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PRIME MINISTER

cc Members of OD  
Sir John Hunt

*I'm afraid  
this amounts to 4  
very little indeed.  
We started regular  
helicopter patrols  
to get information  
advance  
as well as  
follow-up the  
initiation  
out*

NORTHERN IRELAND : CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

My meeting with Messrs O'Kennedy and Collins today was almost entirely devoted to cross-border cooperation. We went in detail through the points which you and the Taoiseach had remitted to us on 5 September; the Irish came well prepared and were evidently anxious to make a significant contribution. I believe that we made significant progress, which was reflected - but deliberately not spelled out - in the communique we issued, of which a copy is attached. I summarise the main points below.

2. We were able to record that both police forces are increasing their manpower: the extra 1,000 for the RUC on our side is going to be matched on theirs by more Gardai in selected border areas, and an increase in the capacity of the Special Task Force and of the Technical Bureau (both of which although not wholly dedicated to the border, could nevertheless have a great impact there). We agreed that certain border areas, notably South Armagh, needed re-inforcing on both sides. The Irish and the Commissioner clearly appreciated the Chief Constable's argument that long-term surveillance and in-depth investigations were a crucial element

SECRET

SECRET

in bringing terrorists successfully before the courts. They agreed that the exchange of information across the border in both directions was a key to this.

3. They agreed that coordinated operations for pre-determined tasks are the best way of deploying manpower on either side, and that special efforts are needed in problem areas, especially coordinated patrolling in the more dangerous ones. The Gardai Commissioner and the Chief Constable agreed to review their procedures together and to make the changes that were necessary.

only?  
4. Helicopters. The Irish came with a most carefully prepared and constructive concession: they are now ready to permit helicopters to cross the border as a direct follow-up of serious incidents, subject to a number of detailed operational conditions which we were able to accept. The only short-coming is their insistence that the maximum depth of penetration should be 5 kilometers at 1500 feet (i.e. visibility much further), while we regard 10 kilometers as the useful minimum. There was no immediate prospect of getting more than this. I had the GOC's Chief of Staff at hand and with his concurrence I accepted the offer, on the understanding that we should have to review the arrangement month-by-month. The Irish are equally insistent on this, since they are highly suspicious of the dangers of

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SECRET

abuse, and frightened of the political side-effects of regular appearances of British helicopters in their border areas.

5. Communications between the two security forces. It is part of the agreement on helicopters that our Army Pilots should be able to communicate with the Garda on the ground. On ground-to-ground communication more generally, the Irish also conceded that there would be occasions when the British Army would need to get in touch without delay with the forces on the other side; to meet this point they are putting a Garda officer into every Army unit operating on the border so that direct communication will be available in emergencies.

6. RUC interviews of suspects in the South. The Irish argued strongly and with much supporting evidence that the Courts in the Republic would never admit statements which had been obtained with the participation of the RUC in the questioning. They claimed that in any event, given the rules currently applied by their Courts, police questioning unsupported by other evidence never yielded any results; also that to allow it would have the effect of drying up their current sources of information, and putting the policemen concerned on both sides at personal risk. They made it plain that they would not be able to give way over

*This is a  
reduction  
on the  
judges.*

SECRET

SECRET

this, and suggested instead that we ought to tackle the problem by means of closer consultation between the RUC and Garda, which should bring improvements in the Garda performance over questioning.

7. I expressed our real disappointment that they could not help us on this point, but, guided by the Chief Constable who had a separate and very constructive meeting with the Garda Commissioner at which it was agreed that there were other routes to the same end, I did not make this an issue publicly. It was quite clear that the valuable breakthrough on helicopter overflights would have been at risk had I pressed the issue that far.

8. Training. The Irish set the tone on this point by thanking the RUC for the great help which the Garda had received in planning and operating security over the Pope's visit to the Republic. We had no trouble agreeing that since counter-terrorism was "a joint effort in a common cause" each force should help the other to the maximum, and that the Chief Constable and Commissioner could decide between them where each could best offer help.

9. Exchange of police liaison officers. The Irish dislike the idea of formal liaison officers. After I had pointed to the political effect of the proposal in demonstrating our joint dedication to the cause, they agreed that each force should

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SECRET

SECRET

nominate an officer who would be available round the clock as contact with the other headquarters. This arrangement could be made publicly known, as could the periodic meetings between the Chief Constable and Commissioner (though for security reasons they should not be announced beforehand).

10. I am sending copies of this letter to other members of OD and to Sir John Hunt.

*Humphrey Atkins*

SECRETARY OF STATE

5 October 1979

MEETING BETWEEN BRITISH MINISTERS AND MINISTERS OF  
THE IRISH REPUBLIC ON 5 OCTOBER 1979

COMMUNIQUE

1. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Humphrey Atkins, MP, today met the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Irish Republic, Mr. Michael O'Kennedy, TD, and the Minister for Justice, Mr. Gerard Collins, TD. The Chief Constable of the RUC, Sir Kenneth Newman, and the Commissioner of the Garda Siochana, Mr. Patrick McLaughlin, were also present. The security situation and the general political situation in Northern Ireland were discussed. In relation to security Ministers reviewed progress in the development of proposals, discussed on 5 September between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach, for a substantial improvement in the joint efforts of the two countries to stamp out terrorism.
2. On security cooperation both sides reaffirmed their common commitment to the eradication of violence. They agreed on a series of measures which they were satisfied would enhance the effectiveness of their common campaign against violence and their already extensive cooperation. The new measures are designed to inhibit the movement of terrorists on either side of the border and their ability to exploit that border, whether to commit criminal acts or to evade arrest. They include measures in relation to more

intensive patrolling on both sides of the border and improved coordination and communications between their security forces. It was agreed that an urgent study would be carried out jointly by the heads of the police forces to develop greater cooperation and expertise in a number of areas of police operations. In the interest of maximum effectiveness it was decided that operational details of the measures which were discussed and agreed would not be made public.

3. The Ministers stressed that their common interest in countering terrorism was not limited to the border area, and informed each other of developments in their respective jurisdictions. Ministers also welcomed the decisions of both Governments to increase the strength of their respective police forces.

4. The Ministers agreed that every effort should be made to make fuller use of the 1976 Extra-territorial legislation which allows terrorist suspects to be brought to trial in one jurisdiction for offences committed<sup>k</sup> in the other. They recognise the crucial importance of evidence in securing convictions and expressed confidence that the general public on each side of the border would give all aid and assistance to the Garda and the RUC in their common task of protecting the community.

5. The Ministers also discussed the prospects for political progress in Northern Ireland. They noted that the Secretary of State was engaged in continuing private talks with political

leaders in Northern Ireland, and that in the light of these the British Government hoped before long to be in a position to put forward positive proposals for political development. The Irish Ministers emphasised the importance of an early initiative leading to acceptable political institutions which both sections of the community in Northern Ireland could support and sustain.

6. Ministers reviewed the progress on cross-border economic cooperation and expressed their joint determination to continue to cooperate in the interests of the economic well-being of the people of the border regions.

7. It was agreed that Ministers would continue to meet from time to time to review developments in all of these areas.