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Mr. Sheehan
Questions on
and
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cc PDS
PDS
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Consider A/S
Lillis
23.11.85

TO HQ
FOR A/S LILLIS

FROM LONDON
FROM MINISTER

PRIOR STATEMENT TO COMMONS ABOUT KEADY KILLINGS

1. SECRETARY OF STATE MADE SHORT STATEMENT TEXT OF WHICH IS BEING TELEXED SEPARATELY. HE CONDEMNED THE OUTRAGE, EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING FOR THE FEELINGS OF THE PROTESTANT COMMUNITY AND APPEALED FOR RESTRAINT. OTHER POINTS INCLUDED THAT CONGREGATION DID NOT INCLUDE ANY PERSONS CONNECTED WITH THE SECURITY FORCES AND THAT BULLETS CAME FROM A WEAPON USED IN OTHER RECENT ATTACKS ASSOCIATED WITH INLA.
2. PAISLEY ASKED WHY SECURITY FORCES HAD NOT ACTED ON INFORMATION RECEIVED THAT AN ATTACK ON A CHURCH WAS PLANNED. HE ALLEGED THAT AFTER THE ATTACK SECURITY FORCES WERE DEPLOYED IN PROTESTANT AREAS TO PREVENT BACKLASH INSTEAD OF BEING USED TO PURSUE THE MURDERERS. PRIOR ACKNOWLEDGED THAT INFORMATION WAS RECEIVED BUT SAID IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO PROTECT ALL CHURCHES. THE SECURITY FORCES HAD ALERTED OTHER PROTESTANT CONGREGATIONS IN THE AREA AFTER THE ATTACK, A REASONABLE PRECAUTION TO HAVE TAKEN.
3. PAISLEY ALSO SPOKE OF THE FAILURE OF THE SECURITY FORCES TO PROVIDE PROTECTION DUE TO CUTBACKS AND RAISED THE QUESTION OF THE RIGHT TO EXERCISE SELF-DEFENCE IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES. PRIOR SAID THAT THE RIGHT OF SELF-DEFENCE ONLY EXISTED IF ONE WAS ACTUALLY ATTACKED. SECURITY SHOULD BE LEFT TO THE SECURITY FORCES. LIMITATIONS ON OVERTIME HAD NOT BEEN A FACTOR - SO FAR AS I COULD HEAR, PRIOR SEEMED TO SAY THAT OVERTIME COULD BE PAID IF THE CHIEF CONSTABLE ASKED FOR IT.

4. POWELL, IN THE ABSENCE OF MOLYNEAUX, URGED THE NEED FOR SATURATION SECURITY IN SOUTH ARMAGH AND ASKED WHETHER THE CULPRITS WOULD BE EXTRADITED IF APPREHENDED IN THE SOUTH. PRIOR REPLIED THAT RESPONSIBILITY RESTED WITH A SMALL GROUP OF TERRORISTS AND FOR THAT REASON SATURATION COVERAGE WOULD NOT HELP. EXTRADITION WAS A MATTER FOR THE SOUTH. HE ADDED THAT HE FELT THE GOVERNMENT IN DUBLIN WOULD HOPE TO BE ABLE TO EXTRADITE AND REFERRED TO DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LAW WHICH MIGHT MAKE THIS POSSIBLE. MERLYN REES ALSO SPOKE AGAINST FLOODING THE AREA WITH SECURITY FORCES.

5. IT WAS EITHER REES OR ROSS, AS FAR AS I CAN REMEMBER, WHO MADE THE POINT THAT THE IDENTITY OF THE KILLERS WAS KNOWN TO PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY AND WHO SUGGESTED A MEETING ON THE BORDER BETWEEN AN NIO MINISTER AND A MINISTER FROM DUBLIN. THE SECRETARY OF STATE SHOWED SOME INTEREST IN THIS IDEA.

6. PRIOR WAS ASKED BY ATKINS AND OTHERS WHETHER A WITHDRAWAL BY THE OUP FROM THE ASSEMBLY WOULD NOT BE UNHELPFUL. HE AGREED, SAYING THAT IN NORTHERN IRELAND IT WAS EASIER TO DESTROY THAN TO CONSTRUCT.

7. REV. JOEL MCCREA NAMED MCGLINCHEY AS THE INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBLE. PRIOR SAID THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE BUT ADDED THAT MCGLINCHEY WAS ONE OF THE MOST WANTED MEN AROUND.

8. PAISLEY MOVED A MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT WHICH WAS NOT ACCEPTED BY THE SPEAKER. IN THE COURSE OF MOVING IT, HE ATTACKED THE CHIEF CONSTABLE ON THE GROUNDS THAT HE WAS OUT OF NORTHERN IRELAND SO MUCH LECTURING. EARLIER THERE HAD BEEN LAUDATORY COMMENTS ABOUT HERMON FROM THE OPPOSITION BENCHES AND BY PRIOR.

9. HOUSE WAS ABOUT HALF-FULL AND ATMOSPHERE SOBER. THERE WAS NO CRITICISM OF PRIOR OR SECURITY FORCES EXCEPT FROM UNIONISTS. GENERAL SENSE OF THE HOUSE WAS THAT RESTRAINT WAS NOW NEEDED WHILE SEVERAL MEMBERS SUGGESTED THAT ATTACK MAY HAVE BEEN INTENDED TO BE PROVOCATIVE.

END

21.11.83
TIME: 18.05

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