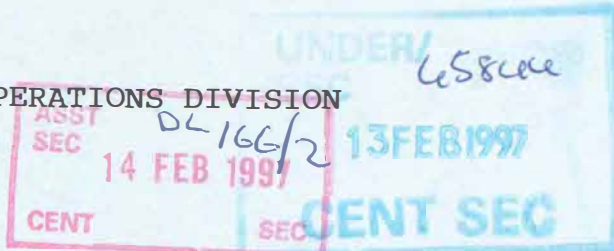


R E S T R I C T E D

FROM: N P PERRY
SECURITY POLICY AND OPERATIONS DIVISION
13 FEBRUARY 1997

DESK IMMEDIATE



cc: PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B
PS/Sir John Wheeler (DFP, B&L) - B
PS/Michael Ancram (DENI, B&L) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Sir David Fell - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Steele - B
Mr Leach - B
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Stephens - B
Mr Wood (B&L) - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Daniell - B
Mr Ray - B
Mr Beeton - B
Mr Brooker - B
Mr Hill - B
Mrs Collins - B
Mr Smyth - B
Miss Bharucha - B
Mr Clarke - B
Mr Margetts - B
Mrs Todd - B
Mr Brearley - B

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PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B

RECENT TERRORIST ATTACKS: LETTER TO US AMBASSADOR

Your minute to Miss Bharucha of 11 February (not to all) asked for a draft letter which the Secretary of State might send to the Admiral Crowe listing recent terrorist attacks.

2. This is attached. I have also included a list of security force successes. Following last night's murder of L/Bdr Restorick, it is worth recalling the extent to which the security forces have been successful in disrupting terrorist attacks in recent weeks. Terrorist ambushes in the process of being set up have been foiled

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in Londonderry on 18 January (Mk 16 recovered), Dungiven on 25 January (PRIG and rifle recovered, four men charged) and Lurgan on 6 February (Mk 16 recovered, two men charged). A number of arms caches have been uncovered - 3 Mk 16 and a PRIG in Belfast on 5 December (1 charge); 2 PRIGs and a Mk 16 mortar in Belfast on 17 January (in transit, 1 charge); a rifle in Strabane on 17 January (1 charge); and a PRIG, rifle and 2 revolvers in an ongoing operation in Lurgan, in connection with which a number of people are currently in custody. PIRA have also been forced to abort a number of operations, for a variety of reasons: for example, near Rosslea on 7 December; in Belfast on 11 December (Mk 16 recovered) and 31 December (1,000 lbs of HME recovered in vehicle at Belfast Castle); and near Strabane on 10 February (1,400 lb landmine defused). In all 17 people (14 republicans) have been charged with terrorist offences since 1 January. Material bringing out these successes, and others in GB and the Irish Republic, is being prepared for PM's Questions.

[signed]

N P PERRY

SHA Ext 27028

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DRAFT LETTER FOR SIGNATURE BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE:

His Excellency The Honourable Admiral William J Crowe
American Embassy
24 Grosvenor Square
LONDON
W1A 1LH

When we spoke on Tuesday, I undertook to let you have details of recent terrorist attacks in the Province. These, covering the period since the beginning of December, are attached.

Last night's cold-blooded murder of a young soldier, shot in the back by a sniper while manning a checkpoint in Co Armagh, is the latest in a series of steadily intensifying terrorist attacks on the security forces in recent weeks. All have been potentially lethal: and many, like yesterday's, have also put civilians at grave risk. Nothing exposes more clearly the hypocrisy of Sinn Fein's talk of peace. The latest murder has caused deep anger throughout the community and has been condemned across the political spectrum in Ireland and Britain - except, of course, by Sinn Fein - and this has been accompanied by widespread encouragement to the loyalists to maintain their ceasefire.

The toll from terrorist attacks would have been much higher were it not for the vigilance and professionalism of the police and Army. I also attach an illustrative list of recent security force successes to illustrate the point.

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Terrorism will not, of course, deflect us by a single inch from our objective of securing lasting peace in Northern Ireland. Thank you for your continuing support.

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RECENT SECURITY INCIDENTS

TERRORIST ATTACKS (All PIRA unless otherwise stated)

DECEMBER

- 20 Shots fired at RUC protecting DUP member Nigel Dodds at Royal Victoria Hospital. One policeman injured.
- 22 Under car booby trap exploded beneath car belonging to a Republican in Ardoyne. He suffered leg and arm injuries. (Suspected Loyalist attack).

JANUARY

- 6 Belfast City Centre - PRIG (improvised rocket) attack on sangar protecting Royal Courts of Justice. One RUC officer and a civilian slightly injured. One man charged in connection with attack.
- 7 Londonderry - 2 RUC vehicles attacked by Mk16 horizontal mortar. No casualties.
- 10 Tempo, Fermanagh - 2 Mk15 mortars fired at unmanned RUC station. No casualties.
- 13 Andersonstown, Belfast - MK16 mortar fired at 4 RUC/military vehicle patrol. No casualties.
- 18 Downpatrick - 2 Mk16 mortars fired at RUC mobile patrol. 2 RUC officers and a female civilian motorist caught in blast; not seriously injured.
- 20 East Belfast - 2 coffee jar devices thrown at RUC Mountpottinger station. No casualties.

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- 20 Larne - Under car booby trap functioned under passenger seat of a van belonging to a Roman Catholic man. (Suspected Loyalist attack).
- 26 Ballynahinch - explosive device exploded under a car belonging to off-duty soldiers. One soldier carrying out security check of the vehicle slightly injured.
- 26 Toome - Mk 16 mortar fired at an armoured police vehicle. No casualties.
- 28 Belfast - 2 PRIGs fired from alleyway in West Belfast at Army mobile patrol. One vehicle struck: no casualties.

FEBRUARY

- 6 Dungannon - PRIG attack on police vehicle. No casualties.
- 6 Lurgan - Mk 16 attack on police mobile patrol. No serious casualties.
- 7 Co Antrim - civilian vehicle with two soldiers fired on by gunman. Three hits on vehicle, no casualties.
- 9 Pomeroy - Mk 16 fired at and hit RUC vehicle, but only partially detonated. One RUC officer slightly injured; two others suffered shock.
- 12 Bessbrook - L/Bdr Restorick shot dead by sniper.

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SECURITY FORCE FINDS/CHARGES

DECEMBER

- 5 Belfast - RUC discover 3 Mk16 mortars, 34 cassette incendiary devices and a PRIG firing assembly at a house in West Belfast. (One woman charged.)
- 11 Belfast - Mk16 mortar recovered from wheelie bin near Girdwood Barracks: part of failed attempt to ambush security forces.
- 31 Belfast - Van containing 450 kgs of HME discovered outside Belfast Castle: aborted attack on security forces.

JANUARY

- 5 South Armagh - 5 barrels with 250 lbs of explosives found hidden in wall.
- 17 Belfast - Routine patrol apprehended individual with two holdalls, which contained 2 PRIGs and 1 Mk16 horizontal mortar. One man charged.
- 17 Strabane - M1 rifle and ammunition found in dwelling house. One man charged.
- 18 Belfast - Search uncovered 1 SIG sniper rifle with 270 rounds of ammunition hidden in wall in block of flats.
- 18 Londonderry - Men acting suspiciously fled when spotted by security force patrol. Mk16 mortar recovered.
- 25 Dungiven, Londonderry - Police patrol intercepted group of men acting suspiciously. PRIG, rifle and other terrorist equipment recovered. Four men charged.

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FEBRUARY

- 6 Lurgan - Military patrol spotted men acting suspiciously. 1
Mk 16 mortar recovered, together with firing pack and
twinflex wire. Two men charged as a result of follow-up
operation.
- 10 Strabane - 1,000 lbs of HME recovered after ATO defused
landmine: aborted ambush.
- 11 Lurgan - Ongoing search operation in the Kilwilkie Estate:
arms recovered so far include a PRIG, a rifle and 2
revolvers. Several people in custody.

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