

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Michael Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
London SW1

14 May 1981

Dear Michael,

I enclose a note giving a line to take on the points which Mr Molyneux has said he will raise, and some others which he might raise, when he meets the Prime Minister this evening.

*Yours ever,
Ray Harrington*

R A HARRINGTON

*See record of
discussion.*

for [unclear]

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MR MOLYNEAUX'S MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER, 14 MAY 1981

"INTERMEDIATE WEAPON" FOR USE AGAINST RIOTERS

1. The RUC have studied and tested all available riot control methods. The Chief Constable is satisfied that in present circumstances the use of baton rounds provide the most practicable method of controlling riots, consistent with the principle of using the minimum of force.

IRA MORTAR CAPABILITY: USE OF SAS

2. It is a matter for serious concern that there have recently been two accurate, though fortunately unsuccessful, mortar attacks on joint RUC/Army posts. There is good security co-operation along the border, and every effort will be made to prevent such weapons being brought in. As to the SAS, they are available in Northern Ireland but it is the Government's practice not to discuss their deployment in any detail.

AN INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVE

3. The Prime Minister may like to take delivery of the proposal and if appropriate to remind Mr Molyneaux that the UK has over a number of years participated actively in international discussion and arrangements designed to deal with terrorism of all kinds.

STRENGTHENED POWERS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

4. The Government will persevere with the search for a way of transferring significant powers to locally elected representatives on a basis acceptable to both sides of the community. The option of increasing local government powers has not been ruled out. However, it is a fact that such a move could well

prove divisive and would be strongly opposed by the representatives of the minority community on the grounds that it would revive fears of discrimination against Catholics.

ANTI-BRITISH PROPAGANDA IN USA

5. Our posts overseas take every opportunity to rebut hostile propaganda and dispel ignorance about Northern Ireland. We are very aware of the need to counter Provisional IRA propaganda in the USA and a significant proportion of HMG's information effort there is devoted to that end. We also provide information and briefing for Northern Irishmen who go there - a Presbyterian Church delegation is attracting helpful press attention there right now.

LEGISLATION TO DISQUALIFY CONVICTED TERRORISTS FROM PARLIAMENT

6. The Government is certainly considering introducing such legislation in the near future.

POSSIBLE ELECTORAL MALPRACTICE IN THE 20 MAY LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

7. That is a matter for the Chief Electoral Officer.

A PARAMILITARY-STYLE FUNERAL FOR HUGHES?

8. The actions of the security forces in any particular situation are a matter for the objective and professional judgement of their commanders on the ground. In the past, it has often been considered that moves by the security forces to tackle what are clearly attempts at stage-managed provocation would have resulted in unnecessary bloodshed. On such occasions, considerable numbers of soldiers and police officers, both seen and unseen, are usually on duty and where it is possible to establish the identity of persons who have broken the law, charges can be brought, as has occurred in the past.

ANY QUESTIONS ON DETAILED ACTIVITIES OF SECURITY FORCES

9. This is a matter for the expert judgement of the Chief Constable and the GOC.

EXTRADITION FROM THE IRISH REPUBLIC

10. We have made it clear that we regard extradition as the most effective method of bringing fugitive terrorists to justice. In the absence of extradition, we shall continue to press the Irish authorities to make effective use of the extra-territorial legislation whereby people may be prosecuted in the Republic for offences committed in Northern Ireland.

IS EXTRADITION COVERED IN THE JOINT STUDIES?

11. It would not be appropriate at this stage to reveal the detail of the Joint Studies. Like other aspects of inter-governmental relations the studies are being conducted on a confidential basis. When action is contemplated as a result of any suggestions that come forward Parliament will of course be informed. I have repeatedly made clear that the Studies do not deal with the constitutional position of Northern Ireland.