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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

Prime Minister
Per information (2)



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

Charles Powell Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

28th May 1985

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Dear Charles,

THE RUC AND THE GARDA SIOCHANA

Mr Hurd (who is on leave in Scotland) has asked me to keep you up to date on the dispute between the RUC and the Irish over the terrorist attack near Newry on 20 May.

As he reported to Cabinet on 23 May the Irish were irritated because the Chief Constable had at once published his belief that the terrorists and the explosives had come from the Republic before communicating with them privately. Both the Garda and the Irish Government interpreted this as a direct attack. In a telephone call to Mr Barry on 22 May, Mr Hurd gave specific reasons for our belief that the vehicle in question had probably travelled via the Republic, and that the terrorists had probably escaped to the Republic. The Irish Government however chose to brief the press about this to the effect that the British Government had assured them that there was no evidence of Irish involvement (Dublin telegram number 312 of 24 May refers).

The resulting press stories have inevitably put the Chief Constable in a difficult position. Mr Hurd has kept in touch with him and found him reasonably relaxed. The Garda privately invited a senior Assistant Chief Constable to visit his opposite number in Dublin on Saturday 25 May. Though by no means a complete substitute for resumed contact at the top level this invitation indicated some wish towards an accommodation and in the event modest progress was made.

It is not in our interests to make a public row with the Irish Government over their misleading presentation of this affair. Nevertheless Mr Hurd thinks it is important that they should understand the depth of the sense of frustration which many

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feel in the North as a result of terrorist activities South of the Border, particularly those who come North to operate in the Newry area. He proposes to use the occasion of his meeting in London with the Irish Foreign Minister on 30 May to make this point and to explore how best to achieve a proper exchange of information and co-ordination of plans at senior police level.

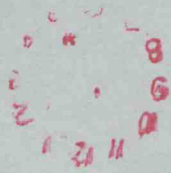
I am copying this letter to Len Appleyard (FCO) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office)

Yours sincerely
Neil Ward.

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28 May 2005