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File AX

12

Ireland

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

13 April 1981

Dear Roy,

NORTHERN IRELAND SECURITY CO-ORDINATOR

The Prime Minister has seen the joint minute of 8 April 1981 from your Secretary of State and the Secretary of State for Defence about the post of Security Co-ordinator in Northern Ireland.

She is content that they should proceed as they propose in paragraph four of their minute, subject to a firm understanding that the new arrangement will be reviewed in a year's time with a view to discontinuing it completely then.

She has also commented that the provision in the arrangement proposed by Mr Atkins and Mr Nott that the Security Co-ordinator and his supporting staff should be available to report urgently in the interim if circumstances require it is particularly important following the result of the Fermanagh by-election.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), George Walden (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Brian Norbury (Ministry of Defence) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).


Yours truly,

John Major

Roy Harrington Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office.

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Mr Whitmore

Northern Ireland: Security Coordinator

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland's
minute of 8 April.

2. The fact is that Sir Maurice Oldfield
and Sir Brooks Richards have done what
was required to be done. The job was
always seen as finite. It is no longer
needed.

3. There are two reasons for not winding
it up immediately but keeping it in
mothballs as proposed:

(a) it will reassure the Chief Constable
of the RUC to know that the
Coordinator is still there in the
background, and could be wheeled

in if he (the Chief Constable) were to run into the same sort of trouble with the GOC as his predecessor encountered;

(b) it enables the Secretary of State not to announce the winding up of the post at a time when it would be politically inconvenient to do so.

4. On this basis I think that the Prime Minister can agree with what is proposed; but I suggest that the agreement should be subject to a firm understanding that the arrangement will be reviewed in a year's time with a view to discontinuing it completely then.

RWA

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