

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

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Original Mr still in box?

*Type for PM's
Signature -
[Signature]*

7 September 1981
R8/9 PLSatt

Dear Michael

You wrote to Stephen Boys Smith on 1 September enclosing a copy of a letter which the Prime Minister had received from Dr Paisley.

In this letter Dr Paisley returns to a theme which he has frequently voiced, early this year in particular. He claims that the Government's security policy is ineffective and that the recruitment of a "Third Force" of local people is necessary to help the security forces and terrorism. When he met the Prime Minister on 25 June Dr Paisley criticised the Government for restricting and hampering the activities of the police and the UDR. The Prime Minister will recall his series of "Carson Trail" demonstrations earlier this year which began with a massed gathering of several hundred men at night on a hillside in Co Antrim. Dr Paisley is seeking now to capitalise on increased tension among Protestants (and indeed Catholics) built up by the hunger strikes and exacerbated by the election of Mr Owen Carron in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone by-election. He has already released the text of his letter to the Prime Minister to the Press in Northern Ireland and the Republic. He will undoubtedly make what use he can of the Prime Minister's reply.

The RUC consider that Dr Paisley's assertion that the Chief Constable has said that he is short of manpower is a piqued reaction to a statement issued by the Chief Constable in the wake of a series of bomb attacks in Northern Ireland towns on 5 August. These attacks coincided with a Loyalist parade in Cookstown - a town with a history of sectarian tension - which seemed to have been deliberately staged to coincide with Republican anti-H Block demonstrations. Large numbers of extra policemen were needed in Cookstown to ensure that the evening passed off quietly. The Chief Constable pointed out that dealing with public events of this nature was a drain on resources which might better be directed to countering terrorist activity.

... I enclose a draft letter which the Prime Minister may care to send to Dr Paisley. It defends the Government's security policy and warns about the danger of encouraging civilians independently to take on the security forces' proper tasks.

*Yours sincerely
Mike Hopkins*

M W HOPKINS

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DRAFT LETTER

FILE NUMBER.....

ADDRESSEE'S REFERENCE.....

To	Enclosures	Copies to be sent to
<p>Dr Ian Paisley MP House of Commons LONDON SW1A 0AA</p> <p>(Full Postal Address)</p>		<p>(Full Address, if Necessary)</p>

LETTER DRAFTED FOR SIGNATURE BY THE PRIME MINISTER

(Name of Signatory)

Thank you for your letter of 28 August.

I am naturally concerned not only about the recent bomb attacks you mention but also at the continued attacks on members of the security forces. However, I do not accept your view that the Government's policies and the efforts of the security forces to implement them are ineffective. There are no short cuts, and no substitutes for diligence, persistence, calmness and courage. ~~I am quite confident that~~ ^{the} members of the RUC and the Army have these qualities. Humphrey Atkins and I believe that the Chief Constable and the GOC are deploying their men and their resources in a sensible, intelligent and productive way. We are ready, as I have frequently said, to give them extra help if they need it. Recruitment to the RUC is encouragingly high and the establishment ceiling of the force has not yet been reached. I can quite understand however that the Chief Constable must feel frustrated when his men are diverted from pursuing terrorists by other duties, such as maintaining public order in circumstances where it is being disturbed unnecessarily.

It is important ~~at any time~~ to take a balanced view of the security scene. There have indeed been the terrorist attacks you mention; but the terrorist effort has been hurt ~~and hampered~~ too. You will have noticed the ~~red-handed~~ arrest by the police of three terrorists in a car in possession of two armalite rifles, following a shooting attack against an Army foot patrol in Andersonstown on 20 August. Among a number of good finds was the ~~important~~ recovery from a flat in the Shantallow Estate in Londonderry of 500 kilogrammes of explosives on 16 August.

The police and Army rely on the help of ordinary citizens in all parts of Northern Ireland if they are to prevent violent attacks and arrest those who have committed them. There are still opportunities for local people to serve more actively by joining the UDR or the RUC Reserve. I cannot insist too strongly that the energy and willingness which you describe must be channelled into direct help for the police and the Army, whether by part-time service or other means. The creation of another force would be in stark conflict with that principle. ~~And~~ For ^{any group} ~~anybody~~ to arrogate to themselves the proper tasks of the security forces would be unhelpful, improper and (depending on the circumstances) possibly illegal.

The welfare and safety of the people of Northern Ireland are the responsibility of the Government of the country of which it is a part. We are providing the RUC and the Army with the best means possible to ^{carry out their duties.} ~~protect them~~. What the authorities need ^{now} is ~~the~~ positive support ~~of~~ ~~everyone~~ in their efforts to fulfil that responsibility.