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NEWS AT TEN

REGGIE:

We're now going directly to Downing Street where the talks have ended and Bill Norris is there waiting with Mr Wilson.

NORRIS AND HAROLD WILSON INTERVIEW

BN: Prime Minister, you've now been talking for more than five hours. What action have you decided to take in Northern Ireland?

HW: The talks are not yet over. We have now to approve the final communique. But I've come up now to give an interim report. We've reached agreement on very wide series of issues - the most important is that the General Officer Commanding the British troops in Northern Ireland will now take over the full responsibility ^{for} ~~the~~ security in Northern Ireland. He will be responsible for the operations of the Royal Ulster Constabulary including the special constabulary so far as ~~these~~; their security duties are concerned - not of course traffic control, crime and the rest. That I think is the most important thing - everything now will be done in accordance with his decisions. In addition to that we have agreed the text of a declaration which lays down the whole basis of relations in the two governments and the whole future of the Northern Ireland situation - both as regards the security question, ^{the} ~~an~~ employment of British troops and ~~also~~ also as regards the removal of the grievances which have played so big a part in recent years.

BN: But isn't there a danger that the Catholic population in Northern Ireland will see this as a move towards the end of partition?

HW: No not at all. Indeed the declaration reiterates what we have said many times that the question of partition is not involved here - that there will be no change in the states of Northern Ireland without the consent of the people of Northern Ireland. And indeed the declaration says that the border is not an issue in this question.

BN: But this does mean that the B. Specials as they're called will continue to operate?

HW: They are now under the control of the GOC, the General Freeland, they are progressively being moved out of the cities and areas of population. They are out of the riot control duties which they were put into very temporarily in the recent emergency. And of course it is the intention now that they will be progressively be stood down and of course the GOC will be responsible for the custody - deciding the custody thereon.

BN: Yes, I was going to ask you Prime Minister if there was any intention of disarming...

HW: It is entirely within the discretion of the GOC and of course ^{we all} ~~we all~~ ~~with~~ recognise the feelings about the specials - so far as that is concerned the GOC will now decide what duties they will have. As their numbers diminish - as the numbers on active duty diminish - and as ^{their} ~~as~~ ~~arms~~ are no longer required.

BN: How long is it envisaged the British troops will have to stay in Northern Ireland?

HW: It is impossible to say that - we regard it as a temporary deployment.

MORE....

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HW cont: of British troops and we've already been discussing the situation which will follow the withdrawal of the troops, but for the time being there is no guarantee of security or peace or stability in Northern Ireland except on the basis of the British troops.

BN: What about the other civil rights - the complaints about discrimination in housing and education and jobs? Have you got any guarantees from Major Chichester Clark?

HW: Yes, I discussed these matters with the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland and his colleagues ~~and~~ when they were here in May and reported to the House of Commons and I think that report was warmly accepted by the House and we have agreed that the full momentum of improvement, of reform in the matter of local government reform, local government franchise, the allocation of houses, non-discrimination, that all this must proceed. In our declaration which we have issued tonight, or which we shall issue tonight, we have further said that all citizens of Northern Ireland, irrespective of their political views or their religious beliefs, will have the same right to freedom, to freedom against discrimination as all other citizens of the United Kingdom.

BN: Did Major Chichester Clark and his colleagues agree to this willingly?

HW: Yes, it is an agreed declaration by both governments.

BN: Prime Minister, thank you very much indeed.