

2) SecS

FROM: N BELL
SECURITY POLICY AND OPERATIONS DIVISION
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- 1. PS/Minister of State (B)
 - 2. PS/Secretary of State (B)
- cc PS/SofS (L) - B
 - PS/MofS (L) - B
 - PS/PUS (L&B) - B
 - ① PS/Sir K Bloomfield - B
 - Mr Ledlie - B
 - Mr Burns - B
 - Mr Wilson - B
 - Mr Alston - B
 - Mr Wood (L&B) - B
 - Mr Blackwell - B
 - Mr Dodds - B
 - Mr J McConnell - B



SECRETARY OF STATE'S SPEECH

As requested, I attach a draft of a speech for the Secretary of State's use on Saturday evening, when he addresses the UDR Regimental Dinner for their Twentieth Anniversary. This has benefited from the suggestions of Messrs Ledlie and Wilson. This will be an important occasion, as Ministers know from their recent meeting with the two Colonels Commandant of the Regiment, from which the Regiment is expecting much - largely, one expects, by way of balm for still unhealed, and to some extent self-inflicted wounds.

Straight Talking

2. The Secretary of State can and should pay the most eloquent and sincere tribute that he can to the courage and commitment of the overwhelming majority of the Regiment, past and present. But he would be less than a friend to the Regiment in the long run, if he did not also draw attention to the special problems of the Regiment in helping police a divided society, and on the need for them to strive to win and maintain confidence amongst the Nationalist community. The draft attempts to make these necessary points in a way which will least abrade UDR sensitivities.

3. The Minister of State, who asked to see the speech in draft, will recognise some of the themes as those he successfully put across himself at the UDR's weekend conference at Ballykinler last Autumn. The language has, however, been changed somewhat as many of those then present will be listening to the Secretary of State.

Publicity

4. Provided Ministers are content, there is no reason in principle why the Speech should not be given wider publicity. Arrangements can be made in collaboration with Information Services. Indeed the speech contains material that could usefully be made to a wider audience: a restatement of the fundamentals of our security policy; an explanation of why public support for the police and Army is an essential ingredient in defeating terrorism in this divided society. But one must be careful: the primary aim of this speech is the encouragement and education of the UDR at their 20th Birthday Party. It would be damaging if the Secretary of State's material were to be retailed in the media under such a rubric as 'Secretary of State tells UDR to go easy on Nationalists' or, 'to put their own house in order'. There will, I trust, be other opportunities to emphasise the wider themes, and in our media handling we ought perhaps to err on the side of emphasising the Secretary of State's confidence in the Regiment, its future, and its growing professionalism; and his total commitment to the defeat of terrorism (with the UDR's help) under the rule of law; and, perhaps the need for good civil government to reinforce the work of the police and Army.

The UDR Depot

5. You will also know that, with the support of MOD, the speech also announces publicly the formation of a dedicated UDR Regimental Depot at Ballykinler. This may be largely cosmetic. But it does give the Regiment a focus, and can be used to demonstrate the emphasis placed by the Government and Army on the increasing professionalism of the UDR. (A note on the Depot is attached.) Another note of caution, however: although the Depot will formally come into being on Sunday, the GOC is uneasy at giving Ballykinler any greater prominence and hence increasing the likelihood of the camp's becoming a terrorist target. We cannot lightly disregard his advice. It would, however, be a pity to drop all reference to this tangible acknowledgement of the UDR's maturity. The compromise which I believe would satisfy the GOC would be for the Secretary of State to mention the Depot in his speech, but for it not to be alluded to in any Press Release.

(signed)

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J1/10926

DRAFT

SECRETARY OF STATE'S SPEECH TO THE UDR

Introduction

(Secretary of State's own words)

Delighted and deeply honoured to have been the first Secretary of State for Northern Ireland invited to attend and to speak at your Regimental Dinner.

Tribute to the Regiment

In my short time as Secretary of State, I have come very quickly to realise that the Ulster Defence Regiment is an exceptional body of men and women. The [Irish] philosopher, Edmund Burke [who combined the interesting distinction of being both an Irishman and a Conservative] once wrote that: "for evil to triumph, it is enough for the men of goodwill to do nothing". The UDR is exceptional precisely because it has risen to Burke's challenge: your commitment to the service of peace over 20 dangerous and difficult years should be a shining example to all those who care for peace and justice whether in the island of Ireland, across the sea in Great Britain, or more widely still. The more so because this example has not been set by a few, remarkable individuals. Over the years, over 40,000 men and women have, by joining it, stood up to be counted. By so doing they have deliberately put their own lives at risk in order to protect the lives of others. I am deeply conscious that over 180 serving and former members of the Regiment have already lost their own lives as a result of that commitment to protect the lives of others.

What values lie at the heart of such commitment and inspire such unremitting hard work as well as sacrifice on behalf of the whole community? First, and foremost I would place a firm belief in justice, decency, and democracy. Second, and flowing directly from the first, I would put an absolute determination that those who have arrogantly chosen to try and impose their will by ruthless and callous attacks (usually on defenceless victims) should not be allowed to triumph.

All of us in this room know that terrorism cannot, and will not prevail. In 20 years, in no small measure because of your own efforts, the Provisional Irish Republican Army has not advanced one millimetre towards securing its declared political objectives. At present, it is still the determined and effective action of the security forces which bears most heavily on the terrorists; and there will be no let up here. But security force action by itself will not be enough. Terrorism will be finally be defeated, and driven into oblivion when the community is united not only in its utter condemnation of that evil, but also united in its wholehearted support for, and involvement in all the basic institutions of society in Northern Ireland. Terrorists, orange and green, recognise this point all too well. That is why they are trying constantly by their actions to divide and not unite people. They are the true believers in the old adage of "divide and rule". That is why they are trying always to sap public confidence in the fundamental pillars of our society; to smear and besmirch those, such as the UDR, who they rightly perceive to be a powerful obstacle to their plans.

Defeating Terrorism

There are divisions enough in Northern Ireland society. The Government and the UDR share, I believe, the objective of ensuring that these divisions are healed, not widened by our common enemies. The first priority of Government in Northern Ireland therefore will always be the defeat of terrorism, from whichever side of the community it comes. We want the people of Northern Ireland to be able to live together in peace and to take decisions about their own future, democratically and without fear or coercion. That is why the Government will continue to ensure that all arms of the security forces, including the UDR, enjoy the moral, legal and material resources they need to undertake their difficult and dangerous work on behalf of the whole community. Our second priority is to provide a means of establishing some new and more accountable system of Government for Northern Ireland that can find wide acceptance across the community. As I now know better than most, there is no easy path here either. But I am not easily discouraged; and I will continue to try to make progress. In the meantime, I and my colleagues, and the NIO and the Northern Ireland Departments, will continue our efforts to provide a Government for Northern Ireland which is, above all, fair. And which, in remedying the sense of injustice and deprivation on which terrorism has in the past fed, will complement and reinforce your own equally essential work, and that of your police colleagues, in remorselessly wearing down the terrorists and denying them all hope, ever, of success.

The Iterative of Professionalism

The UDR is, as I have often said publicly, an essential element in our anti-terrorist strategy. The police and the Regular Army cannot manage without you; and they will not be asked to try. But like its Regular Army colleagues, the UDR acts in support of the police, representing the civil power in Northern Ireland. Representing the civil power in Northern Ireland at this time is a particularly heavy responsibility. Like every public authority, therefore, your task is one which must be carried out with exemplary attention to the need to ensure that everyone with whom you come in contact is treated fairly and equally at all times. I am talking, in short about the need for professionalism - and, therefore, I fear preaching to the converted. You know - better than I - how necessary it is that the actions of the security forces at all times should be such as to create and maintain absolute confidence in their integrity and impartiality. Failure to win this confidence right across the community would allow the terrorist to exploit divisions in the community, foment distrust and, ultimately, still more violence.

In fact, as we all know, we need to be looking at all times for the maximum amount of community support for both the police and Army. I accept that 100% support is unattainable. The terrorist hard core we must continue to isolate, to bring to justice, and to punish. However, there is a much larger number of people whose upbringing has led them - as they would see it with good reason - to question the impartiality and fairness of society in Northern Ireland, who are nevertheless in their hearts just as firmly against the real

evildoers as we are. These are the people who we must convince that they have nothing to fear from the forces of law and order. They must know that if they are stopped in the dead of night in a dark lane by an Army or police patrol, they will be treated with respect and allowed to go on their way with the minimum of inconvenience; that they are not regarded as criminals or potential criminals simply because of their religion or supposed political affiliations. These are the people who must come, naturally, to call upon the police and Army (including the UDR) as their protectors, to regard you as belonging to them.

It is, I know, easy for me to say this. I do not have your experience of patrolling in the dark, of meeting people who may at any moment be trying to kill me. But I can imagine the depths of suspicion, ignorance and instinctive fears that have to be overcome. More important, however, I know that everyone here would agree that, even under the most severe provocation which terrorists and their sympathisers can - and do - devise, UDR men and women must at all times act professionally. Like me you will wish to ensure that there are no sustainable grounds for suspicions of partisanship against any member of a very fine Regiment. This will require leadership of an exemplary kind from all of you here, and from your NCOs; and it will require near exceptional standards from all the ordinary soldiers of the Regiment. But I am in no doubt that this can and will be provided. I would ask you to be equally confident that the UDR can rely on the unqualified support of the Government in all that it does to defeat terrorism under the rule of law.

The Stevens Inquiry

You may not wish me to sit down before I say something about the inquiry being carried out by the Deputy Chief Constable of Cambridgeshire, Mr John Stevens, at the request of the Chief Constable of the RUC. I know there has been disquiet about the Stevens inquiry, both about the fact of its establishment and about the way it has been carried out. There is a proper channel for complaint in relation to the second of these points; and I will therefore make no comment on that issue now. About the decision to establish the inquiry, I will say only this. The decision was taken independently by the Chief Constable - although with my full support. He made that decision - to seek the assistance of a senior police officer from an English force - after widely publicised allegations that the terrorist murderers of Mr Loughlin Maginn had used security force material to target their victim, after the reported disappearance of confidential material from Ballykinler camp, and after the unexplained theft of photographs of PIRA suspects. I have no doubt that he was right.

I do not know what Mr Stevens will say when he presents his report to the Chief Constable. We hope that this will be sometime next month. I imagine it will raise issues for us all. But I do believe that the overwhelming majority of all arms of the security forces fully supported the decision to establish the inquiry, and that they share the Government's determination that any wrong-doers among their ranks should be brought to justice. I also know that it is well understood that any misdemeanour, no matter how minor or technical, is unprofessional behaviour: not least because they provide potent weapons for the terrorist.

Peroration

But I do not want to dwell on the Stevens inquiry or past history. It is the future of the Regiment to which I want to direct my closing remarks. At the age of 20, the UDR has completed its adolescence; it is a Regiment which is fast maturing. I know that with maturity will come even greater professionalism, even greater understanding, and an even greater determination to make its special contribution to the solution of the problems of Northern Ireland.

Since I came to Northern Ireland, I have heard a lot about the UDR. More importantly, I have also learned a lot about the Regiment. Between us I think that the Minister of State (John Cope) and I have now visited all of your Battalions at least once. We have both been enormously impressed by the dedication, professionalism, and the resolute good nature of the men and women we have met. We know that the UDR is the youngest Regiment in the British Army, that it is also the largest, and that has been on active duty now for 20 years and has sustained the most casualties. It is fast developing a spirit all of its own, one well capable of matching the esprit de corps and tradition of Regiments with illustrious histories going back generations.

It is in recognition of the outstanding contribution which the Regiment has made, and will continue to make, to preserving peace and law and order that Colours are to be awarded to your constituent Battalions over the next few months. I am personally delighted by this. I see it as the only appropriate reward for the dedicated service which you have given so unstintingly and so consistently.

I am also delighted to say that, in recognition of the UDR's established place in the British Army, the Ministry of Defence has decided to give the UDR its own Depot. Most of you will have fond memories of Ballykinler - perhaps of the fog, and mud, or perhaps of what I understand is the inimitable Ballykinler curry. From tomorrow, Ballykinler will become the UDR's own training Depot. This will be a real focus and centre for the whole Regiment. It will have a vital role in shaping the future of the UDR itself, and, thereby, I dare to suggest, in shaping the future of Northern Ireland itself.

Let me therefore, conclude to take this opportunity of wishing you all the very best in that future. I look forward to a still closer relationship with the Regiment, to working together, with you, and with all other decent people of whatever tradition in Northern Ireland, to bring peace and harmony in place of strife and discord. I could not ask for better colleagues in this most worthwhile task than those who I hope I can call my friends in the Ulster Defence Regiment.

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The Reorganisation of the Northern Ireland Training Establishment

The UDR Training Depot at Ballykinler forms part of the Northern Ireland Training Establishment (NITE) which also provides in theatre NI training for the Regular Army. The Regulars were originally the major customer of the training establishment there. But, in recent years, the burden of training has shifted to the UDR.

MOD have therefore decided that some internal reorganisation should be carried out to reflect this development. The Depot will accordingly be renamed HQ Depot UDR, with NITE forming part of it. The command and control arrangements and actual functions will continue as now, except that the CO, whilst a regular Officer, will be cap-badged UDR. The regular training unit will continue to be controlled by HQNI. While the changes are, therefore, largely cosmetic, they will for the first time give the UDR its own Regimental Depot, which will serve as a focus for the whole Regiment. The change will be effected on 1 April, the 20th Anniversary of the Regiment's formation.

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