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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

John Coles Esq
PS/Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

[Handwritten signature]

5 April 1982

Prime Minister

To note

[Handwritten initials] 5/4

Dear Tom,

NORTHERN IRELAND SECURITY CO-ORDINATOR

In his minute to the Prime Minister of 17 December, my Secretary of State commented on the Security Co-ordinator's report on the situation at that time, and pointed out that we should have to review his position in the Spring.

Sir Brooks Richards has attended the periodic Security Policy Meetings in Belfast up till the end of March. He did not think it necessary to contribute any further written report. Work has gone forward in the areas to which Sir Brooks drew particular attention in his last report and on which Mr Prior commented in his minute. That will be a continuing necessity, if the response is to remain appropriate and adequate to the threat at all times.

Having taken careful stock of the current security scene, and of the relationship of those responsible for dealing with it - RUC, Army and NIO - Mr Prior has concluded that the Security Co-ordinator has fully discharged his responsibilities and that there is no further role for him to play in present circumstances. Sir Brooks Richards has accordingly stepped down.

We would see no advantage in making any public announcement about this, and indeed we should regard the post as being in abeyance (though it will disappear from the establishment). The circumstances in which we might wish to revive it are less likely, insofar as we can ensure that the lessons instilled by Sir Brooks and his predecessor Sir Maurice Oldfield are not forgotten; but they are not inconceivable. If they should recur, my Secretary of State would have no hesitation in seeking the Prime Minister's authority to reinstate the post, and believes that it should be possible to find a suitable incumbent without any unacceptable delay.

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I am sending a copy of this letter to John Halliday in the Home Office,
David Omand in the Ministry of Defence and to David Wright in Sir
Robert Armstrong's Office.

Yours sincerely
Mike Hopkins

M W HOPKINS

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