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FROM: I T MAYE
Security Policy and Operations Division 1
15 September 1995



cc PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Sir David Fell - B
Mr Legge - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Leach - B
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Williams - B
Mr Shannon - B
Mr Steele - B
Mr Marsh - B
Mr Maccabe - B
Mr Brooker - B
Mr Perry - B
Mr Beeton - B
Mr Caine - B
Mr Maitland

1. Mr Pope [SMP 15/9]
2. PS/Sir John Wheeler (B&L) - B

SIR JOHN WHEELER'S SPEECH TO THE ARMY COMMAND AND STAFF COURSE,
CAMBERLEY - 20 SEPTEMBER 1995

The Minister is due to speak at the Army Command and Staff Course at Camberley on Wednesday 20 September 1995. The address is programmed to take place between 1500 and 1600 and comes at the end of a 2½ day study on Northern Ireland.

2. The course organisers place great importance on a Ministerial input to the course; the Secretary of State spoke to the course in 1993 and 1994, and the students found his contribution to a week spent studying Northern Ireland issues immensely valuable. The speech provides an opportunity for the Minister to pay tribute to the security forces, review the Government's security policy and the Army's current role in Northern Ireland, and address recent political developments.

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3. I attach a draft speech for the Minister's consideration which reviews the year past, explores the continuing role of the Army in Northern Ireland, touches briefly on political progress and the current political situation, and covers announcements made by the Secretary of state in his speech at Queen's University on 25 August. Also attached at Annex A is a full list of de-escalatory measures taken since the ceasefires.

(Signed)

IAN MAYE

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ARMY COMMAND AND STAFF COURSE - CAMBERLEY, 20 SEPTEMBER 1995

Last September Sir Patrick Mayhew had the opportunity to address the participants on this course. At that stage we were some two weeks into a Provisional IRA ceasefire. It was far from clear whether the ceasefire was intended to be permanent, or whether other republican groups and, more importantly, the loyalists would follow suit. The loyalist ceasefire declaration of 13 October 1994 was still to come.

Ironically, over a year later, peace in Northern Ireland is far from assured. We are still only at the beginning of a process, not the end, and we have a long way to go before we can say with confidence that the Troubles have finally ended. I may sound a little pessimistic: I am not. But it is important for everyone in Government, in the security forces and in the wider community to understand that the quest for peace will not be completed overnight. We have much work to do yet to realise our dream of creating a peaceful, prosperous and just society in Northern Ireland, and to end the nightmare of the last quarter century. We are closer to realising it than ever before, a fact that we should never lose sight of.

Today I would like to talk to you about the role which you in the Army have had in bringing us to this situation, to describe how the Government and the security forces have built confidence in the ceasefire and the wider political process, and to consider where the Government and the other participants in the peace process might go next.

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Deployment of the Army

The Army has been deployed in an emergency role in Northern Ireland for 25 years. For most of that time they have valiantly supported the Royal Ulster Constabulary in opposing terrorism in all its guises. The RUC would have faced an impossible task without that support. They value the dedicated and wholly professional contribution that Army has made, and continues to make, to the defeat of terrorism. We should never forget that 653 members of the Armed forces have lost their lives as a direct result of terrorism in Northern Ireland. I pray that no more will be added to that list.

Though much reduced, military support to the RUC is still vital. PIRA, in the words of Gerry Adams, "haven't gone away, you know". How true that is. We know that they are continuing to train, to develop and test their improvised weaponry, and to target members of the security forces and security force bases, and to raise money through extortion and racketeering. And that is only the tip of the iceberg. Despite claims to the contrary, they continue to kill and maim. Three murders since the ceasefire can be laid at their door, and they have carried out over [] so-called "punishment" beatings since the ceasefire, often maiming their victims for life and coming close to killing them. They continue with their so-called "exclusion orders", unashamedly ordering men and women to leave the Province or face death. And they foment street disorder, fanning the flames of sectarian tensions, all too evident over the past few months.

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Nor can we discount other groups. The loyalists continue to carry out punishment attacks, and continue to seek out weapons, as recent arrests in Scotland show. Despite their highly conditional assurances that they will not strike first, one can never rule out a return to violence on their part. The INLA have suspended their campaign, more we believe due to pressure from PIRA than any other reason. But they are more volatile, and their leadership less coherent, than PIRA. Republican Sinn Fein have vowed to disrupt the ceasefire; thankfully their threats have not yet borne fruit.

All of this points to a continuing need for military support, or at the very least the capability of providing support effective support at very short notice, to meet any return to widespread violence. All of the changes we have made to the security force response so far have been easily reversible; while the possibility remains of a wholesale return to violence we will stick to that principle.

The Government's Objectives

No doubt you wonder if the Government's objective has changed over the past year. It has not. The common objective is to secure a just and lasting peace in Northern Ireland, underpinned by a just political settlement established by consent - consent freely and widely given by the people living there. But where do the security forces fit within that? They make a vital contribution by:

- maintaining the rule of law;

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- ensuring that all the people of Northern Ireland are free to express their political opinions without inhibition, fear of discrimination or reprisal;

- defending the democratically expressed wishes of the people of Northern Ireland against those who try to promote political objectives by violence or the threat of violence.

But the security response, whilst of vital importance, has only been one element of the total response to violence. Political and socio-economic initiatives have formed the other two elements of Government policy in Northern Ireland and our efforts in these areas are now more focused than ever. All three elements are still inextricably linked.

What has been achieved?

I have no doubt whatsoever that the actions of the security forces have contributed to the continuing ceasefire and the progress we have made politically. Despite frequent accusations by Sinn Fein that the Government has sat on its hands since the ceasefire was announced, there are over 100 different initiatives which the Government has taken, many of them impinging dramatically on the quality of everyday life for people living in Northern Ireland.

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In terms of security arrangements, there has been a dramatic and ready response. We have removed all border road closures; the broadcasting restrictions have been lifted; no-one is now legitimately excluded from Northern Ireland, and the numbers excluded by order from Great Britain have been reduced significantly. Many physical security measures have been removed, most security-related parking restrictions have been lifted, and the Belfast Civilian Search Unit has been wound up. As regards military support, routine support to the police has fallen by over 75% and the Army no longer routinely patrols in Belfast, Londonderry and many other parts of the Province. Two battalions have already been relocated from Northern Ireland and a major security force base vacated and demolished.

While peace lasts, we expect that this process of reducing military support to the RUC will continue, with the full support of the Chief Constable of the RUC and the General Officer Commanding. We are already giving consideration to the relocation of further units in the Autumn, providing peace continues to develop.

Police Reform

The ceasefire has also had an impact on the way the RUC operate in Northern Ireland. Twenty months before the ceasefire, Sir Patrick Mayhew said in a landmark speech:

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"Freed from the threat of death at every corner, the Royal Ulster Constabulary would be free to give fresh priority to the quality and accessibility of its service"

That is already happening. The responsiveness of the RUC to calls from the community has already improved dramatically, particularly in areas where elaborate precautions were once necessary to avoid the danger of attack. And there have been other more visible changes. Gone are long arms on patrol - and much more patrolling is done on foot. Gone too is body armour; it was heartening to see RUC officers patrolling in their shirt sleeves in West Belfast during the summer. And there is no doubt that the RUC are becoming increasingly acceptable in nationalist communities, a fact which worries Sinn Fein and PIRA immensely. We feared that crime might increase in the wake of the ceasefire. In fact it has not. Overall crime rates have dropped, and clear-up rates are rising, in stark contrast with other areas in the UK. I believe that much of this success is due to the RUC's ability to switch resources to the fight against crime. Whilst the ceasefire has also reduced the RUC's appalling workload, there have been no irreversible changes to the RUC's pre-ceasefire stance; there will continue to be strong counter-terrorist and anti-riot capabilities as long as they are warranted.

That does not mean that we, or the RUC, are standing still on police reform. We have been planning for a fundamental review of policing needs, the aim of which will be to reshape the RUC into a police service to serve the needs of the whole community in ways which have

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previously been impossible because of the constant threat of terrorism. The Government will publish a White Paper this Autumn, giving firm proposals for reforms to policing structures aimed at safeguarding the operational independence of the police, and engaging the community seriously on policing issues. All in the community know that we are doing this. That is why Sinn Fein's calls to disband the RUC ring increasingly hollow.

Emergency Legislation

We must also look at the emergency legislation, which serves as the foundation of the security response to terrorism. Whilst the law has been strengthened over the years to take account of terrorism our basic approach has been to deal with terrorism as crime, pure and simple. What is criminal under the ordinary criminal law cannot be anything else for the terrorist. Murder is still murder, whatever its motive or purpose. That remains a fundamental principle of anti-terrorist legislation in Northern Ireland. To be denied any special status, and yet to have the protection of the ordinary criminal law, denies the terrorist the opportunity to use the system of justice to promote his cause.

The ceasefires offer the opportunity to review the future shape and purpose of the emergency legislation. Already aspects are falling into disuse. Arrests under the Prevention of Terrorism Act for involvement in terrorist crime have fallen by some two thirds. The number of RUC and Army searches has also fallen dramatically, from over 3,000 in 1994 to 164 in the first quarter of 1995.

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As we have already announced, we shall be looking at all the options for such legislation and we shall be establishing as soon as possible a powerful, authoritative and independent review of the emergency legislation in its entirety. What legislation is needed in the future - to deal with international as well as domestic terrorism - will need the most careful consideration. That process is not something which can be completed quickly, and almost certainly not before the present EPA expires next year, so some of the existing powers will have to continue on a temporary basis. But we will make a start and, as peace continues, our aim remains to return to policing the Province by the normal structures and procedures on the criminal law.

Prisoners

Another issue which has come to the fore since the ceasefires is that of prisoners. Both the loyalist parties and Sinn Fein have laid great emphasis on the need to move forward on prisoner issues. It is perhaps the single topic on which they present a united front, albeit reluctantly. Indeed it has been a central plank of Sinn Fein's continuing protest campaign.

The Government's position on this has been clear and simple; there are no political prisoners in the UK, rather those properly convicted in the courts of serious crimes of terrorist violence, often resulting in the murder and maiming of soldiers, policemen, civilians, young and old alike. Those who survive such crimes, and those who have lost loved ones and must bear the grief of that loss

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for the rest of their lives expect protection and retribution. Society as a whole expects no less. The pain does not go away just because violence has ended. That is why there can be no amnesty - no emptying of the jails. Society would rail at the very thought of those responsible for such hideous crimes walking away scot free.

To deter those who might take up the gun and the bomb, the Government decided in 1989 that remission for those serving fixed term sentences should be cut from 50% to 33%, while the remission rate for all other prisoners remained at 50%.

But now that there has been a year without terrorist violence, and that the ceasefires have transformed life in Northern Ireland, no longer are young people in the Province growing up in a situation where they are tempted with the call to arms. Prisoners are an important part of the political equation, and cannot be ignored. That is why the Secretary of State announced on 25 August that we would seek early legislation to enable those already serving sentences for terrorist offences to be released after they have served 50% of their sentence. This would mean that all fixed sentence prisoners could be released from prison at the same point in their sentence. Over 100 prisoners, almost equally from the loyalist and republican camps, will be released in the first year. I believe firmly that this will be of very real benefit to the developing peace.

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However, that does not mean that prisoners will be released into society without some protection against those who might continue to pose a danger. We envisage that prisoners will be released on condition that they remain of good behaviour until the two-thirds point is reached and do not commit further criminal acts. If they breach these conditions, they will be recalled to prison. As a safeguard against the possibility of a ceasefire breakdown, the legislation will contain a provision allowing the Government to end the scheme.

Determinate sentence prisoners are only one facet of the problem, however. Life sentence prisoners, who have been convicted in connection with some of the most horrific and callous murders ever witnessed in the British Isles, are a different matter. The existing review procedures already take into account a range of criteria, one of which is the risk of re-offending. If the ceasefires continue, then this will of course have a bearing on the assessment of that risk.

The Economy

The ceasefires have had a considerable impact on the economy, and, as we have always believed, the economy and wider socio-economic factors have an impact on the prospects for a lasting peace, and reinforces the peace process. Unemployment is falling - down by 10,000; and jobs are increasing - up by 12,000. Northern Ireland is seen as an increasingly attractive location by inward investors. Visits by potential investors are up by nearly 40% and there have

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been number of key inward investment and expansion projects announced in recent months, with more to follow. Most strikingly, holiday visitors to the Province are up by over 50%; young European and US back-packers are now a common sight in Belfast.

The international community has given our policies wholehearted support. The White House conference in May gave a valuable stimulus to business and tourism. The European Union's peace package will bring two hundred and forty million pounds additional investment to Northern Ireland. And the valuable work of the International Fund for Ireland has been enhanced by further funding.

Political Progress

Despite some setbacks, we have also made political process.

The ceasefires enabled us to enter into exploratory talks with Sinn Fein and with the PUP and UDP. In addition to the four parties involved in the 1992 talks. We undertook to open these exploratory dialogues within three months of a cessation of violence, and we did so. We set out before the ceasefires had been declared what the purpose of such dialogue should be, how those parties could come to play a part in political talks, how they could play a part in normal political life and to explore the practical consequences of the ending of violence.

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We have had useful and productive dialogue with the PUP and UDP, both of which played a pivotal role in bringing about the loyalist ceasefire. We value the serious, responsible and frank approach which they have brought to the dialogue. We have discussed a broad range of issues, including prisoners, economic and social issues and the treatment of prisoners. Exploratory dialogue with Sinn Fein, although vigorously pursued on our part, has been less productive and more intermittent. Much, I should say, to the Government's regret. It has proved much harder to bridge the divisions of suspicion and mistrust with Sinn Fein than with the PUP and UDP. Nonetheless, we are determined to pursue constructive dialogue with them.

Decommissioning

Political progress requires trust. Trust on the part of all the parties around the table others do not come to the table with the threat of a return to violence. That is why we have placed so much emphasis on the decommissioning of paramilitary arms and explosives. There can be nothing more likely to undermine this trust, and destroy the confidence which we and others are patiently and painstakingly building, than the fear that if one or other side does not get its way at the negotiating table, it will resort to the force of arms.

Some ask: is the silence of the bombs and guns of the past year not sufficient? We believe not. What has happened is that the fingers of the terrorists have been taken off the trigger and the bombs have

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not been planted. Given what we know about PIRA's and the loyalists activities since the ceasefires - about which I have already spoken - it is not enough. That is why, in order to create confidence and build trust, we have said that there must be substantial progress on the issue of decommissioning. That means, as the Secretary of State said in Washington in March:

"We shall be pressing to achieve three things:

- a willingness in principle to disarm progressively;
- a common practical understanding of the modalities, that is to say what decommissioning would actually entail;
- in order to test the practical arrangements, and to demonstrate good faith, decommissioning of some arms as a tangible confidence building measure and to signal the start of a process."

We have made it clear that we do not seek surrender. Nor do we seek progress on this issue alone; we are also ready to suggest immediate and inclusive all party talks to do the ground work for the political negotiations when the conditions become right to get all the parties round the table. We retain an open mind on how arms are decommissioned in practice; what is important is that the process should begin. Both the British and Irish Governments have always agreed on this. The Government firmly believes that an

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International Commission to advise the two Governments on the subject of a scheme for decommissioning illegally held arms might best be devised and implemented - a proposal, I should add, that was developed jointly with the Irish Government.

Despite the recent postponement of the Summit between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach, and the media hype which surrounded that decision, we believe that this is the right approach and hope that with the Irish Government we can do so. Further work needs to be done on this idea, and we will pursue it vigorously. We shall go on seeking every avenue for progress. Then we can look forward to the restoration of the Summit.

A vision for the future

Where might we be, and just would be possible if more progress can be made on all these fronts in the coming year.

It could mean a Northern Ireland free forever from terrorist violence, and free of the enormous cost in lives and suffering which that brings, banished, together with the threat of a return to violence, with the illegal arms.

It could mean the breaking down of barriers, both physical and mental, between the communities in Northern Ireland, each community sustaining and enhancing its cultural traditions without fear or intimidation.

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It could bring economic growth and prosperity, fairly spread throughout the community.

It could mean that a political agreement on the future of Northern Ireland was within reach, taking account of all the political views, addressing all fundamental relationships, giving expression to the identity and, ethos and aspirations of all sections of the community, and founded squarely on the principles of self-determination and consent.

And, most importantly for this audience, it could mean a Northern Ireland in which the Army presence was reduced to normal peacetime garrison levels, as in any other part of the United Kingdom, and where the deployment of troops to help the police combat terrorism, was no more than a memory.

That is our vision. I firmly believe that it can become reality, and that it is within reach. To realise it we shall need to move forward on the security, political and economic fronts. No-one pretends it will be an easy task, but it is a task which we in the Government are determined to pursue, and resolved to complete.

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ANNEX A

LIST OF MAIN DE-ESCALATORY MEASURES TAKEN BY THE SECURITY FORCES SINCE
31 AUGUST 1994

- The impact of the planned and incremental steps taken by the security forces since 31 August on the population in Northern Ireland has been significant - in large parts of the Province the RUC can, for the first time in many years, operate effectively and respond quickly to public need without direct Army support.

SEPT/OCT

- The lifting of all 104 closure orders on cross-border roads; (98 now either complete or being worked on, 6 where work is planned).
- No routine vehicular checks at border patrol bases.
- No flying throughout the Province between 2300 hrs and 0600 hrs except when operationally necessary.
- Berets worn instead of helmets: no use of Saxon armoured vehicles.

NOV

- No routine Army patrols in Londonderry.
- One sub-unit (approximately 200 strong) returned to Germany from its role as Prison Guard Force at HMP Maze.

FEB

- Removal of Kilturk Patrol Base.

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MARCH

- Relocation announced of the Drumadd Roulement Battalion (approximately 400 men) to its home base in GB.
- Army no longer acting in support of the RUC on the streets for the greater Belfast area day or night.

APRIL

- From 1 April, routine military patrolling in support of the RUC throughout the Province has dropped by 75%, compared with pre-ceasefire levels. (1 March figure was 60-65%).
- On 9 April, the Army sangars at Chapel Street and Church Street, Cookstown were removed.
- PVCs on the three main roads in Bessbrook are currently being removed.
- On 18 April, the relocation of Girdwood Roulement Battalion, 40 Regiment Royal Artillery to its base in Germany began. Completed 21 April.
- Barriers and bollards removed from Ballygomartin Road, Donegall Pass and Dunboyne Park.
- Donegall Pass opened to two-way traffic.

MAY

- Military support withdrawn from Royal Courts of Justice.
- All road barriers at Oldpark RUC Station re-opened.

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- Military support to the police in the South Armagh area has, HQNI report, dropped by 37% compared with pre-ceasefire levels. [The overall reduction of 75% reported in April remains the same.]
- Road ramps were removed at Cloghoge PVCP on the Dublin Road and Forkhill Road.
- Approach roads to Belfast International Airport were opened to traffic.
- The road in front of the Courthouse in Victoria Street, Banbridge was re-opened to traffic.

JUNE

- Work to remove Clady PVCP was completed on 30 June.
- Derry's Walls fully re-opened to the public during daylight hours for the first time.
- RUC personnel redeployed from security duties within Stormont Sub-Division.

JULY

- Works Protection Unit at Armagh Courthouse suppressed, 4 officers returned to beat and patrol duties (wef 17 July).
- At Cloghoge PVCP security equipment removed at Forkhill Road wef 17 July to aid construction of Newry bypass.
- Demolition of North Howard Street Mill started on 24 July.
- Civilian Search Unit disbanded.

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AUGUST

- Most vehicle control zone orders rescinded on 1 August.
- Drop-arm barriers and security huts removed from City Centre following the disbandment of the Civilian Search Unit (1 August).
- Checkpoint at Airport Road, Aldergrove now unmanned (4 August).
- Removal of the ramps outside Keady Army base as soon as possible.
- Ramps outside Keady Army base removed.

UPCOMING MEASURES

- At 6 Fermanagh PVCs/Patrol bases ramps to be removed (August).

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