



Permanent Secretary

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Prime Minister

(2)

Thank you very much
out.

Recd 26/10

26 October.

Dear Prime Minister.

Thank you so much for inviting Joan and me to your party for John and Madeleine Hunt. It was a splendid evening, and we both enjoyed it. There are now two special occasions at No 10 under your office as Prime Minister which we shall always remember.

You asked me about Maurice O'Leary. It will give you the flavour of his impact if you read the attached note (which I send you with Humphrey Atkins approval). The important point about it - and my real reason for sending it to you - is that when we discussed it with the GOC and the Chief Constable at the Secretary of State's Security meeting, Tim Cressy said for the record that it had the Army's backing 100% - and Ken Newman agreed.

And now, thank you again.

With all good wishes. Ken Stone.



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SPM(79)12

Note by Security Co-ordinator

"BUT ME NO BUTS"

1.. This might be regarded as a light-hearted title for a paper on a serious subject - and it might also be considered presumptuous for one who has been in Northern Ireland for exactly one week to make such a comment. I have however found the same refrain going through my talks at all levels and in all departments. It goes something like this:

"Our personal relations are very good but";

"We have no difficulty in agreeing at the operational level but there are questions of higher policy";

"Of course the task is clear but".

I suggest that while recognising the valid reasons for these reservations, our aim should be to convert the conjunction "but" into "and".

2. I do not propose to write a long paper. The issues have been argued and re-argued almost interminably. I always knew that Northern Ireland had many religions but I never realised that it could give rise to so much theology - and a good deal of it pretty dogmatic. I shall try to produce a framework of practical measures to ensure the quick and effective exploitation of opportunities and to resolve disputes before they hamper action.

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3. There can be no controversy about the aim which is set out in the Secretary of State's statement in the House of Commons on 2 July:

"It is the Government's firm policy that we should continue in Northern Ireland to do our utmost to defeat terrorism, and to extend the pattern of normal policing throughout the whole of the Province. The implementation of these policies rests in the hands of the Royal Ulster Constabulary assisted by the Army."

Of course this statement itself produces a practical dilemma. While the two parts of the aim march together it is evident that where the security situation is serious - and not improving - top priority must be and be seen to be given to the first part. The degree of emphasis between one and the other will clearly need to be different in different parts of Northern Ireland, but where the security situation remains serious, timing is of the essence. We need measures which will produce visible results in the short term - say the next six months.

4. I do not consider it opportune or indeed practical to suggest the introduction at the present moment of a Joint Operations Staff. Such a staff would only duplicate, or triplicate if you wish, the existing chains of command in the RUC and the Army. We should, I suggest, first look critically at the arrangements for the conduct of operational liaison between the RUC and the Army at local level and then follow the channels from these arrangements upwards. Such an examination will enable us to determine what new joint organisation (if any) may be needed at the top. (I realise that there are differences between RUC and Army chains of command. The investigation should suggest means of ensuring that those differences do not impede efficient and effective action).

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5. What then should be the first tasks of the Security Co-ordinator's staff? It must, I think, have a mixture of functions. It would have an investigative role and be prepared to serve as a court of appeal. It should produce independent advice on the planning, management and command problems relevant to security operations. It should act as a think-tank and also as a ginger group. It would not have executive powers and would discharge its responsibilities through the departments within whose constitutional responsibilities action lay. It should keep a 24-hour watch.

6. The group would be required to provide advice in conjunction with appropriate Departments in the following areas:

- (a) Operations of the Security Forces.
- (b) Intelligence. It is in my opinion impossible to detach intelligence or counter-intelligence from Operations since all Operations have a direct or indirect intelligence interest.
- (c) Public Relations - to ensure support in both offensive and defensive roles, taking into account not only impact in Northern Ireland but also in GB and foreign countries.
- (d) Co-ordination of support from other Northern Ireland Departments whose actions impinge directly or indirectly on operations against the terrorists.
- (e) It would be useful for the group to have access to legal and management services advice.

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7. The Chief Constable has already nominated an Assistant Chief Constable and the GOC a Brigadier to the staff. Until it is possible to determine the volume of work and the amount of travelling which may be required in Northern Ireland, it is not easy to estimate what the establishment should be. My best guess would be about 8 full-time officers with supporting staff and 2 or 3 part-time consultants. I would hope that about half the staff would be from the Northern Ireland Civil Service and/or the RUC.

8. It has been suggested that Stormont is not the ideal location for the Group. I understand the reasons for this advice but I believe they are outweighed by the need to be seen to be close to the Secretary of State, even apart from the practical difficulties of finding other accommodation in the short term.

9. As an envoi I tell a story of Allen Dulles who kept a card on his office desk. This card faced his visitor and read:

"Do you come with a solution to your problem or are you yourself part of it?"

Let us hope we can together find our solutions.

10. An outline organisation chart is at Annex A.

16 October 1979

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