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PRIME MINISTER

MEETING WITH SIR ELDON GRIFFITHS

He is coming to see you tomorrow about the RUC. The Northern Ireland Secretary is very sensitive about this meeting (he will not be present).

On the basis of his earlier letters he is likely to argue:

- that the attacks on the RUC should have been foreseen and preventitive action taken,
- that more needs to be done now to protect them;
- that you should see the Police Federation;
- that the Chief Constable is subject to political direction;
- that the RUC should be taken off border security duties.

You will want to make clear that the Government are very concerned about the welfare of the RUC and are doing a great deal to alleviate the problems (please see paragraph 7 of the brief). The measures taken will ensure that no member of the RUC is financially disadvantaged as a result of being intimidated. You will also want to rebut the allegation that the Chief Constable is subject to political direction in operational matters, and express full confidence in him (and indeed in Northern Ireland Office Ministers).

You might agree in principle to see the Federation but keep the timing open. They have just seen Northern Ireland Ministers and you don't want to seem a Court of Appeal from them.

Sir Eldon may also raise Libya. The main US bases are in his area.

C.P.
Charles Powell

21 April 1986

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JALAPZ

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

CC B/UP



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

Charles Powell Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

21 April 1986

CJP

Dear Charles,

MEETING WITH SIR ELDON GRIFFITHS MP

... I attach, as discussed earlier, briefing material prepared by colleagues in Northern Ireland for the meeting tomorrow with Sir Eldon Griffiths MP. Unfortunately on this occasion due to other immoveable committments in Northern Ireland the Secretary of State will not be able to attend in support of the Prime Minister.

Yours Sincerely
Neil Ward.

N D WARD

Encl

JLD

REPORTED INTIMIDATION/ATTACKS ON POLICE FAMILIES
(from 3 March to 18 April 1986)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number attacked</u>	<u>No evacuated</u>
RUC (Regular)	76	16
Full-time Reserve	79	17
Part-time Reserve	44	6
Ex-members	14	1
Families	35	5
Totals	<u>248</u>	<u>45</u>

<u>Nature of Attack</u>	<u>Number</u>
Petrol Bombing	29
Shooting	10
Stoning	106
Threats	71
Slogans	8
Others	24
Total	<u>248</u>



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SIR ELDON GRIFFITHS - ATTACKS ON RUC

Line to take

1. The Prime Minister could take the opportunity to underscore the Government's concern for the welfare and security of RUC members and their families and its full support for everything the Chief Constable and the Police Authority are doing to provide reassurance, financial assistance and added protection.

2. The opportunity could also be taken to re-emphasise that there is no question of the Chief Constable being subject to political control or direction in relation to his operational responsibilities; and perhaps also to suggest that it is of no less importance for those who have the interests of the RUC at heart to avoid any word or action which might call into question the Force's impartiality in enforcing the law.

3. Sir Eldon could be advised that Ministers have assured the Police Federation on 2 occasions recently that everything that can be done will be done to restore confidence in the political process in Northern Ireland - to isolate the extremists and to assist the Forces of law and order.

4. /If pressed - while responsibility for providing reassurance and direct support to the RUC must remain with the Secretary of State I would be content to meet the Police Federation if that would be helpful at some stage. Timing is important and I am concerned not to be seen to be involved in a way that might give rise to misconceptions/.

Background

5. Since the "Day of Action" on 3 March 1986, there have been 246 attacks on the homes of RUC members and their families - by "Loyalist" extremists. As a result, 45 families have been evacuated (at 18 April) - details are attached at the Annex.

6. To counter the risk of attack from Republican terrorists many police families have chosen to live in or close to housing estates where Protestants are in a majority. Ironically it is in such areas that they are now most vulnerable to attack by the hooligan element. This makes it particularly difficult to relocate RUC families in "safe" areas - which may explain why most families have so far decided to stay put. But this only serves to add to the strain and pressure on RUC members and their families.

7. Following the events on 31 March in Portadown, the Chief Constable has tasked a special committee to examine all measures for alleviating the problems of police officers arising out of intimidation; to provide quick and effective assistance to families; and to ensure that communications within the Force are effective in countering rumours and misinformation about police operations and policy. The Police Staff Associations - the Police Federation, Superintendents' Association and ACPO - are each represented on the Committee. With the full support of the Police Authority and the NIO, the Committee has established procedures for providing tactical and financial assistance to intimidated families. These include:

- (i) purchase of owner occupied houses by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive under the SPED Scheme (special purchase of evacuated dwellings). RUC members are being given priority treatment.
- (ii) Ex-gratia payments to cover the full amount of any discount which has to be repaid to the NIHE in respect of the sale of houses previously purchased from the NIHE.

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- (iii) Interest free loans to meet the cost of deposits for the purchase of new houses.
- (iv) Emergency cash advances up to £250.00 to RUC members who have to vacate; or where the home or personal property has been damaged.
- (v) Provision of leased furnished accommodation - at no additional cost to the officers while permanent accommodation is being sought.
- (vi) Immediate removal to emergency accommodation where necessary (police accommodation, hotels, rented/leased housing is available for this purpose).
- (vii) Special home security measures where the family intends to remain, this includes the immediate provision of special protective covering for windows and doors and, in the slightly longer term, a full range of security measures under the VIP Protection Scheme - average cost £8,000-£10,000.

8. These arrangements extend to all serving members of the Force, including the Part-time Reserve (who do not normally qualify for removal expenses as they are not liable to transfer). Their purpose is to ensure that no RUC members are financially disadvantaged as a result of being intimidated. The RUC Emergency Housing Unit will also provide advice and practical assistance to ex-members and police families.

9. Sir Eldon Griffiths can be expected to rehearse the points he has made in his recent correspondence with the Prime Minister and in various statements to the media about the

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cause and effect of the current campaign of intimidation and attacks on the RUC: that the Chief Constable and/or the Government must take steps to convince the Force and the majority community that the Chief Constable is not subject to political direction in the context of the AI Conference, particularly in the handling of Loyalist parades; that the RUC should be relieved of border security responsibilities; that there is a crisis of morale in the RUC; and that more needs to be done to protect and reassure police officers and their families. He may also return to the theme that the Chief Constable should be replaced because he no longer has the confidence of his Force.

10. In most respects Sir Eldon's views reflect those of the Police Federation; and the rather strained relationship which has existed between that body and the Chief Constable for some years. Similar points were made by the Federation delegation which met the Secretary of State and Mr Scott on 15 April. Essentially they are preoccupied with the RUC's role in relation to the AI Agreement and the policing of parades. It is clear that they are under considerable pressure from hard liners in the Federated ranks to press for changes in the operational policy. However while the Federation are anxious that there should be some movement in the current political impasse between Unionists and the Government, they would not wish this to be perceived to have been brought about by the actions of extremists.

11. The Police Federation has also discussed their concerns with the Chief Constable. The special Committee on intimidation was established in response to these concerns. The Chief Constable has also assured the Staff Associations that whenever practicable they will be consulted in advance about the handling of controversial parades.

12. Sir Eldon is likely to press for a meeting between the Federation and the Prime Minister in the near future. The

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justification for this - in terms of providing further reassurance and underscoring the Government's support for the RUC - will need to be considered in the light of developments, on both the public order and political fronts.

*Pl. add to
meeting folder
on*

MR. POWELL

cc. Mr. Alison

As the Prime Minister is seeing Eldon Griffiths tomorrow Tuesday, 22nd April I thought I should report his telephone conversation to me last Friday afternoon.

1. Labour groups on those County Councils with US air bases were trying procedural devices in the hope that they could request a meeting at Westminster to complain of the action against Libya. The Labour Group in Suffolk was trying this but would fail because Conservatives were in control. But he had heard of moves afoot in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire. Eldon hoped that any request for these County Councils to see the Prime Minister or the Environment Secretary would be turned down. I told him they would be and passed his message to the Special Adviser at the Department of the Environment. (I spoke to you about this point on Friday).
2. He expressed concern in case the annual air show at Mildenhall may be cancelled for security reasons because of over caution.
3. He told me (which you may know) that General Gabriel flew into the US air base after the action against Libya.

S.S.

STEPHEN SHERBOURNE

21.4.86

PRIME MINISTER

21 April 1986

POLICE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

MEETING WITH SIR ELDON GRIFFITHS, 22 MARCH 1986

The Police Service in Northern Ireland, which currently consists of 8,250 regulars and 3,000 full and part-time reserves, feel extremely vulnerable at the moment, following the wave of protestant attacks on their homes. Temporarily, there is a lull but in the last months there have been, altogether, 248 attacks on the families and homes of 226 serving police officers and reserve officers. Officers are naturally worried while they are on duty. Attacks, as you know, have ranged from stoning (106 incidents) and daubing (71 incidents) to shooting (10 incidents), petrol bombing (29 incidents) and threats (71 incidents). In 45 cases, rehousing is urgently needed to allow officers and their families to escape further attacks.

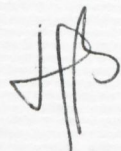
There arise three difficulties: firstly, the question of where these officers should move; secondly, the loss of value of the home sold in these circumstances; and thirdly, if the house had been a public sector tenanted house where the officer had earned a rebate on the purchase value, the loss of this rebate.

The Financial Implications of the Federation's Case

On occasion, the new house to be purchased may cost much more than the one sold. Worse than this is the second problem, namely, that under the special purchase of evacuated houses arrangement, the valuer brought in by the administration frequently awards a price £2,000 or more below what is said to be the true value of the house. And worse still, the loss of housing rebate may amount to a loss of £5-6,000 to the police officer. If the Government was to compensate the loss of rebate alone, the total revenue implications in the short-term will amount to about £100-150,000, but in the course of the year, if the problem continued, it might amount to about £1 million.

Proposal

The Police Federation will say that an ex gratia payment should be paid by the Government to cover the loss of housing rebate for the handful of police who have lost it by being forced to move. It appears critical to the morale and support for the RUC that we assist in this way. However, it seems that the other two points need no help from you. The valuation point and the question of where to move, can either be resolved without your help or will be accepted by the RUC.



HARTLEY BOOTH

MR POWELL

21 April 1986

POLICE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

We understand that, although Sir Eldon may be taking up some points concerning policing near Mildenhall and Lakenheath in Suffolk, his principal point relates to attacks on the Ulster Police Force. Our contacts in the RUC have provided the following briefing material which I have addressed to the Prime Minister.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'H.B.' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

HARTLEY BOOTH

Ireland, Situation

PERSONAL

PRIME MINISTER

You agreed to see Eldon Griffiths to talk about police matters in Northern Ireland. We are arranging this for Tuesday week.

Tom King knows (from Michael Alison) that Eldon wants to see you, and takes the view that he should be present. This is constitutionally correct. But it will be an unhappy meeting; and anyway you regard Eldon as a friend, entitled to see you alone.

I think that you should tell Tom King that you will see Eldon alone; but ask him to let you have a really good brief on the basis of which you can deal with Eldon's complaints.

Agree?

Yes

mt

C D P

C D POWELL

11 April 1986

SL3APD

Spoken to NIO.
By all means a
speaking note for BF
the PM.
C.D.P. 14L

PERSONAL