireland and would include addresses from the Secretary of State, the former GOC and extracts from syndicate discussions, some of which would be "hawkish".

The Constitutional Conference

The Chairman said that the Conference would meet again on Monday to discuss the order of business. So far the discussion had been heavily concerned with procedural matters but it was clear that the SDLP and DUP wanted to continue as both had passed up chances to withdraw. The nub of the problem was the range of topics which had been excluded by the Working Party eg Irish unity. Mr Hume had pressed for, and got, some expansion of the limits, but not perhaps as great as he supposed.

Two points of value had, however, emerged. The various parties had tabled their respective papers and although there had been disagreement over the order of business it seemed probably that they could be resolved. Further, an additional series of meetings outside the Conference to cover matters which could not be discussed within the Conference had been arranged; both the SDLP and Alliance, but not the DUP, had agreed to attend. Also it was clear that neither Mr Paisley nor Mr Hume exercised the complete domination over their parties which had hitherto been assumed.

It was possible that the Conference would move to matters of substance on Monday 21 January and the parties had been told that the Government wanted substantial agreement by Easter, although it had to be admitted that this hope might not be fulfilled. One potential problem was that Mr Paisley had indicated a desire to talk about the role of the head of a future devolved administration in formulating security policy; this was not within the terms of the Working Paper and might lead to difficulties.

21 January 1980

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

18 January 1980

Dear Brian,

Northern Ireland

As you will know from Clive Whitmore's letter to you of 17 January, the Prime Minister has read Annex B, dealing with Northern Ireland border bases, of your letter to Clive of 10 January about her visit to the Ministry of Defence.

The Prime Minister has, nonetheless, expressed concern, having read JIC(80)(N)(IR)1 about the possibility that there will be further mortar attacks on security force bases. She has asked whether the Army have taken any further action to defend against such attacks in Newtonhamilton, Forkhill or Crossmaglen. I should be grateful if you could let me have a note on precautions being taken in the light of the new assessment of the threat.

I am sending copies of this letter to Roy Harrington (Northern Ireland Office) and Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely

Michael Alexander

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Brian Norbury, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence

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PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Atkins' Statement on Northern Ireland Bombs

A copy of Mr. Atkins' Statement and a list of the incidents which took place yesterday are attached. The House was very quiet and serious about the Northern Ireland security position this morning.

In answer to Questions, Mr. Atkins said that he was reviewing security on public transport generally and that he was constantly looking at ways of improving security. ~~generally~~.

Ian Paisley welcomed the fact that a Statement had been made and said that he hoped that there would be Statement on similar occasions in future. He suggested that the security forces should move from the defensive to the offensive and carry the battle into the heart of the I.R.A.'s territory. Mr. Atkins said that he was always ready to make Statements if the occasion seemed appropriate and that Mr. Paisley should not think that the operations of the security forces were entirely reactive. That was not so, and there had been a number of useful successes in the recent past.

Winston Churchill demanded the return of the death penalty for acts of terrorism. Mr. Atkins said that the House had debated the death penalty since the Election and had reached a decision. Mr. Biggs-Davison said that Mr. Atkins should consider with Irish Ministers the possibility of the re-introduction of very selective detention on both sides of the border, since this had proved the only effective tactic in dealing with Irish terrorism in the past. Mr. Atkins said that it was true that he had detention powers, and that he was always considering how best to use all the powers he had, but detention had not been employed since 1975.

Tony Marlow said that the interrogation methods permitted in Northern Ireland were suited more to shoplifters in Surrey than hardened terrorists; and that many people were afraid to come forward and give evidence because they were frightened of the consequences for themselves. Mr. Atkins said that the securing of of evidence was not easy but that everyone had a part to play in providing information and intelligence. The Government's aim was to get convictions by legal means.

/ Peter Robinson

Peter Robinson called for a new initiative on security. Mr. Atkins said that the House had debated the security position immediately before Christmas and had supported the Government.

There were no difficulties about any of this, but it has committed us to making Statements on similar occasions in future. This may not be a bad thing.

MS

18 January 1980

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10 DOWNING STREET

MT.

PRIME MINISTER

I attach a note about Mr. Atkins' Statement this morning. His Office have since confirmed that one of the men who was injured in the train explosion yesterday is well known to them and they hope that he will be charged. The woman who was killed in the explosion was his girlfriend, who may also have been involved in the carrying of the bomb. The other two people who died were a 17-year-old student and a Nigerian accountant, both of whom were entirely innocent.

MS

18 January 1980

SECRET

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Nick Sanders Esq
10 Downing Street
London
SW1.

18 January 1980

Dear Nick,

I now enclose a copy of the statement made by my Secretary of State this morning: in the circumstances it was not possible to get it to you before the statement was made.

You may find it useful to have with the statement the enclosed list of yesterday's incidents.

Yours ever,

Roy Harrington.

R. A. Harrington

E.R.

Statement dated 18th January 1980.

17.1.80.

With permission Mr. Speaker, I will make a statement about the fatal bombing incident in Northern Ireland yesterday evening. Just before six o'clock yesterday evening there was an explosion followed by a fire on a Ballymena to Belfast train in the vicinity of Dunmurry.

The explosion occurred in a carriage immediately in front of the engine, which was at the rear of the train. As a result 3 people died and 5 others were injured and taken to hospital. The bodies of those who died are so badly charred that their identity can only be established by a process of elimination, and this is in hand. Of the injured, 3 were seriously burned and were detained in hospital. The explosive device used is believed to be of the blast incendiary type, and police enquiries into the incident are continuing. Up to the present moment no individual terrorist organisation has claimed responsibility for the outrage. The possibility cannot be ruled out that the device exploded prematurely.

I am sure I carry the House with me in expressing my deep sympathy with those innocent members of the public who were injured, and with the relatives of those who died. The incidents of the last three days have yet again brought home the utter callousness of the terrorists in their continued attempts to destroy the life of the

E.R.

Province. Last night's brutal murders and the attempted murder of many others have made this clear.

But despite the terrorists' efforts the bravery and dedication to duty of the people of Northern Ireland remains unshaken. My hon friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State who visited the scene of last night's fatal incident has told me of the courage of the staff of the Northern Ireland Railways who dealt with two devices on two other trains which did not explode.

The people of Northern Ireland are determined not to give in to such cowardly attempts to intimidate them. Her Majesty's Government is equally determined to give them the fullest possible security backing.

E.B.

SITUATION REPORT FOR THE PERIOD:

0830 HOURS THURSDAY 17 JANUARY 1980 TO 0830 HOURS FRIDAY 18 JANUARY 1980

1755 hours - Explosion on Lisburn/Belfast train as it passed under bridge at Black's Road, Dunmurry. Three dead - burned beyond recognition. Four injured - burns - not serious.

1835 hours - Device spotted on Belfast/Carrickfergus train. Removed from train at Greenisland and exploded on platform. No injuries.

1750 hours - Three men (armed) entered Auto Supplies, Scotch Street, Dungannon. Gave staff 10 minutes warning. Planted several devices which exploded causing fierce fire and extensive damage. No injuries.

1755 hours - Shooting incident at Boveva, Dungiven, Co Tyrone. Wm James REA of same address - ex-UDR member - was driving to a potato yard to collect some employees. A car with at least 2 persons drew up alongside. REA heard a shot and returned 2 shots from his legally held Browning pistol at close range. No known injuries. Hospitals in area are being checked.

1820 hours - Device spotted on train at York Road Station, Belfast. Thrown onto platform and exploded. No injuries.

1825 hours - Explosion at the Carlton Hotel, Belleek, Co Fermanagh. Hotel gutted. No injuries.

2114 hours - Explosion at McKinleys furniture store, Maghera, Co Londonderry, Minor damage. No injuries.

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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

17 January 1980

Clive Whitmore Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

Prime Minister -
To note.
18/1

Dear Clive,

Brian Norbury kindly copied to me his letter of 10 January following up some points which arose in discussion during the Prime Minister's recent visit to the Ministry of Defence. I understand from Brian that the discussion on Northern Ireland derived from discussion on other topics, and there are some additional points related to the deployment of security forces in Northern Ireland, particularly on the border, which the Prime Minister should be made aware of.

As the Prime Minister knows my Secretary of State had before Christmas commissioned from the Security Co-ordinator a series of area studies covering West Belfast, Tyrone, Londonderry and South Armagh, starting with the latter, to identify the most effective way of using the skills and resources of the Army and the police. This review embraces the deployment of all the security forces, covering the role of both the Army and the police, and the civilian administration as well; it will also deal with the political and economic implications of any possible changes. Although South Armagh accounts for less than 10% of the army manpower in Northern Ireland, the Security Co-ordinator has been asked to take that area first because it experiences a disproportionate share of the violence in the Province. It is also an area where our co-ordination with the Republic is particularly crucial, and one of the factors in the review will be the need to provide on our own side of the border a sufficiently active presence to take maximum advantage of the increasing support we are getting from the security forces in the Republic.

Annex B to Brian Norbury's letter referred at paragraph 4 to some of the arguments against withdrawal from some of these bases (though we recognise that the Prime Minister is not by any means suggesting withdrawal of security forces from the area). Those arguments are important: but my Secretary of State is determined that the reviews that I mentioned above shall be conducted on a fundamental and open-minded basis. He does not intend

/... that

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Clive Whitmore Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street

January 1980

that that should delay them. At his regular security meeting with the Security Co-ordinator, the GOC and the Chief Constable last week he made clear that the first review, which has already started, should be completed within no more than five or six weeks. After consultation with the Secretary of State for Defence my Secretary of State intends to report the results to the Prime Minister and to colleagues in OD Committee.

The review of South Armagh will be directly relevant to the question of the South Armagh bases: but the area reviews are intended to set that sort of question in the context of wider issues affecting force levels, the relative roles and strengths of the Army and the RUC, and Government policy towards Northern Ireland generally, over the next few years.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Brian Norbury, George Walden and Martin Vile.

Yours ever,

Roy Harrington

R A Harrington

CONFIDENTIAL

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

17 January 1980

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
4 JANUARY 1980

The Prime Minister has seen the notes which you sent with your letter of 10 January.

I understand that the Cabinet Office do propose to take the lead on the question of the extent of Ministerial participation in NATO exercises, and the Prime Minister looks forward to seeing their advice in due course.

As regards border bases in Northern Ireland, the Prime Minister has noted that the new GOC is conducting a review of the dispositions of his forces and in particular is looking closely at military strengths on the border. When your Secretary of State and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland have reached conclusions on the basis of the GOC's study, she would be grateful to know what they are.

The Prime Minister would also like to know, in due course, the outcome of the studies mentioned in paragraph 4 of the note on our parachute capability.

The Prime Minister is grateful to your Secretary of State for his invitation to pay a second visit to the Ministry of Defence, but she will not be able to take it up until she has completed her first round of visits to other Departments.

I am sending copies of this letter to George Walden (FCO), Roy Harrington (NIO) and Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

C. A. WHITMORE

B.M. Norbury, Esq.

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PS TO PM

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FM WASHINGTON 162320Z JAN 80

TO PRIORITY F C O

TEL NO 261 OF 16 JAN 80

INFO NIO LONDON, NIO BELFAST, DUBLIN, BIS NEW YORK.

MY TELNO 4334 OF 22 DECEMBER: ARMS FOR THE RUC.

1. SINCE THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT, WE HAVE CONTINUED TO SEEK POSSIBLE OPENINGS. THE PRESENT POSITION IS THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE NOT (NOT) YET RECEIVED A FORMAL APPLICATION FOR A LICENCE FOR THE FURTHER 3000 WEAPONS WE ARE SEEKING. THE MANUFACTURERS WROTE TO THE OFFICE OF MUNITIONS CONTROL AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT ON 14 DECEMBER SEEKING ADVICE ON WHAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT REACTION TO A FORMAL LICENCE APPLICATION WOULD BE (TEXT OF LETTER IN MIFT). NO REPLY HAS YET BEEN SENT TO THAT LETTER BUT WE KNOW FROM A STATE DEPARTMENT SOURCE (PLEASE PROTECT) THAT THE COMPANY WERE IN TOUCH WITH THE OFFICE OF MUNITIONS CONTROL BEFORE SENDING THEIR LETTER AND THAT THEY HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT, WHILE THE STATE DEPARTMENT REVIEW CONTINUES, NO ACTION IS LIKELY ON LICENCE APPLICATIONS. THE MANUFACTURERS THEMSELVES HAVE RECEIVED THREATS FROM IRISH AMERICANS OF RETALIATION IF FURTHER ARMS ARE SUPPLIED.

2. THE MAIN OBSTACLE TO PROGRESS REMAINS THE ATTITUDE OF SPEAKER O'NEILL. HE WAS IMPRESSED BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND HE SUPPORTS OUR CURRENT INITIATIVE ON NORTHERN IRELAND. HE REMAINS ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO BIAGGI AND HIS FOLLOWERS AND PERSONALLY TELEPHONED THE PRESIDENT ONLY RECENTLY TO PREVENT HIM FROM SENDING (AT BIAGGI'S INSTIGATION) A GOODWILL MESSAGE TO THE IRISH NATIONAL CAUCUS (INC) ANNUAL DINNER IN NEW YORK. BUT HE BELIEVES THAT IF HE SANCTIONS THE SALE OF ARMS TO THE RUC HE WILL LOSE HIS CLAIM TO IMPARTIALITY AND WILL NO LONGER BE ABLE TO DISSUADE IRISH AMERICANS FROM GIVING FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO SURROGATES OF THE PIRA SUCH AS NORAID. MOREOVER, HE WOULD NO LONGER BE ABLE TO RESIST PRESSURE FOR HEARINGS ON THE GROUNDS THAT CONGRESS HAD NO STANDING IN THE MATTER. IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY SALE, O'NEILL'S OPPOSITION TO HEARINGS (INCLUDING THOSE ON AMERICAN INVESTMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND WHICH HAVE BEEN FORMALLY REQUESTED BY CONGRESSMAN GILMAN) REMAINS FIRM.

/3. IF WE WERE

CONFIDENTIAL

3. IF WE WERE TO MAKE ANOTHER BIG PUSH NOW ON ARMS SALES I SUSPECT THAT THE MOST WE WOULD ACHIEVE WOULD BE FURTHER APPEALS FROM PRESIDENT CARTER TO THE SPEAKER WHICH WOULD GET NOWHERE. THE ELECTORAL CONSIDERATIONS WHICH HAVE INFLUENCED CARTER UNTIL NOW CONTINUE TO APPLY AND ARE LIKELY TO DO SO AT LEAST WHILE THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION IS IN DOUBT AND PROBABLY, IF CARTER WINS THE NOMINATION, UNTIL THE ELECTION IN NOVEMBER.

4. IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED TO ME INFORMALLY THAT THE ONLY PERSON WHO COULD AT PRESENT CHANGE THE SPEAKER'S MIND, AND THEREFORE THE ADMINISTRATION'S MIND, IS JOHN HUME OF THE SDLP, EITHER BY A DIRECT APPROACH TO O'NEILL NOW OR FOLLOWING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW ADMINISTRATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND OF WHICH HUME WAS A MEMBER.

5. WITHOUT A BREAKTHROUGH OF THAT KIND, I SEE LITTLE HOPE OF MAKING EARLY PROGRESS ON OUR APPLICATION OR EVEN OF PERSUADING THE ADMINISTRATION TO MAKE A STATEMENT OF INTENT WHICH COULD BE USED IN PARLIAMENT AND WHICH WOULD HELP OVER THE PROBLEM OF MORALE IN THE RUC. I CANNOT THEREFORE SEE THAT THERE IS MUCH GOOD IN CONTINUING TO RELY ON SUPPLIES OF THESE WEAPONS FROM THE U.S.A.

HENDERSON

FILES

RID
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MAED
NEWS D
SEC D
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PS
PS/LPS

PS/MR HURD
PS/MR RIDLEY
PS/MR BLAKER
PS/PUS
SIR D MAITLAND
CHIEF CLERK
MR FIGG
MR BULLARD
MR FERGUSSON
LORD N G LENNOX
MISS BROWN

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION
NORTHERN IRELAND

CONFIDENTIAL

Northern Ireland Office
Stormont Castle
Belfast BT4 3ST
Telephone Belfast (0232) 63011
Telex 74272

M Alexander Esq
No. 10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

15th January 1980

Dear Michael,

CONFERENCE ON THE GOVERNMENT OF NORTHERN IRELAND

Now that the Conference has met for its first week of sessions, my Secretary of State thought it might be a suitable time to give his OD colleagues some information about progress so far.

All things considered, the Conference has got off to a good start. Those taking part are working together well, and are making a conscious effort much of the time to be friendly and co-operative towards one another and the Government's team. A Conference routine has been established. We shall be meeting every Monday to Wednesday each week, except when other commitments rule out meetings - as, for example, the European Parliamentary session does for the week beginning Monday 14 January.

As regards the timetable of the Conference, the Secretary of State explained in his opening remarks that there was no target date for its conclusion. But he would be disappointed if it did not prove possible for him to report the outcome of the Conference to his colleagues in the Cabinet to enable them to reach their conclusions on the broad framework of proposals which the Government might put to Parliament by around Easter. But this may prove an over-optimistic aim. Already members of the Conference are saying that it is more important to get it right than to reach an early conclusion.

It was only to be expected, from the transactions in the period leading up to the Conference, that the question of the scope of the Conference might prove a stumbling block. But we believe

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that we are on the way to solving that problem - i.e. how to accommodate the SDLP's wish to have discussions going wider than the task of the Conference without compromising the "ground rules" set out in the Government's Working Paper. The proposed solution, to which we do not believe the parties will object, is for a separate meeting or meetings before the Conference ends with all the parties (together or separately, as they prefer,) on security; the economy, and the EEC. These matters are not within the scope of possible transfer of powers but affect the relationship between Westminster and a devolved administration.

We hope and believe that, with this obstacle circumvented in that way, the Conference will settle down in the week of 21 January to discuss the wide range of substantive matters set out in the Working Paper and enlarged by the initial submissions of the three parties which were introduced at the second session of the Conference. A re-worded Agenda was drawn up in the light of the submissions and given to the parties for their consideration before the Conference resumes.

Our judgement is that, though the two main and mutually opposed parties will press their disagreements as far as they can, they will not take them to the point of breaking up the Conference. For their different reasons all three parties want to remain at the Conference and see it achieve a measure of success.

There is one final point I should emphasise. The Conference is meeting in private. It has been agreed that at the end of each session an official spokesman shall give to the Press, without elaboration, a brief Press Statement, the terms of which have been agreed by the Conference. Members of the Conference themselves suggested that, in their own contacts with the Press, they should exercise a "self-denying ordinance", and though there has not been total consistency there are definite indications that they want to

take that restriction seriously. It is therefore important that nothing said about the Conference by those speaking for the Government should give ground for complaint from the parties that the Government was being less discreet than they are.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Private Secretaries to all OD members, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever,

R A HARRINGTON
Private Secretary

JC

FILE

Ireland. RH

CC NIO

10 DOWNING STREET

11 January 1980

THE PRIME MINISTER

Dear Jim,

Thank you for your letter of 31 December covering your party's proposals for systems of devolved and local government in Northern Ireland. I have read them with interest and have passed a copy to Humphrey Atkins.

I cannot help thinking that it is a pity that you are not present at the Conference in Belfast where discussion of just the issues raised by your proposals is now taking place. I know that they have received wide publicity and the Conference can be expected to be well aware of what they contain. But it could well be helpful for Humphrey to table your proposals in their entirety at the Conference, and I should be grateful if you would confirm to him that you would have no objection to his doing so.

Yours ever

Margaret

J. H. Molyneaux, Esq., J.P., M.P.

RH

pt 5.

5T, A.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-~~230 7822~~ 218 2111/3

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COVERING SECRET

MO 25/3/4

10th January 1980

Top copy of this letter filed on Prime Minister (Pt 2) 'Visits to Departments.'

Dear Clive,

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
4TH JANUARY 1980

Annex A filed on Defence (July 79) 'Exercise Crusader 80 etc'

Annex C filed on Defence (Jan 80) 'Para Capability'.

My Secretary of State thought that it might be helpful to the Prime Minister if I were to let you have some notes on points which arose during her visit here last Friday and on which time did not permit full discussion.

I attach three notes accordingly, dealing with the NATO Exercise Programme (Annex A), Northern Ireland Border Bases (Annex B) and the UK's Parachute Capability (Annex C). I hope that these notes will be self-explanatory but I should perhaps add some very brief covering comments. As regards the Exercise Programme (see paragraph 3) we stand ready to re-examine the question of the extent of Ministerial participation in exercises; it may be that the Cabinet Office would like to take the lead on this. As regards Northern Ireland Border Bases, my Secretary of State proposes to discuss with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland the conclusions of the GOC Northern Ireland when he has completed the study to which reference is made in the fourth paragraph of Annex B. As regards Annex C I would draw attention particularly to the studies which it is explained in its paragraph 4 are in hand.

The question of the RUC's requirement for weapons was also raised during the Prime Minister's visit. On this, I understand that the Northern Ireland Office are undertaking a full study of alternative sources of supply and that this

/ study ...

C A Whitmore Esq
10 Downing Street

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study will be reported to the Prime Minister. The Army's standard handgun is the Browning 9mm semi-automatic pistol, which would not meet the RUC requirement for a revolver. Revolvers are not issued to HM forces except for a very limited number for specialist uses.

Perhaps you would let me know whether there is any further advice we can offer, either in respect of the matters to which I have referred above, or on others which were discussed during the Prime Minister's visit.

X My Secretary of State explained to the Prime Minister, as you know, that he would very much welcome it if the Prime Minister could find the time to pay a further visit here; he considers that we could arrange one with an equally wide range of interest given the wide scope of defence business; and we would ourselves find another visit extremely valuable.

I am sending copies of this letter to George Walden (FCO), Roy Harrington (NIO) and Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,
Brian

(B M NORBURY)

Prime Minister.

The Cabinet Office are going to put in a paper on Ministerial participation in NATO crisis management exercises.

✓ I think that it would be a good idea to ask for the conclusions of the study on Northern Ireland border bases to be reported to you in view of the interest you have taken in the problem. Agree? Yes MT.

The study on the parachute assault capability will now be subsumed in the more general work on our defence capabilities which is being done for OD and on which Sir Robert Armstrong reported over the week-end.

As regards X above, I imagine that you will not wish to go back to Defence before you have completed your forthcoming visits to Government departments. Agree? Yes MT

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ANNEX B
TO MO 25/3/4
DATED
10th JAN 80

NORTHERN IRELAND BORDER BASES

There are ten border RUC stations in Northern Ireland, in which soldiers are stationed to provide protection for the police. Besides soldiers actually on duty at the bases, others are needed in bases to provide an immediate reserve, maintain a rota, and provide essential support services. Many of the casualties which the Army has suffered have been the result of attacks on border bases or the patrols tasked to protect them, whose activity in the long run is bound to become predictable. Crossmaglen and Forkhill in South Armagh have been attacked more times than the other bases, particularly by mortars, and for this reason these two bases are being mortar-proofed. This work will not be completed until 1981, largely because there is not enough space to accommodate more than a small Royal Engineers construction team in each base.

2. The opportunities presented to the terrorists by the limited number of approach routes to border bases to use culvert mines to ambush Security Force vehicles threaten all supply runs and mobile patrols. In the extreme case of South Armagh all Army movement has for some years been by helicopter. Building materials for the works at Forkhill and Crossmaglen are supplied every 6-8 weeks by road convoys. These have to be protected which involves an extra battalion for three days to support the troops in the area.

/3. ...

3. In strictly military terms it would be preferable to pull back to main bases away from the border, such as Bessbrook Mill, and to operate forward from them. Closure of border stations would permit a more flexible pattern of deployment, would avoid tying down men guarding these static and vulnerable positions and could possibly allow us to lower further the force level in the Province or to increase patrol activity. Terrorists would be forced to attack further from the border, which would be more dangerous for them.

4. The RUC deployment cannot, of course, be seen only in military terms. Withdrawal from the bases might be represented, within Northern Ireland especially, as the abandonment of territory to the IRA, and this would raise difficult political problems. The new General Officer Commanding (who took up his appointment earlier this week) is now reviewing the disposition of his forces. The Secretary of State has asked him, in consultation with the Security Coordinator, the Chief Constable and the Northern Ireland Office, to look particularly closely at military strenths on the border.

5. The Prime Minister also queried the living and working conditions in the bases. There is no doubt that conditions are far from ideal but they are largely imposed by the small size of the original police stations. In addition, mortar-proofed accommodation must necessarily be of small size

/because ...

because the construction techniques used would make larger buildings prohibitively expensive and this requirement, allied to the problem of space, means that Forkhill and Crossmaglen are particularly cramped. However, additional building is being planned for these bases. A good deal of money has been spent on providing amenities but there are obvious financial limitations on spending money on accommodation which we hope will only be used for a limited time and where individual soldiers serve on four month tours.

Northern Ireland Office
Stormont Castle
Belfast BT4 3ST
Telephone Belfast 63011

Michael Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

8th January 1980

Dear Michael,

Thank you for your letter of 3 January with which you sent Mr Molyneaux's letter to the Prime Minister covering the UUP's constitutional proposals. The proposals themselves reveal the UUP to be in particularly inflexible mood; and by placing such emphasis on the fact that he is submitting the proposals to the Prime Minister, Mr Molyneaux is clearly seeking to deliver a snub to the Northern Ireland political Conference.

The proposals fall into two separate parts. First the UUP present their proposals for a system of devolved government. These are largely a recapitulation of the recommendations of the 1975 Convention Report, which was rejected at the time by all the main parties at Westminster on the grounds that it allowed an inadequate role to representatives of the minority and therefore did not command sufficient support throughout the community. Even Paisley now seems to accept that the Convention Report is a dead duck. Yet in the one area where the Report did give minority representatives minimal participation (seats on and chairmanships of backbench non-executive committees), the UUP are now even less generous than was the Convention Report.

The UUP's proposals for devolved government are made in an effort to counter the success of Paisley in presenting himself as the leading Unionist in favour of restoring devolved government. The UUP's real interest is in the failure of the Conference to idenfity enough agreement on which to base <u>devolved</u> government, and the consequent imposition of a system of <u>local</u> government on the same pattern as exists in Great Britain. Thus the second part of the UUP's proposals

set out the arrangements that they would like to see for a local government system in Northern Ireland. These proposals would be total anathema to the SDLP and to the minority community: they are not compatible with progress to devolved government and therefore smack of integration; and they contain no allowance for any role whatsoever for the minority.

It seems profitless for the Prime Minister to discuss the substance ... of the UUP proposals in her reply to Mr Molyneaux. The attached draft reply therefore concentrates on acknowledging Mr Molyneaux's letter and suggesting that the right place for substantive discussion is the Conference.

Yours ever,

Roy Harrington

R A HARRINGTON
Private Secretary

PC

DRAFT LETTER

FILE NUMBER.....

ADDRESSEE'S REFERENCE.....

To	Enclosures	Copies to be sent to
J H Molyneaux Esq JP MP Unionist Headquarters 3 Glengall Street Belfast BT12 5AE		
(Full Postal Address)		(Full Address, if Necessary)

LETTER DRAFTED FOR SIGNATURE BY PRIME MINISTER
(Name of Signatory)

Thank you for your letter of 31 December covering your party's proposals for systems of devolved and local government in Northern Ireland. I have read them with interest and have passed a copy to Humphrey Atkins.

I cannot help thinking that it is a pity that you are not present at the Conference in Belfast where discussion of just the issues raised by your proposals is now taking place. I know that they have received wide publicity and the Conference can be expected to be well aware of what they contain. ~~However it seems to me that~~ But it could well be helpful for Humphrey to table your proposals in their entirety at the Conference, and I should be grateful if you would confirm to him that you would have no objection to his doing so.

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Ireland

MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

On the occasion of the opening of the Conference I send to all those taking part my best wishes for a fruitful meeting.

Her Majesty's Government have shown themselves to be fully committed to the fight against terrorism and to the restoration of law and order throughout the Province.

Now we are embarking on the political task of returning to the people of Northern Ireland more responsibility for controlling their own affairs. This calls for the greatest possible measure of agreement among all sections of the Northern Ireland community. I believe you will have the support of all men and women of goodwill, and on behalf of all my colleagues in the Cabinet I wish you well in your deliberations.

7 January 1980

F.R.

Read over Phone to Duty Officer Stormont Castle 1930 hrs 4.1.80

~~DRAFT~~

Message from Prime Minister to Secretary of State, NI.

On the occasion of the opening of the Conference ~~on the future arrangements for governing Northern Ireland~~ I send to all those taking part my best wishes for a fruitful meeting.

Her Majesty's Government have ~~already~~ shown themselves to be fully committed to the fight against terrorism and to the restoration of law and order throughout the Province, ~~so that all who live in Northern Ireland may live and bring up their children in peace.~~

Now we are embarking on the political task of returning to the people of Northern Ireland more responsibility for controlling ~~the government of~~ their own affairs. This calls for the greatest possible measure of agreement among all sections of the Northern Ireland community. I believe you will have the support of all men and women of goodwill, and on behalf of all my colleagues in the Cabinet I wish you well in your deliberations.

FILE

VLS

Ireland

4 January 1980

Northern Ireland Conference

I attach a message from the Prime Minister to your Secretary of State to mark the occasion of the opening on Monday of next week of the Conference on the future arrangements for governing Northern Ireland.

The text of the Prime Minister's message was read over the telephone to your Duty Officer earlier this evening.

C. A. WHITMORE

Roy Harrington, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION OR REFERENCE
TO CONTENT BEFORE TIME OF DELIVERY

Speech by the Rt. Hon. J. Enoch Powell, MP, to the Annual Institution Supper of the Dundonald Orange Lodge, Comber Road, Dundonald, Co. Down.
at 8.30 pm, Thursday, 3rd January 1980

The Union between Great Britain and Northern Ireland is probably in greater danger now than at any time since the disastrous actions of the Heath government in 1972 and 1973. In saying that, I do not at all have in mind the deeds of the Provisional I.R.A.. Appalling though these are in their individual human consequences, the Provisional I.R.A. have done nothing, and can of themselves do nothing, to shake the Union. On balance, over the last ten years they have strengthened it; they have upon the whole alienated British public opinion, while their campaign has resulted indirectly in bringing Northern Ireland more firmly under the Union Parliament and under Her Majesty's Government than at any previous time since 1921.

The danger is from another quarter altogether. It is from the government of the United Kingdom itself. This is the unambiguous significance of the political initiative announced on 24th October, which is to have its first instalment next week at Stormont. The only possible consequence, and therefore the intended consequence, of that action - whose the intention was, I shall consider presently - is to work towards the destruction of the Union. The proof positive is as follows.

The Government says that it wishes to introduce changes in the present arrangements for governing Ulster. Well and good. It goes on, however, to say that it wants the maximum political agreement among the parties to those changes. Whose agreement? Not Unionist agreement - of whatever brand. If the changes are to be such as will evidently maintain and strengthen the Union, Unionist agreement was to be had for the asking - indeed, without even the need to ask. No, the agreement which the Government seeks, and which it has set up a conference in order to show the world that it seeks, is the

agreement of the S.D.L.P. The S.D.L.P. was the indispensable ingredient - all others could at a pinch be done without.

Now, the veriest tyro in Northern Ireland politics knows that the S.D.L.P. cannot, without self-destruction, be seen agreeing to anything which does not visibly tend to promote the dissolution of the Union. That was proved, if it needed proving, by the fate of poor old Gerry Fitt. He understood the Government's game well enough but could not convey the necessary nod-and-a-wink to his followers, who took the Government's white paper at its face value and threw Gerry over unceremoniously. So the object of the conference, and the only object which stands up to examination, is to try to obtain agreement on political changes in the government of Northern Ireland which will weaken the Union.

But what if - not improbably - no such agreement is forthcoming? The Government has told us: it will then be ready to impose a solution. So, what sort of solution? Not one which strengthens the Union. If that were its solution, the last thing it would have done would have been to court open opposition to it by trying to get the S.D.L.P. to agree. The only imposed solution which makes any sense of the Government's behaviour since 24th October is a solution imposed upon the Unionists, a green-edged constitutional set-up like that of 1973, which had to be forced upon the province and which the then Government visibly hoped would promote the euthanasia of the Union.

After what I have said, it will be as plain as a pikestaff - so plain that only the very gullible, like the D.U.P., or the very anti-Union, like the Belfast Telegraph, could fail to see it - that the Ulster Unionist Party could by no means agree to participate in an operation, of which the very basis and meaning was in flat defiance of the first fundamental principle of the Unionist creed. Much more interesting, however, than the question why some of the intended victims fell into the trap is the question: "Who laid the trap?"

It was certainly not the Secretary of State. Whatever other faults or failings Humphrey Atkins may have, this one cannot be laid at his door, for the simple reason that he was as much taken aback by it as anybody else. Up to a few days before 24th October, he and his officials were innocent of any such idea - which is why they took no steps to prepare the ground for something which was suddenly thrust upon them against their protests and in face of their reluctance. So where did it come from? The Prime Minister asserted before the general election that her great object for Northern Ireland would be to maintain the Union. I do not believe she was bluffing then, and I do not believe that she would now have devised a devious scheme for doing the opposite to what she had undertaken. Except in the sense that all substantial acts of government are her responsibility, I am ready to acquit her too.

That leaves one source, the source from which an endless stream of hostility to the Union of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has flowed for years. I refer to that nest of vipers, that nursery of traitors, which is known as the British Foreign Office. To the Foreign Office the fact that five-sixths of the inhabitants of this province are, and intend to remain, integrally citizens of the United Kingdom, is less than nothing. Its thoughts are not of us. Its eyes and its affections are fixed outside the realm - on Dublin, on Brussels, on the Vatican, above all on Washington D.C., for whose favour and delectation this province is to be offered up a sacrifice, if the arts of skulduggery will avail to do the trick. We are reading a lot these days about the C.I.A. One needs to be an innocent to be unaware, after all that has happened, that, so far as Ulster in concerned, the C.I.A. with its clumsiness and its crudities has nothing to teach the Foreign Office. What bribes, what threats, what agents provocateurs, what corruption, what undercover agents can achieve, for that in Ulster you may put your bottom dollar on the Foreign Office.

It will fail. Of that I have no doubt, because in the end all such machinations find themselves wrecked on the granite rock of Ulster's unionist determination. What worries me is the damage and destruction that can be wrought in the meantime. Not only will the Provisional I.R.A. be encouraged to continue its costly though ultimately futile campaign of murder and mayhem by the spectacle of the U.K. government itself playing the game of the U.K.'s enemies. Ulster's victories over those who would tear it out of Britain are victories for which a price has to be paid. Part of that price is the diminution of Ulster's natural loyalty and affection towards Britain as the mother country and the pattern of freedom and parliamentary democracy. Each time a new attempt is made by British politicians to betray Ulster, that indispensable treasury of goodwill is drawn down.

Another part of the price is the destruction of the confidence which ought to exist between the Ulster people and their political leaders. Too many generations of those leaders already have been caught and destroyed in the trap of "co-operation" with U.K. politicians in moves to destroy the Union: the unmourned figures of Moyola and Faulkner are mute memorials of past loss. The strength of the forces to which they succumbed can be gauged by the volume of abuse and disloyalty to which Unionism's present leader, James Molyneaux, has been subjected simply for standing fast and refusing to betray his trust.

Surely it is not asking too much of the U.K. government, and of a Prime Minister who has more than once identified herself with Ulster's cause, to call off without more ado and before more harm is done the fifth-column operation of the Foreign Office, and to stand up, plainly and straightforwardly, for Britain and all its people. What, after all, is Her Majesty's Government for, if not for that?

Ag. Ian

3rd January 1980

You will remember that at a meeting with the Prime Minister in November you handed to her two medals which had been returned to you by Members of the Ulster Defence Regiment.

At that meeting you said that you would very kindly provide the Prime Minister with the addresses of the two soldiers concerned.

Would you please let me have these addresses?

Ian Gow MP
Parliamentary Private Secretary

The Rev Ian Paisley MP

bcc Michael Alexander

CONFIDENTIAL

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

3 January 1980

GF 10.1.80

I enclose a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from Mr. Jim Molyneaux, together with a copy of the proposals enclosed with that letter.

I should be grateful for the text of a draft reply which the Prime Minister might send to Mr. Molyneaux. It would be helpful if your draft could reach me by close of play on Thursday 10 January.

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

M. W. Hopkins, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

5

E.R.

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING ON SECURITY -
2.50 PM ON 24 DECEMBER 1979 AT STORMONT CASTLE

Present: Prime Minister
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Mr Stowe
Sir Maurice Oldfield
Mr Hannigan
Mr Ingham
Mr Whitmore
Mr Harrington
General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland
Chief Constable (designate) RUC
Lt Col M Ashmore
Supt H McMorris

1. Sir Maurice Oldfield and the Chief Constable explained to the Prime Minister the difficulties faced in gathering intelligence. Information was needed from south of the border and from the heart of the Catholic community and was very difficult to obtain. What intelligence was available tended to come through the RUC. In rural areas, strangers were readily identified. The first task of the police must be to re-establish local contact and slowly to win back the support of the community in the difficult areas. The terrorists - mainly PIRA - were increasingly professional. While information about particular crimes became available quite frequently, it often fell short of being evidence capable of use in court. The co-operation of the Garda was urgently needed to establish an acceptable presence on both sides of the border. This would require hard work in the sparsely populated and hence very difficult areas.

2. The Prime Minister enquired about the extent of co-operation with the Garda. The Chief Constable told her that it had definitely improved. It was not yet at the level which he would want in respect of specific incidents, partly because the Garda lacked the skill to gain the necessary information where they were willing to pass it on. This inevitably hampered the work of the security forces: as the GOC explained, the Army needed more information to operate with maximum effectiveness.

3. Sir Maurice Oldfield pointed out that the action by the Government would help to make confidence grow which would enable the population to assist. Even so, evidence would always be difficult to obtain, and would require detailed time-consuming work necessitating a high standard of training for those involved.

4. The Prime Minister asked whether enough research was being done to protect against bombs. The GOC replied that counter measures against radio-controlled devices, enabling them to be jammed or detonated when safe, was the top research priority.

5. Sir Maurice Oldfield emphasised the importance of using the existing law to the best effect. There had been examples of occasions where applications for bail had been successful where they should not have been. Action was in hand to strengthen the RUC legal team, and there might well be a case for some changes in the law.

6. The Chief Constable mentioned that it now seemed clear that the Republic would be taking action under the extra territorial legislation to prosecute O'Hare for a murder in Keady. There were two other cases of attempted murder where the evidence was very strong and where the Republic ought to be able to proceed.

7. The Prime Minister asked whether, in view of the vulnerability of posts such as that in Newtownhamilton, it would matter if they were abandoned. The GOC replied that the Army would prefer to be further back, but their presence was essential to protect RUC stations in such areas. The Police in such places were inevitably isolated from the community and could thus be of only limited effectiveness, but the fact remained that if the security forces were to withdraw the vacuum would merely be filled by terrorists. The waste in manpower had to be accepted on those grounds. There were other ways in which manpower could be saved: the new base at Whiterock, which in effect would replace two and a half bases, would save substantial manpower on static tasks.

E.R.

8. The Chief Constable emphasised that Forkhill and the area around it was probably unique in the difficulties for the security forces. There was considerably improved co-operation with the Garda, for example, in the west of the province, but it would take a long time to make a real impression on the black spots, mainly Belfast, Derry and South Armagh - the latter being by far the worst.

9. The Prime Minister asked whether there were any subsidies on border towns which could be used to affect the co-operation of the population. The Secretary of State replied that there were none which applied differentially towards border areas.

10. The meeting concluded after about 35 minutes.

R. A. Harrington.

R A HARRINGTON
Private Secretary

2 January 1979

Distribution:

Officials present
Mr Marshall
Mr Burns
Mr Buxton
Mr Davenport

Lt Col Ashmore
Supt H McMorris

JS

Ireland

Copy. Original sent to MOD Resident Clerk for despatch to LT COL Thompson

PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO LT-COL. COLIN THOMPSON, COMMANDING OFFICER, 2ND BATTALION, THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT, BALLYKINLER

I was so very sorry to hear of the tragic accident which took place earlier today, as a result of which two of your men lost their lives. May I send my deepest sympathy to you all and especially to the relatives of those who died.

MARGARET THATCHER

1 January 1980

has seen
MT

PRIME MINISTER

You may have heard on the radio this morning about an accidental shooting in Northern Ireland.

This involved men of the Second Battalion, Parachute Regiment, who you visited at Forkhill last week. The Northern Ireland Office tell us that their information is only preliminary so far, but that it appears that a patrol divided into two groups of 10 men, that they lost track of each other with one group moving unexpectedly to a higher piece of ground, and that as a result one group mistook the other for terrorists. In the resulting shooting, two men were killed.

MT

1 January 1980

Leader of the Party:
JAMES H. MOLYNEAUX, J.P., M.P.

Patron:
EILEEN, LADY BROOKEBOROUGH, J.P

President:
COLONEL JAMES G. CUNNINGHAM, O.B.E., D.L.

Secretary:
NORMAN HUTTON, M.I.W.M.,

Telephone No. 24601 (3 lines) & 27606

UNIONIST HEADQUARTERS
3 GLENGALL STREET
BELFAST BT12 5AE

31st December, 1979

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,
10 Downing Street,
Westminster,
London, SW1.

Dear Prime Minister

When Harry West and I met Peter Thorneycroft and the late Airey Neave on 19 March 1979, we were informed that it would not be possible for a Conservative Government to restore devolved government to Northern Ireland during the lifetime of the Parliament following the General Election. However, in his statement in the House on 25 October Humphrey Atkins announced that the Government proposed to embark on an "initiative" with the intention of restoring or transferring a significant range of powers to elected representatives in Northern Ireland. Such restoration of democracy to Northern Ireland is, of course, to be welcomed but the nature of the institutions or structure is of vital importance.

You and I, with our respective Parties, opposed in Parliament proposals to establish in Scotland and Wales structures which we both considered damaging to the unity of the United Kingdom, and it was on that issue that the previous Government fell. It was therefore appropriate that in our Ulster Unionist Manifesto we should pledge ourselves to work unremittingly for the "restoration of such a system of devolved government as will neither endanger the Union nor confer contrived privileges on any section of the community."

I recognise that we now have a duty to be positive and to provide proposals for a structure which would meet that all-important requirement. I am therefore responding to the suggestion made by you in the course of our meeting on 14 November 1979 that I might put in writing my Party's detailed proposals. I do this on the assumption that your policy is now to restore devolved government. But in case you should find it necessary or expedient to revert at some stage to the separate and distinct objective set out in that section of your Election Manifesto which reads "In the absence of devolved government, we will seek to establish one or more elected regional councils with a wide range of powers over local services," you might find it helpful to have our suggestions, in paragraph 7 of the enclosed paper, for the speedy and efficient implementation of that policy.

Needless to say, I shall be very happy to discuss with you the contents of our submission, if you should feel this to be necessary.

Yours ever

Jim Molyneaux

ULSTER UNIONIST COUNCIL

PROPOSALS TO THE PRIME MINISTER

1. INTRODUCTION

(i) The Ulster Unionist Party believes that Northern Ireland should be administered by an elected body empowered to legislate and govern and be known as the Parliament and Government of Northern Ireland.

(ii) The Ulster Unionist Party believes that such a body should not be such as will endanger the Union but rather enhance it and to that end lays down the following principles and proposes a model.

2. SECURITY

Meanwhile Her Majesty's Government must take realistic measures to combat terrorism, defeat the I.R.A. and restore the rule of law.

3. THE PRINCIPLES

(i) The range of matters to be devolved (or transferred) should in general be those of the 1920 Act or the powers transferable under 1973 Constitution Act. The over-riding authority of the Parliament of the United Kingdom should be preserved as laid down in Section 3 of the Draft Bill incorporated in the Report of the Northern Ireland Constitutional Convention.

(ii) The transfer arrangements should take into account majority and minority interests in accordance with normal Parliamentary practice.

(iii) Safeguards and remedies against discrimination on religious or political grounds should be maintained as elsewhere in the U.K. and should also be applied effectively to the actions of United Kingdom ministers and their departments.

(iv) Responsibility for defence and foreign affairs including relations with the European Community should remain with the United Kingdom Government and Parliament.

(v) The appointment of High Court Judges should remain with the Lord Chancellor but routine Court administration and electoral matters should be devolved.

(vi) The Parliament and Government of the United Kingdom should, as in the rest of the Kingdom, be responsible for the defence and security of the land frontier, air corridors and coasts against incursions by terrorist groups and any other hostile forces. Internal responsibility for the maintenance of Law and Order and the Security of the Province should be progressively vested in the Northern Ireland Parliament and Government as the primacy of the Police is established with the support of the other local security forces.

(vii) The general power to raise revenue by taxation of capital and income or by Customs and Excise duties should remain at Westminster but the proceeds of such taxation as is raised in Northern Ireland should be paid into the Northern Ireland Exchequer for financing transferred services. Other taxation powers such as rating and motor licensing should be devolved.

(viii) Public expenditure in Northern Ireland should be assessed on the basis of parity and financed with additional support as necessary from the United Kingdom Exchequer.

(ix) The transfer of powers on these principles need not be completed in one operation but could take place progressively in consultation with the devolved Government.

(x) Machinery should be provided for determining judicially whether any particular matter lay within the powers transferred.

(xi) Municipal, social and environmental services should be administered by elected Local Authorities as in the rest of the United Kingdom. The form of authority and the range of powers could best be determined by the new institutions of devolved Government.

THE MODEL FOR A DEVOLVED LEGISLATURE AND ADMINISTRATION

4. The Institutional Framework:

(i) A Governor appointed by Her Majesty the Queen to exercise such functions as Her Majesty is not able to fulfil in person.

(ii) A single chamber composed of the representatives of single member constituencies elected by a simple majority which would follow the procedure and practice of the House of Commons.

(iii) A Cabinet System of government (The Executive Committee of the Privy Council of Northern Ireland) formed by the leader of the largest group of members in the Parliament and formally appointed by the Governor of Northern Ireland.

(iv) A System of Select Committees to scrutinise the Policies and Actions of the respective Departments, with power to introduce legislation to the Parliament and to debate legislative proposals but with no executive power.

5. The Powers

(i) The powers to be devolved (or transferred) would be broadly those of the 1920 Act or those powers which were transferable under the 1973 Act together with, in either case, those sought in the Convention Report.

(ii) The Parliament would be able to legislate on all transferred matters. All legislative proposals would require the assent of the Governor

of Northern Ireland in Council before becoming law.

(iii) The members of the Cabinet would have collective responsibility and act as Ministers in charge of the Northern Ireland Departments which would discharge Executive functions throughout the transferred field.

(iv) The Parliament and Government of the United Kingdom would retain responsibility for all matters not yet transferred.

6. The Role of Minorities

(i) No entrenched powers, responsibilities or privileges would be assigned to majority or minority parties or groupings as such.

(ii) The Governor would appoint the parliamentary member who appeared to him to have the greatest support from those members not supporting the Cabinet to be the salaried Leader of the Opposition and to be a Privy Councillor for Northern Ireland.

(iii) The members of the departmental select committees would be appointed from those Members of Parliament not in the cabinet and would be so chosen as to ensure that the composition of each committee (and the total membership of all the select committees) reflected the composition of the House as a whole in relation to the groupings in the House.

(iv) Chairmen of select committees would be appointed from the Members of Parliament not in the cabinet and would be so chosen as to ensure that the composition of the total number of chairmen reflected the composition of the House as a whole in relation to the groupings in the House.

(v) The House would be responsible for the allocation of the individual chairmen to their respective committees.

7. Local Government

(i) Experience of the new system of local government created as a result of the Macrory Report shows it to be undemocratic, uneconomic, insensitive, inefficient and bureaucratic. As citizens of the United Kingdom the people of Northern Ireland are rightfully entitled to have a local government system equally as democratic as that which exists in Great Britain. The necessary restoration of local democracy should be given a very high priority by the new devolved Government of Northern Ireland which would be best fitted to perform this task. Should Her Majesty's Government be not yet willing to restore the democratic system of devolved Government which we seek, it should now create in accordance with the Conservative election manifesto, a tier of Local Government on the

following basis.

(ii) A Regional Council or Councils should comprise the representatives of single member regional electoral divisions, elected by simple majority, and should administer and have oversight of all those functions which are the responsibility of Regional Councils in Scotland.

(iii) Each council should have functional Committees to look after day to day administration while matters of policy and principle would be determined by the full Council,

(iv) The Committee Chairmen would be wholly subject to the decisions of their committees.

(v) Each council should be directly responsible through their own committees for:-

(a) Highway construction and maintenance.

(b) Town and Country Planning and Redevelopment.

(c) Water supplies and Sewerage.

(d) Housing.

(e) Coast Protection.

(f) Regional Rating.

(g) Registration of Electors.

(vi) In order to avoid further disruption in a time of financial stringency, the Regional Councils should initially discharge their Education and Social Service functions jointly through the existing Education and Library Boards and Health and Social Service Boards respectively, a majority of whose members they would jointly appoint.

(vii) Regional Councils should also jointly appoint a majority of the members of the Police Authority and of the Northern Ireland Fire Authority which should each continue to be responsible for these services throughout Northern Ireland.

(viii) Each Regional Council should elect their own functional committees and also Board and Authority representatives so as to reflect the composition of the council as a whole. Committees, Boards and Authorities would elect their own Chairmen.

(ix) Regional Council activities should be financed by the Regional Rate supplemented by contributions from the Northern Ireland Exchequer upon the same basis as pertains in Scotland.

(x) Existing Local District Councils should consist of the representatives of single member Local Government Wards elected by simple majority and continue to enjoy the powers they at present possess plus any additional aspects of Local Government functions delegated to them by the upper tier.

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

28 December 1979

Dear Roy,

I enclose a copy of a letter received by the Prime Minister from the Chairman of the Police Federation for Northern Ireland together with a copy of my acknowledgement.

Yours sincerely

Michael Alexander

Roy Harrington, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office.

HO

HS

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

28 December 1979

Dear Mr Wright,

I am writing on the Prime Minister's behalf to thank you for your letter to her of 19 December about the question of arms supplies for the Royal Ulster Constabulary. The Prime Minister is most grateful to you for having written. She greatly values the contribution made by members of the Police Federation for Northern Ireland to the maintenance of law and order in Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely

Michael Alexander

Alan Wright, Esq.

HS

E.R.

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH PRISON GOVERNORS AND PRISON OFFICERS - 2.15 PM ON 24 DECEMBER 1979 AT STORMONT CASTLE

Present:

Prime Minister
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Mr Stowe
Mr Hannigan
Mr Irvine
Mr Barry
Mr Ingham
Mr Whitmore
Mr Harrington

Mr Kerr (Governor, HMP Belfast)
Mr Hilditch (Governor HMP Maze)
Mr Hodkinson (Chairman NI POA)
Mr McGookin (Secretary NI POA)

The Prime Minister expressed her appreciation for the work of the Prison Service in Northern Ireland, in the face of murderous attacks upon its members, and appalling provocation such as that at the Maze. Mr Hilditch said that the problems of the 'H' Blocks were severe, but the service was satisfied that the ending of special category status was right Prison staff would continue to treat even the most savage criminals with scrupulous fairness.

2. Mr McGookin commented that press reporting was often unhelpful. It was necessary to recognise the political motivation of the terrorists: swift and decisive action against them was needed. Supporting this view, Mr Hodkinson suggested that radical measures, such as those advocated by Major General Frank Kitson, should be employed.

3. The Prime Minister asked precisely what measures they had in mind. Mr Kerr suggested that the urgent need was to weed out the brains behind terrorist attacks: the men concerned were known, but the information against them fell short of conclusive proof. It was difficult for prison staffs to accept that no action could be taken. He thought members of the service would also welcome action against propaganda sheets. It was well known that Gerry Adams supported the "H Block Information Office", and Republican News and Protestant paramilitary publications libelled the prison service. Such statements should not go unanswered.

4. The Secretary of State pointed out how difficult it was to counter such reports in a newsworthy way without risking giving further currency to malicious stories.

5. In reply to concern expressed by Mr Hilditch about the release of lifers, the Secretary of State said that nobody convicted of terrorist murders had been released on licence in recent years, and he would not be prepared to release any. Mr Hilditch pointed out that terrorists elsewhere had become respectable political figures. The Prime Minister replied that in those other cases, unlike Northern Ireland, the principle of one man one vote had not applied.

6. Mr Hodkinson returned to his members' concern about press treatment of terrorism. The Prison Officers Association had tried repeatedly to air its point of view on the BBC's "Open Door" programme, but had been refused. Those on the other side engaged in psychological warfare against the forces of law and order seemed to face no such difficulty. The Prime Minister agreed that we needed continually to improve the presentation of our case.

7. Mr McGookin welcomed the Prime Minister's recognition of the role of the 2½ thousand members of the Northern Ireland prison service. The May Report had not recognised the special problems of the service in Northern Ireland.

8. In conclusion, the representatives of the Prison Service thanked the Prime Minister for giving them so much time. The Prime Minister wished them well for the future, and commented that she hoped they would all adopt security measures recommended by the security authorities: quite apart from personal considerations, it was important to take every possible step to deny the terrorists the chance of success.

R. A. Harrington

R A HARRINGTON
Private Secretary

31 December 1979

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Prime Minister

.....

GRS 280

CONFIDENTIAL

FM WASHINGTON 220036Z DECEMBER 79

TO PRIORITY F C O

TEL NO 4334 OF 22 DECEMBER

INFO NIO BELFAST, DUBLIN, BIS NEW YORK.

ARMS FOR THE RUC.

1. YOU MUST HAVE BEEN SURPRISED, AS I WAS, BY THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS, IN HIS DISCUSSION WITH THE PRIME MINISTER ON 17 DECEMBER, TO THE EFFECT THAT CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL WOULD BE NECESSARY IF THE SALE OF REVOLVERS FOR THE RUC WERE TO TAKE PLACE AND SPEAKER O'NEILL HAD ENOUGH SIGNATURES TO A DOCUMENT TO BLOCK SUCH APPROVAL.

2. THERE IS IN FACT NO STATUTORY REQUIREMENT FOR CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF A SALE OF SUCH RELATIVELY LIMITED VALUE AS THE REVOLVERS REQUIRED BY THE RUC. THE REQUIREMENT WOULD BE PURELY POLITICAL, DERIVING FROM THE UNDERTAKING GIVEN BY VANCE TO O'NEILL IN JULY AND THE RUMPUS WHICH CONGRESSMAN BIAGGI AND HIS SUPPORTERS COULD BE EXPECTED TO PROVOKE IF IT GOT OUT THAT EXPORT LICENCES FOR THE GUNS WERE LIKELY TO BE APPROVED.

3. EQUALLY, OUR OWN EXTENSIVE ENQUIRIES ON THE HILL AND THOSE OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE TURNED UP NO TRACE OF ANY DRAFT CONGRESSIONAL RESOLUTION OR SIMILAR DOCUMENT RELATING SPECIFICALLY TO THE SALE OF THE GUNS, STILL LESS A RESOLUTION DRAFTED OR ENDORSED BY THE SPEAKER. I THINK WE CAN BE CONFIDENT THAT NO SUCH RESOLUTION OR DOCUMENT EXISTS. THE STATE DEPARTMENT SPECULATE THAT THE PRESIDENT QUOTE MUST HAVE BEEN SPEAKING FIGURATIVELY UNQUOTE IN REFERRING TO A DOCUMENT WITH SIGNATURES. BUT WHATEVER THE EXPLANATION

PRESIDENT QUOTE MUST HAVE BEEN SPEAKING FIGURATIVELY UNQUOTE IN REFERRING TO A DOCUMENT WITH SIGNATURES. BUT WHATEVER THE EXPLANATION THE HARD FACT REMAINS THAT, AS WE HAVE CONFIRMED WITH THE SPEAKER'S OFFICE, THE THE PRESIDENT SUBSEQUENTLY SPOKE TO O'NEILL AND FAILED TO SHIFT HIM FROM HIS ADAMANT OPPOSITION TO THE SALE.

4. I SHALL BE TELEGRAPHING FURTHER ON MY THOUGHTS ON WHERE WE GO FROM HERE. FOR THE TIME BEING THERE IS LITTLE SCOPE FOR ACTION BY US ON THE HILL, SINCE THE CONGRESS RECESSED EARLY THIS MORNING FOR CHRISTMAS AND IS NOT EXPECTED TO RECONVENE UNTIL 22 JANUARY.

HENDERSON

NNNND

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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Michael Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
London SW1

21 December 1979

Dear Michael,

As I said on the telephone the other day, I am hoping you might have time during the Recess to spend a day in Northern Ireland to have a closer look at the political situation there. Whether that proves possible or not, it was clear from what you said that you would like some general background on the subject. An essential starting point, which is not in general thoroughly reported by the Great Britain press, is the current state of the political parties (you will know the position with regard to the Conference from my letter to you of 20 December, copied to OD members).

It is essential to bear in mind that the political parties in Northern Ireland are an indigenous growth, unique to the Province, and perpetually shifting around the two polarities of Irish national Catholicism and Protestant unionism: Ulster politics can never be identified with Westminster politics. This remains true even though some of the Northern Ireland parties are represented in the House of Commons.

In their different ways most of the major Northern Ireland parties suffer from considerable internal strains; and the history of the last ten years provides examples of leading politicians who got too far out in front of their party (or "polarity") in one way or another. The most recent example of this is the SDLP. The party itself has always been an amalgam of those concerned primarily for social betterment (their main strength being found in and around Belfast) and those who are primarily concerned with realising the nationalist republican ideal of a united Ireland. Gerry Fitt came into the first category, and, while the occasion for his resignation from the leadership and the Party was a difference of opinion about attending the forthcoming Political Conference, this was only the culmination of longer standing tensions relating to the second, and to his very individual style of "leadership". John Hume has ironically brought the party round to attendance at the Conference on the basis of purely procedural "concessions" by the Secretary of State; but even John Hume was at one point in

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danger of taking his Party too much for granted, and he has had to make the absolute maximum (and perhaps a bit more!) out of the points he agreed with my Secretary of State (annexed to my letter of 20 December) in order to convince the Republican wing of his own party that he is still on their side. The party's internal stresses will no longer be reflected at Westminster, since Gerry Fitt now sits as an Independent Socialist, unless he is persuaded to go back into the SDLP - not impossible but perhaps unlikely in the short term while he goes on emphasising that John Hume has agreed to go to the conference on terms almost indistinguishable from those on which he would have attended.

The Ulster Unionist Party - the Official Unionists - present something of the same pattern in a reversed way. Judging by the recent Marplan Survey, which suggests that 84% of the people in the Province want the major political parties to attend the Conference, a large number of the people who normally vote for the Official Unionists must disagree with the decision of their leadership not to attend. It seems that Mr Molyneaux, under the influence of Mr Enoch Powell, but backed (unenthusiastically in some cases) by his fellow party members at Westminster, has got out of touch with his grass-roots. So far there is no sign of his acknowledging this to be the case. Here again, the picture presented at Westminster does not truly reflect what is going on underneath in the Province. The elections to the European Parliament showed this, since Dr Paisley could only have secured his commanding lead with the support of many people who would count themselves as Official Unionists.

The Democratic Unionist Party appears to be somewhat more coherent under the very personal leadership of Dr Paisley, and it is a remarkable demonstration of the OUP Westminster leadership's disconnection from their supporters that it is Dr Paisley who can now present himself to the world as the moderate man of Ulster who is prepared to come and sit down and talk with the republicans! He will have to tread carefully as such, partly because his present power derives largely from his past successes in destroying the "unacceptable" and partly because there will be some among his party faithful who will not take kindly to anything which smacks by compromise arrived at for reasons of realpolitik. But we have good reason to believe that he is very impressed by the Government's - and especially the Prime Minister's - determination to move politically and equally determined not to miss the chance this offers him.

Politicians in Northern Ireland delve into ancient history at the slightest provocation. Without going that far, it is worth emphasising that the troubles of the last ten years started with a civil rights movement directed at religious discrimination: that discrimination was most acute, and most difficult to deal with, at local authority level. As a result, underlying all the political activity in the Province the perception of the minority community and it is impossible to argue that it is without justification that the only form of local government now operating in Northern Ireland, the 26 District Councils, frequently behave in a discriminatory manner. There is plenty of

chapter~~s~~ and verse~~s~~ to quote from and I append an extract from the PCA's report as illustration. This all happens in spite of the fact that legally any act of discrimination by a public body is automatically null and void. The truth is that discrimination effectively operates in various and subtle ways and is by no means always amenable to legal process. A local council can discriminate at least as much by what it decides not to do (often for plausibly respectable reasons) as by what it actually does. It is for this reason that proposals to give the District Councils powers akin to normal local government and exercised by normal local government majority rule is political dynamite - and a very real threat to security.

The fact is that Westminster Ministers and Whitehall officials are - up to a point - trusted by the minority and majority communities and recognised on both sides as properly objective and even-handed. And, by Direct rule, they are seen to be applying the same principles to the central administration of the province. But they have had much less impact on the functioning of local government at the District level and NIO Ministers have been giving much thought to how we can make the anti-discrimination measures bite. It is not easy. If fears of discrimination live on under District Councils whose powers are limited to refuse collection and recreation facilities, what would it be like if they got their hands on housing or personal social services? The reality is that there are still very sectarian attitudes at work in some Councils.

If this background is ignored, then an upper tier of local government to fill the gap between the District Councils and Central Government looks like simple common sense; and in purely administrative terms so it is. But as long as it implies untrammelled government by the majority - which always means in Northern Ireland the Unionist majority - it inevitably arouses deep fears and anxieties among the representatives of the minority.

The SDLP, although they commanded only 19.7% of the votes at the last general election, are the main representatives of the minority, and have to be treated with sensitivity, while at the same time the majority - who have their rights too! - must not be alienated. This is something which has to be borne continuously in mind, and explains why we in the NIO take what may sometimes seem to others to be a pedantic interest in the precise language in which the Government clothes any references to the Northern Ireland scene. And we do it because lying behind politics and political tensions are sectarian communities with plentiful supplies of arms and ammunition and a willingness to use them, both on each other and on the security forces.

Yours ever,

Roy Harrington

R A HARRINGTON

24. My investigation did not, however, confirm the complainant's suspicion that religious discrimination had determined the Council's decision. Although two of those present at the interviews suggested independently that when it came to light that one of the complainant's 'O' levels was in Irish—often regarded as an indication that a person has attended a Roman Catholic School—there had been a noticeable loss of interest in him as a candidate, there was nevertheless considerable unanimity on the part of Councillors, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, that the complainant gave the impression that he was not really interested in the post. And in view of the fact that the decision not to select the complainant was unanimous and unanimously explained I am satisfied that religious discrimination was not a significant factor in that decision.

25. Having established that there was maladministration by the Council I had to consider whether there had been any injustice to the complainant.

26. Accepting that the Councillors were unaware that the complainant was the only candidate who should have been interviewed, the task before them was to decide which of the candidates was the best for the post. In this matter qualifications should be an important consideration, but it not infrequently happens that a less well qualified candidate is preferred on grounds of personal qualities or other factors assessed in the interview. In such circumstances failure to appoint the best qualified candidate may give rise to suspicions, but when, as in the present case, there is unanimity as to legitimate considerations having applied I would not be justified in stating that maladministration in the selection had been proved. In my opinion the question as to the complainant's enthusiasm for the post was a legitimate consideration.

27. Under the terms of the advertisement, however, Mr A should not have been interviewed at all and my enquiries with the Councillors individually indicated that if Mr A had not been seen or if he had refused the post some would have wished to re-advertise and some would have favoured the complainant's appointment, with the result that there was about a 50-50 chance that he would have been offered the post. I considered, therefore, that the complainant had sustained a measure of injustice as a consequence of the maladministration by the Council in not adhering to the terms of its advertisement and that for this he would be entitled to receive some monetary compensation. However, the complainant has informed me that my report and its acceptance by the Council are sufficient recompense to him and he does not wish for anything further.

Case No. 481/76—Complaint against Cookstown District Council concerning the appointment of a Clerk/Typist.

1. The complainant wrote to me on 25 November 1976 about the failure of Cookstown District Council to appoint her to the post of Clerk/Typist on the Swimming Pool staff at Cookstown for which she had been short-listed. She alleged that the person appointed was less well qualified for the position than herself and that the Council discriminated against her because she was a Roman Catholic.

2. The Clerk to the Council was notified of the complaint, and he replied that he did not agree that the person appointed was less well qualified for the position than the complainant and that no mention of religion was made either on the application forms or at interviews.

3. I obtained from the Council copies of all documents relative to the filling of the post and certain other documents which I requested. I interviewed the then Chairman of the Council and the Clerk to the Council, the Council's Solicitor being present. I also interviewed individually those members of the Council who had taken part in the selection of the successful candidate.

The Selection Procedure

4. The post was advertised in the local press in the last week of August 1976 in the following terms:—

> "Applications are invited for appointment to the undernoted positions at the Council's Swimming Pool which is to open shortly.
>
> CLERK/TYPIST (1 vacancy)
>
> Salary Scale Clerical C1 (figures quoted)
>
> The person appointed will be a competent typist who will also require to act as relief Cashier. Ability to deal with the public is essential."

A Job Specification for issue to candidates described the duties of the post in more detail and also, under the heading *"Desirable Qualifications"* listed the following:—

> "Competent Typist preferably with Stage II RSA
> Proficiency in Shorthand would be an advantage
> A knowledge of filing and accounts desirable."

5. In reply to the advertisement 36 applications were received, and these were placed before the Council's Establishment Committee at a meeting on 23 September. The minutes of that meeting record that each Member was supplied with a copy of the Council's Code of Employment Procedure. The minutes also record that each application was considered by the Committee and on the recommendation of the Interviewing Panel 23 candidates, including the complainant, were short-listed for interview. The Interviewing Panel in question consisted of the Clerk to the Council, the Assistant Clerk and the Baths Manager. The candidates who were eliminated at this stage were not interviewed but consisted of those who resided outside the Cookstown District and those whose applications appeared to the Panel to be of a lower standard.

6. The candidates who had been short-listed were invited to attend for typing tests and interviews on 1 and 4 October. In the event 19 candidates attended. A typing test in two parts was given and the papers of the candidates were collected as evidence of their proficiency in shorthand and typing. At the interviews the Clerk asked all the questions while his two colleagues marked interview record sheets on which they assessed the candidates under the six headings of: Appearance, Education, Intelligence, Emotional Adjustment, Personality and Employment Experience. These sheets were also preserved.

7. As a result of the tests and interviews, the Panel drew up a further short-list of 11 names, including the complainant, any of whom they considered would be suitable for the vacancy. The test papers and record sheets have been scrutinised by my staff and I am satisfied that this selection, so far as it went, was carried out in a fair and reasonable manner. I noted, however, that the typing test papers had not been assessed by any system of numerical marking and that a number of the typing errors made by the candidates, including the successful candidate, had apparently been overlooked as they were not marked with a red pen like the other errors.

8. The Establishment Committee of the Council met again on 22 October for the purpose of appointing staff for the new Swimming Pool. The minutes of that meeting record that one of the two Roman Catholic Councillors present commented that he would like to see "job sharing" between Roman Catholics and Protestants for the various posts. There was evidently no response to this proposal from the Unionist Councillors present.

9. The minutes of the meeting record that the appointment of a Clerk/Typist was made in the following manner. Two Unionist Councillors proposed and seconded the appointment of one candidate. An SDLP Councillor proposed and an Independent Councillor seconded another candidate, who was not the complainant. A vote was then taken by a show of hands, and there were three votes for the Unionist-proposed

candidate and two votes for the SDLP-proposed candidate, the former being then declared appointed. The Chairman of the Council did not cast a vote and the other members present were 3 Unionist Councillors, 1 SDLP Councillor and 1 Independent Councillor.

10. I ascertained that in making this appointment in the manner described above (and indeed all the other appointments made by the Establishment Committee that day) the Council was in breach of its own Code of Employment Procedure. Paragraph 5 of the Code reads as follows:—

"Applications shall be submitted to and considered by an Interviewing Panel. If there are 3 or less applicants holding the required qualifications all should be interviewed by a panel of not less than 2 persons. If more than 3 possess the requisite qualifications the panel is empowered, at its discretion, to interview all such candidates or draw up a short-list of not less than 3 such candidates and interview those short-listed. The interviewing panels should be composed as follows:—

a. Trainee Grade post and posts with salary maxima not exceeding the maximum for the time being of Clerical Division CII—The Clerk and the appropriate Head of the Department or other senior officer nominated by him.

b. Posts carrying a salary scale exceeding a. but excluding c. . . .

c. Designated Chief Officers, Heads of Departments . . .

The interviewing panels shall make all appointments in sub-paragraph (a) . . .".

11. The post of Clerk/Typist and the other appointments which were made on 22 October by the Establishment Committee clearly fell within sub-paragraph (a) of the above passage, and therefore the appointments should have been made by an Interviewing Panel consisting of the Clerk and either the Recreation Officer or another senior officer nominated by the latter. It was directly contrary to the Code that these decisions should be taken by elected Members of the Council. The Councillors concerned informed me that, although they were aware that a Code of Employment Procedure had been adopted by the Council soon after it was first set up, they were unaware of its provisions with regard to the making of such appointments. There is no doubt in my mind that this breach of the Code constitutues maladministration.

Evidence of Councillors and the Clerk as to Method of Selection

12. My next concern was to discover the extent to which the selection of the successful candidate had been made on the basis of merit. From this point of view the Clerk to the Council was questioned as to any evidence that might have been given to the Establishment Committee at the time when they chose the successful candidate from the 11 names on the second short-list. The Clerk stated that the Interviewing Panel had considered that 4 of the 11 candidates were especially good and the names of these 4 had been marked on a copy of the list of candidates. However, when the Establishment Committee met to consider the appointment no questions were asked of the Clerk as to the relative merits of any of the candidates and the list with the 4 names marked on it was not produced. The application forms of all the 36 candidates first short-listed were available to the Committee in the sense that they were on the table in a wire basket. At his first interview the Clerk stated that although these documents were available they were not in fact consulted by the Members of the Committee. At a subsequent meeting with me when the Chairman of the Council and the Council's Solicitor were present the Clerk said that he thought some Members had asked to see the papers in the wire basket. The Chairman of the Council, who had been in the Chair at the meeting on 22 October, stated that he had no clear recollection on this point.

13. I asked the Independent Councillor for what reason he had proposed "job sharing" (paragraph 8 above) at the meeting on 22 October. I was told in reply that because of the way the Council had been run in the past there was not a single Roman Catholic in the Council's office staff. The former Urban District Council had been all Unionists, but under proportional representation and with the change in area there were now 5 Roman Catholics among the 15 Councillors. The Roman Catholic members did not have a working relationship with the Unionist Councillors, and the Council's business was often decided on the basis of a sectarian majority vote. The Roman Catholic Councillors had wanted to obtain a footing for Roman Catholics to be employed in the Council Offices, and for this purpose had proposed that the Council should work up to an office staff which would be one-third Catholic, but they had met with no success.

14. I enquired as to the circumstances in which a Roman Catholic candidate (other than the complainant) was proposed for appointment to the Clerk/Typist post. I was told that the SDLP Councillor had gone to the Council Offices a few days before the meeting and examined the application forms of the applicants with a view to selecting a suitable Roman Catholic with good typing and shorthand qualifications. The candidate proposed was the one selected in this manner. According to the Roman Catholic Councillors, the Unionist Members must also have decided which candidate they were going to vote for before the meeting on 22 October took place, since no questions were asked at the meeting about the relative merits of the candidates and the documents in the wire basket were not distributed for examination.

15. The Unionist Councillor who had proposed the appointment of the successful candidate informed me that, sitting in the Committee Room, he had gone roughly through the educational qualifications of the 11 short-listed candidates as set out in their application forms. He had noted that the candidate he proposed had several 'O' levels and was not already in employment. On the basis of these observations he had proposed her. He stated that he believed appointments should be made on the basis of merit. He also said in reply to a question that he accepted that a sectarian imbalance in the Council's staff should be a matter of conern to Councillors.

16. The Unionist Councillor who had seconded the appointment of the successful candidate said that in his recollection he had asked for and looked through the typing test papers of the candidates. These papers had been passed all round the table. He considered that the candidate he supported had done the best typing paper. When I asked him about certain other candidates he agreed that these were good too and said that there was not a lot to choose between the candidates. He said that he also favoured a candidate who was not already in a job. He stated, finally, that the choice had not been a sectarian one on his part.

17. The third Unionist Councillor who had voted and had thereby tipped the balance against the candidate proposed by the SDLP Councillor is now the Chairman of the District Council. He fully accepted that a junior appointment such as this would best be made by the Council's senior staff, without involving Councillors, and that appointments should be made solely on the basis of merit. In his recollection on 22 October the Chairman of the meeting had passed the basket of papers round the table. However, he accepted my suggestion that it would be difficult except with the expenditure of considerable time and effort to form an accurate view of the relative merits of the candidates on the basis of the papers in the state in which they then were. Nevertheless he denied that he was influenced in his vote by sectarian motives. He named another candidate (not previously referred to in this report) as having been probably the best of the 11, but said that as she was already in a good job he preferred to look for a school leaver who would probably appreciate the job more. Therefore he supported the successful candidate, who also had the advantage of living near the Swimming Pool.

18. The Chairman of the Council at that time was in the Chair at the meeting on 22 October. He told me that he had very little recollection of the meeting. He did not take part in the voting, and he told me that this was probably because he could not make up his own mind as between the two candidates who had been proposed and in such circumstances he was not disposed to vote for one side and be accused then of voting on sectarian lines.

The Council's Record in Other Appointments

19. As part of my investigation I requested a list of all the Council's staff, with an indication whether they were Protestants or Roman Catholics. The then Chairman agreed to my being given this information, but pointed out that as the present Council had inherited most of its staff from the former Rural District Council it should not be held directly responsible for any sectarian imbalance. The list showed that about 25% of the Council's manual staff were Roman Catholics. One of the senior officers of the Council was a Roman Catholic, but apart from him all the office staff of the Council were Protestants. In the area of the District Council at least one-third of the adult population is Roman Catholic.

20. It is a fact that the main recruitment for which the present Council has been responsible is the staffing of the new Swimming Pool. In addition to the Clerk/Typist post there were 10 posts of Supervisor/Pool Attendant and 2 posts of Cashier/Receptionist to be filled when the Establishment Committee met on 22 October. I have received no complaint arising out of the filling of these posts, but I included this matter in my investigation to see what light it would throw on the question whether sectarianism was a factor in the Council's recruitment practices. The number of applicants for the Supervisor/Pool Attendant posts was in fact less than the number of vacancies, and therefore all (including both Roman Catholics and Protestants) were declared successful.

21. The minutes show that at the stage of the meeting when the Cashier/Receptionist posts were considered only 5 Councillors were present. The Councillors had before them a short-list of 8 candidates whom the Interviewing Panel considered suitable. The 2 Roman Catholic Councillors again proposed and seconded a Roman Catholic candidate. The same Unionist Councillors who had proposed and seconded the successful candidate for the Clerk/Typist post proposed and seconded 2 other candidates whom I will distinguish by calling them Candidate A and Candidate B. In a show of hands for the filling of the first post there were 3 votes for Candidate A and 2 for the Roman Catholic candidate. Candidate A was declared appointed. In a further show of hands for the second post there were 2 votes for Candidate B and 2 votes for the Roman Catholic candidate. In view of the equality of votes the Chairman ruled that the second post should be filled by the Council at its next meeting.

22. The SDLP Councillor who proposed the Roman Catholic candidate told me that the Committee had probably had the qualifications of all the candidates at an earlier stage, but at the meeting on 22 October no information was read out or passed round. The choice of this particular Roman Catholic candidate rested on the fact that she had worked in a Bookmaker's Office and was therefore familiar with the handling of cash.

23. The Chairman of the Council and of the meeting was, as already recorded in paragraph 18, not at all clear in his recollection of the meeting. He did not recall why he had voted for Candidate A. I asked him why at the second vote he had refrained from voting for either Candidate B or the Roman Catholic candidate, and he replied that he was not satisfied that they were as good as the candidate for whom he had voted or indeed as good as he would have wanted for the job. I suggested that in that case he should have proposed that the second post should be readvertised, but he had not done so.

24. The Unionist Councillor who proposed Candidate A said that he had done so because her qualifications appeared to be outstanding. He said that the qualifications of all the short-listed candidates had been read out by the Clerk. He seconded Candidate B because she had a lot of experience and he thought that she was better than the Roman Catholic candidate.

25. The Unionist Councillor who proposed Candidate B said that he personally did not ask questions of the Clerk but someone else would have done so and the answers given suited him. He knew Candidate A personally and considered her most suitable for the job. He proposed Candidate B because he knew that she had worked in an office and had experience of handling money. In reply to my question about the Roman Catholic candidate he said that he did not find anything wrong with her but he was not acquainted with her.

26. The minutes of the Council's meeting of 28 October show that at the time when the appointment of the second Cashier/Receptionist came up for decision there were 7 Protestant Councillors and 5 Roman Catholic Councillors present, apart from the Chairman who had refrained from voting to break the tie at the Establishment Committee meeting. Candidate B was proposed and seconded by the same Councillors as before and so was the same Roman Catholic candidate. There was then a show of hands and 6 Protestant Members voted for Candidate B and the 5 Roman Catholic Members voted for the Roman Catholic candidate. Consequently Candidate B was declared appointed. I am assured that there was no discussion at the meeting of the respective merits of the 2 candidates under consideration and that the matter was settled by means of a straight sectarian vote on both sides. The SDLP and Independent Councillors whom I interviewed told me that this was common form at meetings of the Council.

Findings

27. As already stated in paragraph 11, the Council did not use the procedure laid down in its Code of Employment Procedure for the making of appointments at this level. This applies to the Clerk/Typist post and also to a number of other posts at the Swimming Pool. I consider that it was primarily the duty of the Clerk to draw the attention of the Council to the required procedure, and I understand that this was not done. The Council members whom I interviewed claimed that they were unaware of the requirement until I drew attention to it, but the Council as such carries the responsibility.

28. From my examination of the procedure which was in fact used I conclude that merit was not the sole consideration in the making of the appointment, as it should have been. The Roman Catholic Councillors freely admitted that sectarian considerations were a factor in their proposing and voting as they did, but they explained this as being a defensive reaction to the sectarian practices of the Unionist Councillors. As evidence of these practices they cited the completely unbalanced workforce in the Council's office staff.

29. The Unionist Councillors made no admissions, but I did not find their denials convincing. These Councillors were aware of the suspicion in which they were held by the Roman Catholic Members but they made no move to prove it unjustified. There was no orderly and conscientious effort made to establish a true order of merit among the short-listed candidates. The state of the relevant documents and the manner of their placing before the Committee was not such as to facilitate the drawing up of a true order of merit. It was clear to me that the Clerk had been trained not to put forward advice or information which might have the effect of tying the hands of Councillors when making their choice.

30. Looking at the proceedings for the appointment of the Clerk/Typist and the Cashier/Receptionists together, I am impressed by the fact that there was never any cross-voting between the two sides or any disagreement among Unionist Councillors as to their preferred candidate. Once a candidate had been proposed by a Unionist Councillor that candidate received a straight party vote. There is no real doubt in my mind that such candidates were selected prior to the actual meeting.

31. Some of the explanations which Councillors actually gave to me for their choices were inconsistent with appointment on the basis of merit alone. I do not consider it right to give preference to a school leaver over an experienced office worker unless this is explained in the advertisement or job specification. The job specification for the Clerk/Typist post actually states: "a knowledge of filing and accounts desirable", and this suggests that preference would be given to a candidate with office experience of this kind. There is also no warrant for preferring an unemployed person over an employed person who may wish to change jobs. Mention was made more than once of knowing a candidate or some relations of a candidate, and in the Northern Ireland situation any such considerations must usually favour co-religionists.

32. I did not interview the candidates, but I have made a careful study of the papers of the short-listed candidates for the Clerk/Typist post. My conclusion is that although the complainant was one of the most able candidates I would not be justified in finding that she should have been appointed in place of the candidate who was successful. She was, however, an entrant in a competition in which she was entitled to expect to be judged purely on the basis of merit, and I find that she as well as any other Roman Catholic candidate who was short-listed suffered under a handicap on account of her religion. On those grounds I find that she sustained injustice in consequence of the Council's maladministration and I consider that she should receive some monetary compensation in recognition of this injustice.

Future Prospects

33. When the Roman Catholic Councillors told me that they had proposed job sharing as a remedy for the sectarian imbalance in the Council's staff, I explained to them that such an arrangement would be contrary to the law under which the Fair Employment Agency operates and could lead to well-founded complaints by either Protestants or Roman Catholics. I explained how I understood that the Fair Employment Agency would approach such situations and I stated that the essential point was to ensure that future appointments would be made on the basis of merit and merit alone, and that all candidates should understand that they would be given equal consideration.

34. I am pleased to be able to report that the Council intends that its procedures for making future appointments should be as laid down in its Code of Employment Procedure. This alone should eliminate much of the scope for sectarianism in the consideration of candidates. The Unionist Councillors whom I interviewed told me that they believed in selection on the basis of merit, and I hope that on reviewing this case they will form a truer understanding of what that means and will genuinely seek to have it applied by the Council in future.

Case No. 471/76—Complaint against the Eastern Health and Social Services Board concerning the appointment of a semi-skilled Engineering Employee Grade II.

1. The complainant wrote to me on 22 November 1976 complaining that the Eastern Health and Social Services Board had failed to give due consideration to his application for employment as a Semi-Skilled Engineering Employee Grade II. He stated that on 29 September 1976 he had applied for the post and that although he had spent most of his working life in the engineering industry he had not been interviewed for the post. He had been notified by letter dated 18 November 1976 that his application had not been successful.

2. I notified the Board's Chief Administrative Officer of the details of the complaint and obtained his written comments. One of my officers later visited the Board's District Office at Belfast City Hospital where he examined relevant records, including the applications received for the post and discussed the complaint with the District Personnel Officer and a Unit Administrator who had taken part in the short-listing and interviewing of candidates for the post. My officer also visited Muckamore Abbey Hospital where the vacancy had occurred and discussed the complaint with the Unit Engineer who was the second member of the Short-Listing and Interviewing Panel. The complaint was also discussed with the complainant when my officer called at his home during the course of my investigation.

3. I learned that the post of Semi-Skilled Engineering Employee Grade II at Muckamore Abbey Hospital was advertised in late September 1976. The press advertisement gave no indication of the duties of the post or of the experience or qualifications which applicants would be expected to have.

4. The Board received 14 applications in reply to the advertisement and these were considered by the Short-Listing and Interviewing Panel. On 21 October invitations to attend for interview on 28 October were sent to 7 of the candidates. The complainant was not among those short-listed.

5. Following the interviews the Panel reported to the District Administrative Officer on 1 November that 6 candidates had been interviewed (one had been unable to attend for interview) and that it was recommended that two of the candidates be offered the posts of "Semi-Skilled Engineering Employee with Boilerhouse duties" and "Semi-Skilled Engineering Employee" respectively. The successful applicants were offered the appointments accordingly by letter dated 5 November 1976 and on 18 November all other applicants including the complainant were notified that they had been unsuccessful.

Further Investigations

6. In discussion with my officer the Unit Engineer stated that although no job specification had been drawn up by the Board it had been intended that the person appointed to the advertised post would act as relief boilerman. In addition to shift duty he might be expected to be engaged on boilerhouse duties for over 20 weeks per year to cover the holidays of the 4 regular boilermen. For the rest of his time he would act as mate to one of the fitters responsible for maintenance.

7. In separate discussions with my officer both members of the Short-Listing Panel recalled that they had felt that it would not be appropriate to appoint a skilled tradesman to the post because of the possibility of demarcation difficulties if he undertook work appropriate to one of the maintenance fitters. The Unit Engineer stated that the Short-Listing Panel had also been influenced by the fact that there had been a turnover of 7 men in the job over the past 5 years. As younger men seemed to find the late shift duty disagreeable the Panel had hoped that a more mature person with a fairly settled outlook might give more lengthy service.

8. Having obtained copies of all 14 application forms I noted that of the 7 applicants who were not short-listed for interview 5 (including the complainant) appeared to be skilled engineering tradesmen. I also noted however that one of the candidates short-listed for interview appeared to be a skilled engineering tradesman (ie fitter/turner). The Unit Engineer stated that at the time of short-listing the Panel had taken him to be only semi-skilled. From the information on the application forms it also appeared that of the 6 other short-listed candidates, 2 who were members of the Hospital's own staff, had completed their application forms after the closing date and (including one of those eventually selected for appointment) did not have any experience in engineering work.

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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

Ireland

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

(2)

Ronnie Runcie

Michael Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
London SW1

20 December 1979

Dear Michael,

Ks. Rus

NORTHERN IRELAND CONFERENCE

Since I last wrote to the Private Secretaries to OD members on 23 November there has been a period of uncertainty about the prospects for mounting the Conference. Nothing is certain in Northern Ireland: but it seems safe to say that the Conference will take place and will open on Monday 7 January in Parliament Buildings, Stormont. My Secretary of State thought that his OD colleagues might welcome a brief account of recent developments.

Shortly after my earlier letter the Government's Working Paper prepared for the Conference (Cmnd. 7763) was debated in the House of Commons on Thursday 29 November. In that debate the Working Paper, and the initiative generally, had a reasonably good reception. The Opposition found little to criticise, though its support was muted. One aspect that caused concern was the lack of understanding on the part of Conservative back-benchers of the policy underlying the Government's initiative of seeking to return a wide range of political responsibilities to elected representatives in Northern Ireland. They seemed to see the way ahead more in terms of enlarging the scope of local government in the Province - a policy which, whatever its merits or demerits, would never be likely to secure the support of the minority community. My Secretary of State is taking steps to see that the Government's policy is put across effectively to back-benchers.

But since that time the main difficulty has been caused by the SDLP's disavowal of Mr Fitt after he had accepted the Working Paper as a basis for the Conference, and Mr Fitt's subsequent resignation from the party leadership. The SDLP's concern has been to broaden the permitted scope of the Conference; in particular they have been anxious that it should not be precluded from discussing their wider aspirations for "power sharing" and Irish unity. The difficulty,

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of course, is that Dr Paisley, though keen to take part in a Conference, has all along made it plain that he would not be prepared to take part if the basis were widened to that extent. Mr Atkins has had a number of meetings with Mr Hume (since he succeeded Mr Fitt as SDLP leader) and with Dr Paisley with a view to reaching an understanding on the basis for the Conference. Enclosed is a copy of a statement agreed between Mr Atkins and Mr Hume and made public after they had again met on Saturday last, 15 December. The broad content (but not the text) of this statement had been put to Dr Paisley, who had not dissented from it. After some final hesitations both participants have now agreed to take part in the Conference on the basis of the understandings set out in the statement. Judging by Mr Hume's behaviour since the agreement on Saturday, we cannot be confident that he is yet firmly in his party's saddle: that does not look well for the Conference.

The points covered by the joint statement are, from our point of view, more a clarification of the basis of the Conference (as set out in the Working Paper) than a departure from it. Points 1 and 2 make it clear that any party can table a paper containing as wide a range of its proposals as it chooses, and these can be discussed to the extent (likely in practice to be limited) that the other participants agree to do so. Point 3 recognises the possibility of further political development beyond the limited area set down for consideration in the Working Paper. The reaffirmation of the two-fold approach of the UK Government towards the status of Northern Ireland which is set out here is seen as important by the SDLP. Point 4 reiterates what was said in my earlier letter, and by the Secretary of State in last month's debate, about the "Irish dimension" in terms of practical cross-border co-operation. Point 5 makes it clear that, though the Working Paper takes a negative attitude towards "power sharing" as attempted in 1973/4, because there is little, if any, prospect of inter-party agreement on it, nevertheless it provides an ample basis for consideration of somewhat similar arrangements.

Throughout this episode the OUP has maintained its position of refusal to take part in a Conference which it sees as a mere talking shop foredoomed to failure. There are some signs to discontent within the party on this attitude and it is just possible that there may be a change of heart. In writing again to Mr Molyneaux my Secretary of State has been careful to leave the door open.

All this will no doubt be further rehearsed in the House on Thursday next, 20 December when my Secretary of State answers questions including several about the political initiative.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Private Secretaries of OD members and to Martin Vile.

Yours ever,

Roy Harrington.

R A HARRINGTON

Enc.

Hand 1.

At meetings on 10 and 15 December the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Mr John Hume of the SDLP discussed the working paper (Cmnd 7763) which is the basis for the proposed Conference. The following points were agreed :-

1. The Secretary of State's invitation to Conference participants in his speech in the House of Commons on 29 November (Hansard, cols 1507 - 8) to put in papers to the Conference means that the SDLP will be free to put forward papers containing their own proposals.

2. The Secretary of State as Chairman would invite those present to introduce their own papers orally. It will be for the Conference as a whole to consider how particular points in such papers should be pursued.

3. The Conference is not an end in itself, but is a means of identifying the 'highest possible level of agreement' on the transfer of responsibility for certain functions to locally elected representatives. Even after such a transfer, further political development remains possible, depending always upon the wishes of the people of Northern Ireland. The Government envisage the Conference as the first step in a developing process of agreement between the people of Northern Ireland. Further political development would be fully consistent with Section 1 of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973, which means that Northern Ireland will remain a part of the UK as long as a majority of Northern Ireland inhabitants so wish, but that if such a majority indicated a wish for some change in their constitutional status, Her Majesty's Government would not stand in the way of such a change.

4. As regards the 'Irish dimension', the Conference (and in due course any elected body) would be able to discuss the relationship between an elected representative body in Northern Ireland and the Authorities of the Republic on all matters over which the former exercised responsibility.

5. The Working Paper (Cmnd 7763) makes it clear that, although there is no serious prospect of agreement on a return to the system of government which obtained in the first five months of 1974, arrangements to take account of the interests of the minority by a sharing of the exercise of governmental powers will be on the table for discussion by the Conference, as is evidenced by a number of references to such arrangements in the Working Paper itself.

6. The Secretary of State will be willing on request, and quite apart from the Conference, to have separate meetings with the parties represented at the Conference on wider issues.

POLICE FEDERATION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Established by Act of Parliament

R.U.C. Garnerville
Garnerville Road,
Belfast BT4 2NX
Telephone : 768203

Pl. Prime Minister
I have acknowledged.

(2)

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister
House of Commons
LONDON

Your reference Rt. 28/XII

Our reference

Date 19 December 1979 f27/12

Dear Prime Minister

On behalf of the Police Federation for Northern Ireland may I express my sincere thanks to you for your personal efforts during your recent visit to America in trying to obtain further arms supplies for the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

It is very much appreciated that you considered it an important issue to raise during your brief meeting with President Carter, whilst there are items of National and International importance demanding your attention.

I fully recognise that the forthcoming Presidential elections have played a direct part in the Presidents refusal to change his mind, although in the future I would hope that the President would reconsider and take full cognizance of your views.

May I take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to you Prime Minister, and your party for all the support you have given to the RUC in various ways in our efforts to maintain law and order in Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely

Alan Wright

ALAN WRIGHT
Chairman

NORTHERN IRELAND: ADVANCE COPIES

24

PS

PS/SIR I GILMOUR

PS/PUS

MR FERGUSSON

LORD N GORDON LENNOX

HD/RID

PUSD (2)

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NEWS DEPT

N IRELAND OFFICE - PS TO SEC OF STATE
RM 66 A/2 GGS

N IRELAND OFFICE [4 copies]

MR K STOWE

MR MARSHALL

MR P W J BUXTON

CABINET OFFICE - SIR ~~J HUNT~~ R ARMSTRONG

MR R WADE-GERY

DIO

NO 10 DOWNING STREET

.....

.....

~~RESIDENT CLERK~~

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FM WASHINGTON 200225Z DEC 79
TO PRIORITY FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE
TELEGRAM NUMBER 4287 OF 19 DECEMBER 1979
INFO DUBLIN, NIO BELFAST AND BIS NEW YORK.

FOLLOWING FROM SIR R ARMSTRONG.

ARMS FOR THE RUC.

THE IRISH AMBASSADOR, SPEAKING PRIVATELY AFTER MY BRIEFING FOR THE COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS THIS AFTERNOON, SAID THAT AFTER THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT THE PRESIDENT HAD SPOKEN IN STRONG TERMS TO TIP O'NEILL. HE REPORTED O'NEILL AS SAYING THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD TWISTED HIS ARM HARD. O'NEILL DID NOT HOWEVER CHANGE HIS VIEW OR HIS POSITION. CLEARLY HE WAS NOT GOING TO LET THE PRESIDENT OFF THE HOOK. DONLON COMMENTED THAT THE DECISION WAS FOR THE WHITE HOUSE TO MAKE, SO THAT IT WOULD BE FOR THE PRESIDENT TO CONSIDER WHETHER HE COULD FIND SOME OTHER WAY OF GETTING OFF THE HOOK.

2. DONLON COMMENTED THAT IT WAS A PITY THAT WE HAD NOT PUT THE REQUEST IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF THE MOUNTBATTEN AND WARRENPOINT KILLINGS. THE IMPLICATION APPEARED TO BE THAT ANOTHER SPECTACULAR ATTACK BY P I R A - PERHAPS ONE WHICH RESULTED IN THE DEATHS OF RUC OFFICERS - MIGHT CREATE A CLIMATE HERE IN WHICH A REQUEST FOR ARMS FOR THE RUC WOULD STAND A BETTER CHANCE OF GOING THROUGH.

RUC OFFICERS - MIGHT CREATE A CLIMATE HERE IN WHICH A REQUEST FOR ARMS FOR THE RUC WOULD STAND A BETTER CHANCE OF GOING THROUGH.

HENDERSON

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0456

AND QRU

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MODB
Ireland (OR)

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-~~930 7822~~ 218 2111/3

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18th December 1979

MO 19/3

Discussed with the Prime Minister who was content.
AWB 20xii

Prime Minister
Mr Pym proposes to go ahead with this reduction tomorrow, Thursday. Content?
AWB 19xii

Dear Michael,

NORTHERN IRELAND: ARMY FORCE LEVEL

My Secretary of State told the Prime Minister in his letter of 29th October of the proposed reduction in the Army force level in Northern Ireland.

When the force level was last reduced a reference to the change was made in the course of an Emergency Provisions Act Renewal debate. However the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland did not consider that this would be timely on the occasion of the most recent debate, on 11th December, in view of the installation in office on the same day of Mr Haughey and the possible effects on the political conference. My Secretary of State agreed, and since no obvious opportunity presents itself for referring to the change in the near future, Mr Atkins and Mr Pym believe that it would be preferable to play the reduction in low key, and not to make a formal announcement. A full PR brief is being prepared against any press questioning which may follow the reduction, and will be passed to your press office.

Mr Pym believes that the personnel of the unit which was to have gone to Northern Ireland in February should be told of the change as soon as possible. The unit is currently undertaking training for Northern Ireland which will be wasted; the change will affect the postings of six other units; and it is becoming increasingly likely that the news will leak. Since most of the

/ unit ...

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street

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unit will be spending the immediate Christmas period with their families Mr Pym would like them to be told before Christmas, he proposes on 20th December.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is aware of the proposed arrangements, and is content.

I am sending a copy of this letter to George Walden (FCO) Roy Harrington (NIO) and Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever
Brian Norbury

(B M NORBURY)

NORTHERN IRELAND: REDUCTION IN FORCE LEVEL - PR BRIEF

Q1. Is it true that 4/7 DG will not be going to Northern Ireland as planned?

A1. Yes.

Q2. What will happen to them?

A2. They will remain in NATO carrying out their primary role.

Q3. Will any other unit be going instead?

A3. No.

Q4. Does this mean you are reducing the Army in Northern Ireland?

A4. Yes. A three-company unit due to complete a 4-month tour in February is being withdrawn without replacement.

Q5. How many men?

A5. 420.

Q6. What will the force level be then?

A6. Twelve major units of the combat arms [about 12500] and eleven battalions of UDR.

Q7. Why is this reduction being made now?

A7. It has always been the Army's intention to lower the force levels in Northern Ireland and return our soldiers to their main role in NATO thereby contributing to the relief of overstretch in the Army as a whole. The reduction will be mainly absorbed within Belfast where the Army will be redeploying resources to cover it and will be making increased uses of specialised techniques less intensive in manpower.

Q8. Is the decision justified by the present security situation in Northern Ireland?

A8. We are satisfied that the steps we are taking in conjunction with the Royal Ulster Constabulary will ensure that the fight against terrorism continues unabated.

Q9. Does it indicate further reliance on covert operations at the expense of visible troops?

A9. It would not be in the interests of security to go in to details.

Q10. Why did you not move the troops to the border?

A10. Because we consider that the number of troops in the border areas is broadly right.

Q11. What if the security situation changes for the worse?

A11. The force level is kept continuously under review. The Spearhead battalion is available to reinforce the Province at very short notice if required.

Q12. Does this presage further reductions, or the start of a phased withdrawal from Northern Ireland?

A12. No. The force level is kept under continuous review and change will always be considered in the light of the security situation.

Q13. What was the role of the Security Coordinator in the decision? When was the decision taken?

A13. All those with an interest were involved. We cannot discuss details of how a particular decision is reached.

Q14. Why was 4/7 DG not told sooner?

A14. As I have indicated, a number of complex factors were involved in the decision. The unit was told as early as possible.

Subject filed on USA
Nov. 79 : Visit to US
Policy

CONFIDENTIAL

Extract from Record of Meeting between PM and President Carter, Washington, 17.12.79 (Pt 3)

Northern Ireland

The Prime Minister said she was acutely aware of the difficulties the question of the supply of arms from the United States to the RUC raised for the President. But it also created difficulties for her. The RUC was not a sectarianism force. The last Chief Constable had been a Roman Catholic. Almost all the other police forces in the United Kingdom had similar US weapons to those which had been ordered for the RUC. The RUC itself already had 3,000 of the weapons in question. It seemed very strange to deny them the remainder of the order and thereby to deprive a significant number of members of the RUC of the right to defend themselves effectively. She herself had handled both the gun which the RUC at present used and that which was on order. There was no doubt that the American Ruger was much better. It had never occurred to her there would be a problem about completing the order. The difficulties created by the absence of weapons would begin to become acute in three or four months' time. Was the difficulty for the President one of

/principle

CONFIDENTIAL

principle or one of timing?

The President said the difficulty was one of timing. The administration was consulting the Congress: the approval of Congress would be necessary if the sale was to take place. Mr. Vance said that at the moment the administration did not have the votes to secure the approval of Congress. The Speaker, Mr. O'Neill, had sufficient votes to prevent approval going through and was prepared to use them. The Prime Minister asked how long this situation was likely to obtain. The President suggested that she should talk to Speaker O'Neill later in the day. Mr. O'Neill had drafted a resolution on the subject and had already collected enough signatures to ensure that approval would be blocked. The President said that he himself would like to approve the sale but did not wish to be defeated in Congress or to have a major altercation with them. The political problem of handling the Northern Ireland issue in the United States would be exacerbated if he took on Congress and lost. Speaker O'Neill rarely became personally involved in policy issues. But this problem was a personal one for him.

The Prime Minister asked about the basis of Mr. O'Neill's objections. There was nothing the British Government could do that would satisfy the IRA. The people of Ulster wished to remain part of the United Kingdom while the IRA wanted a united Ireland. Presumably Mr. O'Neill's attitude was essentially an emotional one. The President made it clear that he was persuaded of the merits of the Prime Minister's case but that he thought the only way to advance the position would be to talk to Mr. O'Neill. He added that Mr. O'Neill had in general supported the policy of the present British Government on Northern Ireland.

/The

The Prime Minister said that it sounded as though it would be several months before the matter could be sorted out. If the sale of the revolvers was blocked, it would be a major propaganda victory for the IRA. It seemed a pity at a time co-operation with the Irish Government had been significantly improved. She expected that it would prove possible to continue with Mr. Haughey the close co-operation which had been begun with Mr. Lynch. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that if it became known that a Government request for a permit to export the arms had been rejected there would inevitably be a great deal of very adverse comment in Parliament. The President made it clear that he was aware of this. He repeated that the Prime Minister should discuss the matter with Speaker O'Neill. He would be interested to learn whether or not Mr. O'Neill showed any flexibility.

The President asked about the prospects for the forthcoming conference on Northern Ireland. The Prime Minister said that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland had achieved a considerable diplomatic feat in securing Mr. Hume's agreement to attend the Conference without losing Dr. Paisley in the process. There was an outstanding difficulty about the official Unionist Party, who had been committed by their Party Conference to stay out of the Conference. However, it might be possible for them to agree to come into the Conference at a later stage. It was important for the Government to show both that they were trying to make political progress and how difficult it was to do so. The Conference would certainly be held. Once it was over, and whatever its outcome, the Government would have to take decisions. Some local government powers would have to be transferred to Northern Ireland. It was ridiculous to have a Secretary of State and six Junior Ministers working full time on Northern Ireland. The Government would have to look at whatever agreement was achieved at the Conference and decide in the light of that the way ahead.

/The President

The President asked whether there had been any reduction in the level of terrorism. The Prime Minister said that it was a question of a change of direction rather than a reduction in the level. The main focus of terrorist activity had now moved to the border. Targets were more specific: indiscriminate attacks had been abandoned in favour of attacks on the security forces. On the other hand, there were now areas where the police could cope without any help from the army. Overall co-ordination had been improved by the appointment of Sir Maurice Oldfield. Nonetheless the terrorists, inevitably, still held the initiative. They could strike where they like. Moreover, the use of remotely controlled bombs had increased the threat from them.

Reverting to the Conference, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that the return of some form of representative Government was important because this was a forum in which moderates could work. In present circumstances no moderate leaders would emerge because there was nothing for them to do. It was true, however, that John Hume was a moderate politician. His agreement to participate in the proposed Conference was very encouraging. The President asked when the Conference would meet. The Prime Minister said it would probably be on 7 January. The Conference would no doubt see a good deal of disagreement but progress had to be made. The present situation could not be allowed to continue indefinitely. The Government was bound to explore every avenue.

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GRPS 600A
FM DUBLIN 171620Z DEC 79
TO PRIORITY FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 528 OF 17 DEC 79
AND TO PRIORITY NIO (BELFAST)
INFO WASHINGTON

Ronnie Munter

MY TELLNO 453: NORTHERN IRELAND

1. I HAD A TALK WITH GARRET FITZGERALD, ON 14 DECEMBER.

2. HE SAID HE THOUGHT HMG HAD DONE ALL THEY COULD TO HELP THE SDLP TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE ON THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT. HE HAD TALKED TO JOHN HUME ON 13 DECEMBER AND WAS HOPEFUL THAT THE SDLP WOULD NOW GO TO THE TABLE. HE WAS VERY HAPPY TO SEE SOME MOVEMENT ON THE NORTH AT LAST. HE ALSO THOUGHT THAT IT WAS ENCOURAGING AND REMARKABLE THAT PAISLEY AND HUME WERE ESTABLISHING A GOOD RELATIONSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR CONTACTS AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. IF THAT CONTINUED IT SHOULD HELP HMG TO REACH A POSITION FROM WHICH THEY COULD ''IMPOSE'' A SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE TO THEM BOTH SHOULD THE CONFERENCE NOT TAKE PLACE OR FAIL.

FAIL.

3. IN REPLY TO MY QUESTION, FITZGERALD SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE HAUGHEY HAD POLITICAL CONTACTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND, DESPITE THE IMPRESSION HE HAS BEEN CONVEYING OF HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE NORTHERN SCENE. AUSTIN CURRIE MIGHT HAVE AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY THROUGH HIS CLOSE CONTACTS WITH JUDGE DONAL BARRINGTON AND SENATOR EOIN RYAN WHO ARE BOTH (AS YOU WILL KNOW FROM MY REPORTS) CLOSELY CONCERNED WITH FIANNA FAIL POLICY TOWARDS THE NORTH. HE, FITZGERALD, COULD NOT SEE ANY ROLE FOR HIMSELF BECAUSE HE WOULD NOT BE PREPARED TO EXCHANGE VIEWS AND INFORMATION ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND WITH HAUGHEY (MY TEL NO 491, PARA 4).

4. FITZGERALD WAS VERY GLAD INDEED THAT HUME WAS HAVING MEETINGS WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND AND EVEN MORE PLEASED THAT HE WOULD, HE GATHERED, BE MEETING THE PRIME MINISTER. THAT WOULD HELP HIM TO CONTROL HIS PARTY, A PROCESS WHICH HE HAD ALREADY BEGUN WITH SOME SUCCESS. HE HAD, FOR EXAMPLE, LAID IT DOWN THAT NO MEMBER OF THE SDLP WOULD BE ALLOWED TO UTTER ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND WITHOUT FIRST CLEARING WHAT HE INTENDED TO SAY WITH HUME. SECOND, ONLY HUME WOULD DEAL WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC, THOUGH AUSTIN CURRIE WOULD PROBABLY BE ENCOURAGED TO CULTIVATE THE CONTACTS, REFERRED TO IN PARA 3 ABOVE.

5. FITZGERALD THOUGHT HAUGHEY WOULD ADOPT A REASONABLE APPROACH ON NORTHERN IRELAND WHILE MAKING ''REPUBLICAN NOISES'' FROM TIME TO TIME. HE DID NOT THINK WE SHOULD HAVE DIFFICULTIES OVER SECURITY COOPERATION (MY TEL NO 517). HE BELIEVED THAT THERE

GOT A LINE BREA HIT TIC PLSE

RING WHAT HE INTENDED TO SAY WITH HUME.

SECOND, ONLY HUME WOULD DEAL WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC, THOUGH AUSTIN CURRIE WOULD PROBABLY BE ENCOURAGED TO CULTIVATE THE CONTACTS, REFERRED TO IN PARA 3 ABOVE.

5. FITZGERALD THOUGHT HAUGHEY WOULD ADOPT A REASONABLE APPROACH ON NORTHERN IRELAND WHILE MAKING ''REPUBLICAN NOISES'' FROM TIME TO TIME. HE DID NOT THINK WE SHOULD HAVE DIFFICULTIES OVER SECURITY COOPERATION (MY TEL NO 517). HE BELIEVED THAT THERE HAD BEEN A DEAL BETWEEN HAUGHEY AND THE SO-CALLED MODERATES IN THE CABINET, PART OF WHICH CONCERNED POLICY TOWARDS NORTHERN IRELAND, THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT BEING THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE FROM THE LYNCH APPROACH. * pending * temporarily retained by Department completion of review. A Wayland 25.10.00

6. HE THOUGHT IT WAS GOOD NEWS THAT COLLINS REMAINED AT JUSTICE SINCE, THOUGH HE WAS * * HE WAS TOUGH AND STRAIGHT. FAULKNER, AT DEFENCE, WAS ALSO STRAIGHT.

AND STRAIGHT. FAULKNER, AT DEFENCE, WAS ALSO STRAIGHT.

7. FITZGERALD EXPECTED HUME TO SEE HAUGHEY IN DUBLIN ON 18 DECEMBER.

8. IT IS TOO SOON TO SAY WHETHER FITZGERALD IS RIGHT ABOUT HAUGHEY'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS NORTHERN IRELAND IN GENERAL AND SECURITY COOPERATION ESPECIALLY. BUT HE IS WELL INFORMED AND KEEPS HIS EAR VERY CLOSE TO THE GROUND.

HAYDON

NNNN

SENT/RECD AT 171940Z JRW/

Subject filed on USA. Nov 79: Visit to US Policy

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

M. Pattison Esq
10, Downing Street
London
SW1.

14 December 1979

Dear Mike,

Following yesterday's briefing meeting for the Prime Minister's visit to Washington, you asked for details of Mr. Lynch's remarks in condemnation of the IRA and in support of cross-border security cooperation, during his recent visit to the US; and also of Mr. Haughey's comments on these subjects at his first press conference. I attach a note of these, together with a report of the latter's remarks to the same point in the Dail yesterday (taken from the Irish Times).

You also asked for advice about background reading on Northern Ireland before the visit. There is remarkably little recent suitable literature, but I am sending you Richard Rose's "Governing without Consensus" (1971), which is still sensible on the underlying political themes. (Please return in due course). We are looking around for further ideas, and will let you know if any seem worth following.

I am also enclosing a note headed 'RUC - Personal Protection' about Rugers and Walthers which was prepared by RUC officers and summarises yesterday's oral briefing.

Yours sincerely,

Claire A. Sharpe.

for M. W. Hopkins

E.R.

MR LYNCH'S CONDEMNATION OF IRA

Throughout his visit to the United States both in public and in private Mr Lynch emphasised his condemnation of terrorism and of those who supported it, directly or indirectly. Speaking at the National Press Club on 9 November, Mr Lynch said that a small hard-core minority remain who, though fully aware of the circumstances, continue to support the killing either by contributing their dollars, or, in an even more sinister fashion in recent years, lending their political and moral support. To those few and those whom they support, I wish to say: "The Provisional IRA are the real enemies of Ireland and the Irish people. Their supporters are the real obstacle to the achievement of peace and reconciliation. You are putting off the union of peoples which we seek". He went on to say, "It has become abundantly clear that the overwhelming majority of the people of Ireland, North and South, reject violence as a means of achieving political objectives. Voting in free elections on both sides of the border, the Irish people have decisively rejected those candidates who have any association with violence. At no election in the last ten years have such candidates won more than derisory support, less than 2% in most cases . . . . we utterly and unreservedly reject violence as a method of bringing about political change. We have been and remain fully resolved to prevent use of our jurisdiction as a base for attacks on Northern Ireland or for the deeds which are repudiated and abhorred by the overwhelming majority of the Irish people, North and South. The deeds are of a savagery which seems always to seek to outdo its own horror - like bombs in a crowded restaurant or the killing of a father before his children".

In a separate interview in Time magazine on 12 November, Mr Lynch said "it is well known that the Provisional IRA are associated with international terrorism . . . . We abhor entirely the manner in which they are pursuing their activities - placing bombs in crowded areas, killing indiscriminately, doing acts of violence that make Irish people ashamed. These men are not fighting for a United Ireland; they are maintaining the division of Ireland - the fear and bitterness that exist in the North. It is brutal and horrific gangsterism".

E.R.

SECURITY CO-OPERATION: HELICOPTER OVERFLIGHTS

Speaking at the National Press Club about Security co-operation between Ireland and Britain, Mr Lynch stressed the need to tackle what he saw as the root cause of the problem, but confirmed that he had agreed to improve security co-operation. He said that the two Governments had agreed not to disclose the terms of their agreement but went on to say that allegations about a so-called air corridor were without foundation. There was no question of a free corridor. The Irish Government had decided, however to make some very slight modifications to existing procedures under 1952 legislation providing for foreign flights near the border with prior permission from Dublin. Nor had the Irish Government given agreement to so-called "hot pursuit". This had been raised before his talks with Mrs Thatcher and Mr O'Kennedy's with Mr Atkins, but had not been pursued.

JDH

E.R.

COMMENTS FROM MR HAUGHEY'S PRESS CONFERENCE: 7.12.79

Q. Mr Haughey, do you envisage your policy on Northern Ireland differing in any way from that of Mr Lynch?

Mr Haughey: No. The Fianna Fail policy on Northern Ireland has been quite clear ennunciated in the 1975 declaration by the party and that will remain our policy. There may be perhaps differences on particular aspects . . . . I see differences of emphasis here and there, the thrust of our policy will be the same - the reunification of our country by peaceful means, the bringing together of the traditions in the country and the pursuit of unifying the Irish people.

Q. Do you place greater emphasis on British withdrawal from Northern Ireland?

Mr Haughey: The Fianna Fail 1975 policy declaration is quite specific on that matter and I might suggest perhaps that it has not been as closely read as it might have been. It begins with a declaration that we want to bring about the re-unification of the country by peaceful means that we abhor violence, we condemn violence and then it goes on to say that towards this end we would like the British to enter into a commitment to disengage from Northern Ireland - from this country.

Q. Do you accept the recent agreement between Mr Lynch and Mrs Thatcher about cross border security?

Mr Haughey: The security arrangements which are in existence will be maintained.

Q. Could you state unequivocally your attitude towards the Provisional IRA?

Mr Haughey: I condemn the Provisional IRA and all their activities. I want to make it clear that I have never done anything else.

E.R.

Q. Why have you not in the past made such an unequivocal statement?

Mr Haughey: This is the first time that I have been asked in this position. Up to now the responsibility for making Fianna Fail party policy statements on these matters belonged to others.

Q. What is your feeling about the pursuit of terrorists across the border from north to south?

Mr Haughey: I belive very strongly that our Army and our Garda Siochana are totally capable of dealing with security matters in so far as the territory of this state is concerned.

Q. Does that mean that you would not support the idea of helicopter overflights from the north to the south in pursuit of terrorists?

Mr Haughey: Only with permission.

Q. Would that permission be granted in normal circumstances?

Mr Haughey: That would depend on the circumstances. Yes. But by and large I want to make it absolutely clear that I believe that the responsibility for the preservation of peace and security in the territory of this state belongs with the Garda and the Army.

Q. What is your attitude to the Humphrey Atkins document?

Mr Haughey: I think it has already been shown to be inadequate.

Q. What is your attitude to power-sharing and the Irish dimension that is much talked of?

Mr Haughey: The 1975 Fainna Fail policy document indicates that pending the withdrawal or disengagement of Britain from Irish affairs that we should pursue the peaceful coming together of the communities by means of interim institutions. Any such interim institution would be welcome.

FR.

Q. What are your priorities?

Mr Haughey: I would regard the peaceful unification of the people of Ireland as my primary political priority. Naturally, allied to that I have the very clear priority to promote the economic development of the country in every possible way.

Q. Will you be asking for a meeting with Mrs Thatcher to discuss Northern Ireland?

Mr Haughey: I have no such plans. It would obviously be of importance and either I and the British Prime Minister or any of my Cabinet colleagues should maintain the greatest possible level of contact and communication with our British counterparts.

Q. I imagine you would get on well with Mrs Thatcher?

Laughter exclamation marks.

Mr Haughey: I could not possibly imagine any reason why I wouldn't.

Q. Would you talk to Ian Paisley?

Mr Haughey: Certainly,I will, of course.

Q. Do you intend to be spokesman on Northern Ireland like Mr Lynch?

Mr Haughey: We have a tradition in the party that Northern Ireland responsibility is restricted - anything like major pronouncements on Northern Ireland matters - are restricted to the Foreign Minister and the Taoiseach. I will probably continue that.

MR C HAUGHEY'S SPEECH TO THE DAIL: 13.12.1979

In his first major speech to the Dail in his reference to Northern Ireland the Taoiseach said he totally rejected violence. It had been and would be the constant endeavour of the Government to achieve Irish Unity by peaceful means, by agreement and in harmonious relationship with our neighbour Great Britain. The Government would concern itself with full civil rights and equality in Northern Ireland and with the impartial enforcement of the law. All people regardless of class or creed under the common name of Irishman, who were constructive in their approach in relation to Northern Ireland would find his door always open. The fundamental principles of FF, as restated in the 1975 policy document, was for an independent, democratic, 32-county Republic by agreement. There might be a change of emphasis in the Government approach. The ways of progress were not always fixed or unchanged. There had been changes within Northern Ireland over the past ten years and changes in the international context, but the basic principles were the same. The security forces would maintain maximum security on the border, preventing totally, as far as was within their capacity, all cross-border incursions of a subversive nature within the rule of law.

CAM

RUC - PERSONAL PROTECTION

OBJECTIVE: A weapon for personal protection which is reliable, effective and simple to handle and maintain. Must lend itself to a training programme embracing 10,000 members and encompass the simplest and most effective safety procedures.

CHOICE: The Walther semi-automatic 9 mm pistol, in use for 5 years, has proved unsatisfactory. Eleven weapons tested - 7 revolvers and 4 pistols. Professional assessment indicated that the Ruger .357 magnum revolver best met RUC needs.

	Revolver (Ruger .357 magnum)	Semi-Automatic Pistol (Walther 9 mm short)
Muzzle velocity	1,168 feet per sec.	970 feet per sec.
Muzzle energy (impact energy)	457 feet lb.	195 feet lb.
Accurate range	55 metres.	40 metres.
Projectile range	2,200 metres.	1,000 metres.
Reliability and Effectiveness	Simple to use and safe; Training straightforward; Greater stopping power;	Complex to load, activate and shoot; Prone to jam; More liable to accidental discharge;

AMMUNITION: The type of ammunition used has a considerable bearing on stopping power. A wider range of ammunition can be used in the revolver.

BATCH ORDER: In good faith through Ruger UK Agent. No reason to suppose there was any problem.

1. September 1978 - Ruger - 3,000 revolvers) Received
   500 rifles)
2. November 1979 - Ruger - 3,000 revolvers - embargo.

The total RUC order highlighted by its size - 9,000 revolvers in three consignments of 3,000 each. Could take outstanding 6,000 revolvers in one batch.

OTHER POLICE FORCES: Other UK police forces are known to hold revolvers manufactured in the USA.

Personal selection in many USA forces. A variety of weapons in use. Control of weapons in UK police forces appears to be much more strict.

THE TERRORIST: Uses a variety of weapons, many of which have a longer range and are more powerful than the Ruger revolver which, in itself, could not be described as 'more offensive than the Walther'. All weapons can kill.

LOGISTIC PROBLEMS FOR RUC Fewer than one third of the RUC (Regular and Reserve) carry the Ruger. Issued to those in most dangerous areas, thus creating difficulties in redeployment.

* * *

CONFIDENTIAL

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

Ireland

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Prime Minister
Mr Atkins mentioned this at the briefing meeting this afternoon
13 December 1979

Michael Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Dear Michael,

As you know, the Secretary of State has had two meetings with John Hume, leader of the SDLP, to try to get him to agree that his party should be represented at the conference on the government of Northern Ireland.

The SDLP needed to show that they had won something to justify their change of mind if they decided to attend; but any changes in the terms of the conference would, as Dr Paisley has made clear, cause the DUP to pull out. Navigating with care between Scylla and Charybdis, the Secretary of State has prepared, and John Hume has provisionally accepted, the paper which I enclose as a statement of the basis on which the SDLP would attend the conference. The SDLP's acceptance is provisional only in the sense that the paper will not be formally agreed by both sides until John Hume comes to see the Secretary of State in Belfast next Saturday morning, after which he will tell his party executive and both sides will publish the paper.

The Secretary of State has given an indication to Dr Paisley of what such a paper might contain. He will be considering whether anything more needs to be done to avoid trouble on the DUP side, which of course could still happen. But all being well, this agreement should mean that an announcement of the SDLP's willingness to attend the conference would be made next Saturday afternoon, just before the Prime Minister goes to the United States. It is essential that it be published as soon as it is formally agreed: leaks and glosses on the text would cause trouble.

At the present stage I am copying this letter and the enclosure only to George Walden and Martin Vile. My Secretary of State will report to his OD colleagues after the weekend when the position will be more definite.

Yours ever,

R A HARRINGTON

CONFIDENTIAL

E.F

(Draft press statement)

At a meeting on 10 December the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Mr John Hume of the SDLP discussed the working paper (Cmnd 7763) which is the basis for the proposed conference. The following points were agreed:-

1. The Secretary of State's invitation to Conference participants in his speech in the House of Commons on 29 November (Hansard, cols 1507 - 8) to put in papers to the Conference means that the SDLP will be free to put forward papers containing their own proposals.

2. The Secretary of State as Chairman would invite those present to introduce their own papers orally. It will be for the Conference as a whole to consider how particular points in such papers should be pursued.

3. The Conference is not an end in itself, but is a means of identifying the "highest possible level of agreement" on the transfer of responsibility for certain functions to locally elected representatives. Even after such a transfer, further political development remains possible, depending always upon the wishes of the people of Northern Ireland. The Government envisage the conference as the first step in a developing process of agreement between the people of Northern Ireland. Such a possibility is fully consistent with Section 1 of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973, which means not only that Northern Ireland will remain a part of the UK as long as a majority of Northern Ireland inhabitants so wish, but also that if such a majority indicated a wish for some change in their constitutional status, Her Majesty's Government would not stand in the way of such a change.

4. As regards the "Irish dimension", the Conference (and in due course any elected body) would be able to discuss the relationship between an elected representative body in Northern Ireland and the Authorities of the Republic on all matters over which the former exercised responsibility.

5. The Working Paper (Cmnd 7763) makes it clear that, although there is no serious prospect of agreement on a return to the system of government which obtained in the first five months of 1974, arrangements to take account of the interests of the minority by a sharing of the exercise of governmental powers will be on the table for discussion by the Conference, as is evidenced by a number of references to such arrangements in the Working Paper itself.

6. The Secretary of State will be willing on request, and quite apart from the Conference, to have separate meetings with the parties represented at the Conference on wider issues.

Prime Minister

4

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FM WASHINGTON 112244DEC 79

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 4148 OF 11 DECEMBER, 1979,

INFO DUBLIN.

M I P T.

THE USA AND NORTHERN IRELAND.

THE SORT OF LINE THE PRIME MINISTER MIGHT AIM TO TAKE IN PUBLIC FOLLOWING THE MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT COULD BE AS FOLLOWS:

(1) SHE HAD DISCUSSED THE QUESTION OF NORTHERN IRELAND WITH THE PRESIDENT, WHO HAD WELCOMED HMG'S COMMITMENT TO PROMOTING POLITICAL PROGRESS IN THE PROVINCE. THE PRESIDENT HAD EXPRESSED HIS SOLIDARITY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM AND SHOWN HIS WELCOME FOR THE COMMON EFFORTS OF THE BRITISH AND IRISH GOVERNMENTS IN FIGHTING THIS THREAT. THE PRESIDENT HAD STRESSED HIS OPPOSITION TO ANY DIRECT OR INDIRECT SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM BY AMERICAN CITIZENS AND HAD UNDERTAKEN THAT VIGILANCE IN PREVENTING THE SUPPLY OF ARMS FROM THE U S FOR USE BY TERRORISTS SHOULD BE INTENSIFIED.

(2) THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER HAD ALSO AGREED THAT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WAS AN ESSENTIAL COUNTERPOINT TO POLITICAL PROGRESS IN NORTHERN IRELAND. IN THIS CONTEXT THE PRESIDENT HAD RECALLED HIS STATEMENT OF AUGUST 1977.

(3) IN ANSWER TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER IS BOUND TO GET ON WHETHER THE PRESIDENT HAS AGREED TO AUTHORISE LICENCES FOR THE EXPORT OF ARMS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND, THE PRIME MINISTER MIGHT SAY THAT THIS WAS A SUBJECT THAT WAS FULLY DISCUSSED AT THE WHITE HOUSE. SHE LEFT THE PRESIDENT IN NO DOUBT ABOUT THE NEED FOR SOLIDARITY IN FIGHTING TERRORISM WHEREVER IT OCCURS AND THE PRESIDENT HAD UNDERTAKEN TO KEEP THE SUBJECT UNDER REVIEW PARTICULARLY IN THE LIGHT OF THE SECURITY SITUATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

HENDERSON

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Ireland (Sit)

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2

Extract from a Record of a Discussion PM / Vance (US Secretary of State) 10 December 1979 at 1030 hours.

Top copy filed on Iran (May 1979) 'Internal Situation'.

Arms for the Royal Ulster Constabulary

The Prime Minister said that she attached great importance to the issue by the US Government of licences for the supply of Ruger pistols to the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Mr. Vance said that President Carter would take no decision until he had discussed the matter with the Prime Minister.

The meeting ended at 1115.

Ireland JFH

cc NIO

CF

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

7 December 1979

Dear Mr Hume,

I know that in discussion with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland you have expressed your concern, which is shared by all those who represent the people of Northern Ireland, about the continuing violence and terrorism. There can be no doubt about the Government's determination to defeat it. You will be aware that I invited your predecessor as leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party to discuss the security problem with me and the Secretary of State. I am writing now to extend that invitation to you as the new leader of your party. I have already met Mr. Molyneaux and Dr. Paisley for the same purpose.

If you would like to accept this invitation, I should be grateful if you would get in touch with my office to arrange a suitable date.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Thatcher

John Hume, Esq.

SECRET

Ireland
Copy No (1) of 56

NIO(79)8

NOTE OF A MEETING HELD IN THE NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE ON FRIDAY 7 DECEMBER 1979 AT 12.00PM

Present:

Mr Marshall	Chairman
Mr Hannigan) Mr Buxton) Mr Corbett) Mr Jones) Mr Benger)	NIO
Mr Stephen) Mr Cousins) Mr Rotheram) Col Jones) Col Wilson) Maj Pheysey)	MOD
Mr Newington) Mr Parramore)	FCO
Mr Phillips	Home Office

The Political Situation

The Chairman said that, since the last NIOM, the Working Paper on the Government of Northern Ireland had been published and initial reaction had been moderately favourable. Both the Alliance and DUP had accepted invitations to attend a Conference and it was probable that the SDLP would feel able to come. Mr Hume had seen the Secretary of State on 3 December and would see him again in the following week to discuss the matter further. The Conference had been postponed and, if the SDLP agreed to attend, it would open either shortly before Christmas or early in January. The Conference was unlikely to run on for a long while; the aim was to identify the highest level of agreement possible so that the Government could decide on future policy.

Security

The Chairman said that the debate on the renewal of the Emergency Provisions Act would take place on Tuesday, 11 December. The Government intended to seek the renewal of all the provisions of the Act despite representations from SACHR; some members of the Commission might possibly resign.

The Republic

During the meeting it was learnt that Mr Haughey was to succeed Mr Lynch as Taioseach. The Chairman said that the Government would not comment on political events in the Republic; in any event our policies were formulated with regard to Northern Ireland's needs. It was possible, however, that Mr Haughey would place more immediate emphasis on Irish unity than Mr Lynch had done.

SECRET

Cross-Border Security

In response to a question from Col Jones the Chairman said that it should be assumed, until the contrary was shown, that arrangements on cross-border security would remain as they were at present. Mr Hannigan thought that the Irish would not break the agreement reached between the Prime Minister and the Taioseach, but the will on the ground was crucial to its success or failure. Mr Newington said that the attitude of the Garda was vital, and in this context the change in the senior Garda posts, notably the appointment of a new head of the Special Branch, should be closely watched. Mr Phillips said that the Home Office was also interested in the new Garda appointments and it was likely that representatives of the Security Services and Metropolitan Police Special Branch would shortly be visiting Dublin to establish contacts.

Helicopter overflight

Col Jones said that the issue of air-safety was still outstanding. Mr Hannigan said that, provided the text of the arrangements did not require agreement, it might be possible simply to announce our intentions and go ahead. The Chairman thought it wisest to delay for a short period while Mr Haughey settled in, while Mr Newington said that a lot would depend on whether there were ministerial changes at the DFA and the Department of Justice.

Force Reductions

Mr Stephen said that for operational reasons the unit concerned would need to be informed by 18 December. The Chairman said that the position at present was that the Secretary of State was not going to make any announcement about force reductions during the renewal debate and that, in the light of the political changes in the Republic and Mr Paisley's request for assurances on security as a condition for DUP attendance at the Conference, the proposed force reduction might have to be reconsidered. He understood that the Secretary of State would be writing to the Secretary of State for Defence on the matter. He asked whether 18 December was the latest possible date on which a decision could be taken. Mr Stephen said that it was not, and confirmed that no irrevocable action had yet been taken, to render reconsideration of the withdrawal impossible. But he drew attention to the fact that the Secretary of State would be unavailable until Thursday 13 December. Furthermore the Army's reasons for desiring the reduction were very urgent, and strong arguments would be needed to reverse the decision. Mr Rotheram said that the dispositions of other units would make the proposed reduction clear to the unit concerned if they were to make a reconnaissance on the ground. Mr Cousins said that the chances of a leak would increase as time went by.

Direction and Co-Ordination of Security Activities

Mr Hannigan said that Brigadier Pascoe had produced a paper on the higher direction of security policy which had been circulated to HQNI, RUCHQ and NIO for comment. It developed the proposition agreed with the GOC and Chief Constable that Sir Maurice Oldfield would chair the Security Co-ordinating Committee, which was not to assume an executive rôle. The paper also examined the functions of the Operations Policy Committee, the revival of which had been agreed by both the Chief Constable and the GOC. The paper was to be discussed at the

Security Policy Meeting on 14 December. On lower-level security policy Mr Hannigan reported that the Working Party's Report on the Direction and Coordination of security operations had in effect been passed to the Planning Staff for practical implementation as the need arose; already recommendations in three instances had been made, and consideration would proceed case by case in view of the local situation as the Working Party had recommended.

Irish Named Unit

Mr Stephen said that MOD would be grateful for an early response on this question in order to relieve the current pressure on certain units in the Army. The Chairman said that NIO had not yet been able to consider the matter but would reply as soon as possible.

The 'H' Block Protest

Mr Hannigan said that the recent meeting of the "Smash the H-Block Committee" had not been very successful; attempts to whip up support were not going well. There was a risk that if the campaign flagged a hunger strike would be called, but this did not seem to be an immediate threat.

12/12/79

CONFIDENTIAL

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PS TO PM

FM F.C.O. 061314Z DEC 79

TO F L A S H WASHINGTON

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1802 OF 6 DECEMBER

INFO DUBLIN.

Prime Minister

MT.

YOUR TELNO 4050: ARMS FOR THE R.U.C.

1. WHEN YOU SEE VANCE TODAY I SHOULD LIKE YOU TO REMIND HIM OF THE VERY GREAT POLITICAL IMPORTANCE WHICH THE GOVERNMENT PLACES ON A SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION OF THIS QUESTION, AND OF OUR STRONG HOPE THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WILL BE ABLE TO APPROVE OUR FULL LICENCE APPLICATION BEFORE THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT.

2. IF VANCE CONFIRMS THE REPORT IN YOUR TELEGRAM UNDER REFERENCE THAT A NEGATIVE DECISION NOW LOOKS LIKELY, YOU SHOULD REACT STRONGLY, SAYING THAT THE SITUATION WHICH WE FACE IN NORTHERN IRELAND IS A HIGHLY SENSITIVE DOMESTIC ISSUE IN THIS COUNTRY. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, I ASSUME THAT THERE COULD BE NO QUESTION OF THE PRESIDENT'S TAKING A NEGATIVE DECISION BEFORE HE HAS HAD A CHANCE OF HEARING FROM THE PRIME MINISTER WHAT SHE HAS TO SAY DURING HER MEETING WITH HIM ON MONDAY MORNING, 17 DECEMBER.

3. IF YOU JUDGE IT APPROPRIATE, YOU COULD SAY THAT THE WORST OUTCOME WOULD BE A NEGATIVE DECISION BEFORE THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT. THIS WOULD BE BOUND TO LEAK AND TO PROVOKE VERY STRONG FEELINGS, NOT ONLY IN NORTHERN IRELAND BUT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AS A WHOLE. THE ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE ATMOSPHERE FOR THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT COULD BE SERIOUS.

CARRINGTON

F I L E S	
	PS/MR HURD
RID	PS/MR RIDLEY
NAD	PS/MR BLAKER
OID	PS/PUS
IPD	SIR A DUFF
WED	
MAED	
NEWS D	MR BULLARD
	MR FERGUSSON
PUSD	LORD N G LENNOX
PS	MISS BROWN
PS/LPS	

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Prime Minister 3

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Mr Lyng-Lennox
Mr Ingham No 10
Mr Wright Cabinet Off.

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TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 4147 OF 11 DECEMBER, 1979.

INFO DUBLIN.

[Files]

THE PRIME MINISTER'S TALK WITH THE PRESIDENT ABOUT ARMS FOR THE RUC.

1. I REALISE THAT YOU HAVE BEEN GETTING CONFLICTING SIGNALS FROM HERE ABOUT WHAT THE U S DECISION IS GOING TO BE ABOUT THE SUPPLY OF U S ARMS FOR THE RUC. THE PRESENT POSITION IS THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS NOT TAKEN A DECISION ON THIS SUBJECT AND WILL NOT DO SO UNTIL HE HAS TALKED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER ABOUT IT.

2. I CANNOT SAY THAT I THINK THAT THE PROSPECTS OF HIS AGREEING TO AUTHORISE THE EXPORT OF THESE ARMS AS A RESULT OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S TALK WITH HIM ARE ROSY. THE REASON WHY THE AMERICANS ARE BEING SO OBSTRUCTIVE ABOUT THIS IS CLEAR: SPEAKER O'NEILL IS IRRETRIEVABLY OPPOSED TO IT: THIS STEMS FROM VISCERAL FEELINGS RATHER THAN ANY NEED FOR VOTES ON O'NEILL'S PART: HE HAS COME OUT OPENLY AGAINST ANY HELP FOR THE IRA AND PROTESTS THAT HE CANNOT CREDIBLY ACCEPT THE SUPPLY OF U S ARMS FOR WHAT HE AND MANY IRISH/AMERICANS REGARD, HOWEVER INADEQUATELY, AS THE OTHER SIDE: THE U S ADMINISTRATION HAVE GIVEN HIM SOME COMMITMENT THAT THEY WILL NOT AUTHORISE ARMS EXPORTS TO THE RUC WITHOUT HIS APPROVAL. ON FOREIGN POLICY GROUNDS THERE IS NO DOUBT WHATEVER THAT BOTH THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND THE WHITE HOUSE WOULD LIKE, FOR THE SAKE OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U K, TO SEE THESE ARMS PROVIDED: THEY DO NOT CONCEAL FROM US PRIVATELY THAT THEY THINK WE HAVE A VERY STRONG CASE: BUT THEY ASK US TO ACCEPT THE POLITICAL REALITIES OF THE MOMENT WHICH ARE THAT THE PRESIDENT'S DOMESTIC POLITICAL REQUIREMENTS HAVE TOP PRIORITY AND THESE WOULD BE INCOMPATIBLE WITH A ROW WITH O'NEILL WHICH COULD IMPAIR CARTER'S

DOMESTIC POLITICAL REQUIREMENTS HAVE TOP PRIORITY AND THESE WOULD BE INCOMPATIBLE WITH A ROW WITH O'NEILL WHICH COULD IMPAIR CARTER'S CHANCES OF RENOMINATION. O'NEILL'S BACKING IS ALSO NEEDED TO GET LEGISLATION THROUGH THE CONGRESS.

3. AN ADDITIONAL ELEMENT IS THAT CONGRESSMAN BIAGGI, WHO IS CHAIRMAN OF THE CONGRESSIONAL AD HOC COMMITTEE ON IRISH AFFAIRS AND CLOSELY LINKED WITH THE IRISH NATIONAL CAUCUS, IS PLAYING A MAJOR ROLE AS A CONGRESSIONAL STRATEGIST IN CARTER'S RENOMINATION CAMPAIGN. HE THUS HAS ACCESS TO CARTER'S INNER CIRCLE.

4. THIS MEANS THAT THE PRESENT IS A BAD MOMENT IN WHICH TO HOPE THAT WE CAN GET OUR WAY ON WHAT SEEMS TO US AN UNANSWERABLE CASE. WHAT INDEED MAKES IT EVEN MORE UNANSWERABLE IS THAT WE ARE GIVING THE USA A LOT OF HELP OVER IRAN AND THEY RECOGNISE THIS. IT IS DIFFICULT OF COURSE TO KNOW WHAT THE STATE OF AFFAIRS OVER IRAN IS GOING TO BE NEXT MONDAY WHEN THE PRIME MINISTER SEES THE PRESIDENT. BUT ASSUMING THAT THE IRAN HOSTAGE PROBLEM HAS NOT BEEN SOLVED I DO NOT DOUBT THAT THE LINKAGE OF THESE TWO ISSUES WILL BE IN THE PRESIDENT'S MIND. THE MORE WE CAN DO TO HELP THEM IN THE WAYS THEY ASK, THE MORE DIFFICULT IT IS GOING TO BE FOR THE PRESIDENT TO RESIST OUR REQUESTS TO HIM TO HELP US OVER OUR TERRORIST PROBLEM IN NORTHERN IRELAND. BUT THERE ARE CLEARLY LIMITS TO WHAT WE CAN IN PRACTICE DO OVER IRAN AND I DOUBT WHETHER WE WILL BE ABLE TO DO SO MUCH IN THE IRAN CONTEXT AS TO MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE PRESIDENT TO REFUSE OUR IRISH REQUESTS.

5. THOUGH IT MAY BE EXPEDIENT TO AVOID RAISING PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS IN ADVANCE AND THOUGH INDEED THE OUTCOME MAY FALL SHORT OF WHAT IS HOPED, I AM IN NO DOUBT THAT THE PRIME MINISTER MUST RAISE THIS SUBJECT IN THE FIRMEST POSSIBLE WAY WITH THE PRESIDENT. IT WOULD SURELY BE BEST IF THIS DISCUSSION TOOK PLACE IN RESTRICTED SESSION WITH THE PRESIDENT: HE WILL BE WANTING TO GET AT THE TRUTH AND THE PRIME MINISTER WILL KNOW FROM HER PREVIOUS TALK WITH HIM IN TOKYO THAT HE RESPONDS WELL TO DISPASSIONATE ARGUMENT.

6. IT IS JUST POSSIBLE THAT THE PRESIDENT WILL SAY QUOTE YES UNQUOTE BECAUSE, AS I HAVE SUGGESTED ABOVE, THE PROBLEM IS REALLY THAT OF ONE MAN, THOUGH A VERY IMPORTANT ONE. BUT IF HE CAN UNDERTAKE NO POSITIVE COMMITMENT AT THE MOMENT IT DOES NOT FOLLOW FROM THIS THAT HE WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO DO SO. INDEED ONE MUST ALLOW FOR SENTIMENTS CHANGING. MOREOVER, IF HIS RENOMINATION BECOMES CERTAIN, OR, IF IT IS OBVIOUS THAT HE IS NOT GOING TO BE NOMINATED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, THE WAY COULD BECOME OPEN FOR HIM TO DISREGARD O'NEILL. IT WOULD SEEM REASONABLE THEREFORE FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO PRESS HIM TO KEEP AN OPEN MIND ON THE SUBJECT AND TO AVOID A NEGATIVE COMMITMENT: AND SUCH AN ATTITUDE WOULD AT LEAST BE OF SOME HELP SO FAR AS OPINION IN NORTHERN IRELAND IS CONCERNED. IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE ALSO TO GET THE

FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO PRESS HIM TO KEEP AN OPEN MIND ON THE SUBJECT AND TO AVOID A NEGATIVE COMMITMENT: AND SUCH AN ATTITUDE WOULD AT LEAST BE OF SOME HELP SO FAR AS OPINION IN NORTHERN IRELAND IS CONCERNED. IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE ALSO TO GET THE PRESIDENT TO AGREE THAT IF THE IRA INTENSIFY THEIR ACTIVITIES THIS WILL MAKE HIM MORE DISPOSED TO GIVE A POSITIVE DECISION ON THE ARMS: AND IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE AT LEAST TO HINT AT THIS AFTERWARDS IN PUBLIC.

7. SO FAR AS THE LINE THE PRIME MINISTER MIGHT USEFULLY TAKE WHEN SHE VISITS THE CONGRESS I SHALL BE TELEGRAPHING SEPARATELY.

8. ASSUMING THAT THE UPSHOT OF THE MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT IS A READINESS ON HIS PART TO COME OUT WITH A CLEAR CONDEMNATION OF TERRORISM AND ITS IRISH AMERICAN SUPPORTERS IN RELATION TO NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE AVOIDANCE OF A DEFINITE QUOTE NO UNQUOTE TO ARMS SUPPLIES AND AN UNDERTAKING TO KEEP THE SUBJECT UNDER REVIEW PARTICULARLY IN THE LIGHT OF THE SECURITY SITUATION IN ULSTER, A LOT WILL HANG ON HOW THIS SUBJECT IS HANDLED PUBLICLY AFTERWARDS. THE PRIME MINISTER WILL OF COURSE KNOW MUCH BETTER THAN I DO HOW TO DEAL WITH THIS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF BRITISH OPINION, AND IT IS OF COURSE DIFFICULT TO TELL IN ADVANCE EXACTLY HOW THE RESULTS CAN BEST BE FORMULATED, BUT IT SEEMS TO ME THAT IF WE CAN WORK FOR SOME PUBLIC FORMULA SUCH AS IS CONTAINED IN M I F T, IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO MAKE SOMETHING OF THE ISSUE.

HENDERSON

NNNN

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Michael Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
London SW1

5 December 1979

Dear Michael,

My Secretary of State had a very useful meeting with John Hume yesterday, following the latter's election as leader of the SDLP to succeed Gerry Fitt.

It was evident from the discussion that although Mr Hume is very wary of the form of the conference, and the fact that some issues have been ruled out of discussion by the Government's working document, it may well be possible to get him to attend the conference. He will be reporting to his party executive the discussion that took place yesterday, and will be seeing the Secretary of State again on Monday 10 December.

At the end of the meeting, Mr Hume mentioned the invitation which had been extended to Mr Fitt to meet the Prime Minister to discuss security. It was noticeable that during his discussion with the Secretary of State he referred to the link between political progress and security, and the need to maintain efforts to win the support of all sections of the community in the fight against terrorism. In the circumstances, the Secretary of State is sure that it would be wise for the Prime Minister to receive Mr Hume, and it would be very helpful if the invitation could be sent to him before the Secretary of State meets him again next Monday.

I enclose a draft letter, which you will see follows, with appropriate changes, the letter sent to Dr Paisley and Mr Molyneaux inviting them to see the Prime Minister.

Yours ever,

Roy Harrington

R A HARRINGTON

E.R.

John Hume Esq
6 Westend Park
Londonderry

December 1979

(Type for signature)

I know that in discussion with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland you have expressed your concern, which is shared by all those who represent the people of Northern Ireland, about the continuing violence and terrorism. There can be no doubt — & I am sure there is none in N. Ireland — about the Government's determination to defeat it, ~~and I am sure there is no doubt in Northern Ireland about that~~. You ~~are probably~~ will be aware that I invited your predecessor as leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party to discuss the security problem with me and the Secretary of State. I am writing ~~The purpose of this letter is to make clear that I~~ now to extend that invitation to you ~~now that you are~~ as the new leader of your party. ~~as you probably know,~~ I have already met Mr Molyneaux and Dr Paisley for the same purpose.

If you would like to accept this invitation, I should be grateful if you would get in touch with my office to arrange a suitable date.

Yours

PART 8 4 ends:-

WR Haydon to CAW 29.11.79

~~MA~~
~~NIO~~ ~~to~~ ~~N10~~ ~~28/11/79~~

PART 5 begins:-

N10 to MA 5/12