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FROM: A E F MAITLAND  
Security Policy and Operations Division 1  
11 January 1995

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- cc PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B [1&2]
  - PS/Sir John Wheeler (B&L) - B [3&4]
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  - PS/Mr Fell - B [7]
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  - Mr Bell - B [10]
  - Mr Steele - B [11]
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  - Mr Daniell - B [15]
  - Mr Wood (B&L) - B [16&17]
  - Mr Perry - B [18]
  - Mr Marsh - B [19]
  - Director, TFU - B [20]
  - Mrs Collins - B [21]
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  - Mr Pope [24]
  - Mr Clarke [25]
  - Ms Johnston [26]
  - DCC Wallace\* [27]
  - Col Snagge\* [28]
  - CIVSEC\* [29]
  - File [30]
- \* by secure fax

RECEIVED 16 JAN 1995

1. Mr [unclear] 25/1  
2. Mr [unclear]  
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Mr [unclear]  
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Steve  
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NOTE OF SECURITY CO-ORDINATING MEETING ON 10 JANUARY 1994

Present:

- Mr Steele (Chairman)
- Mr Perry
- Ms Johnston
- Mr Maitland (Secretary)
- DCC Wallace
- Col Snagge
- Ch Insp Cameron

Apologies

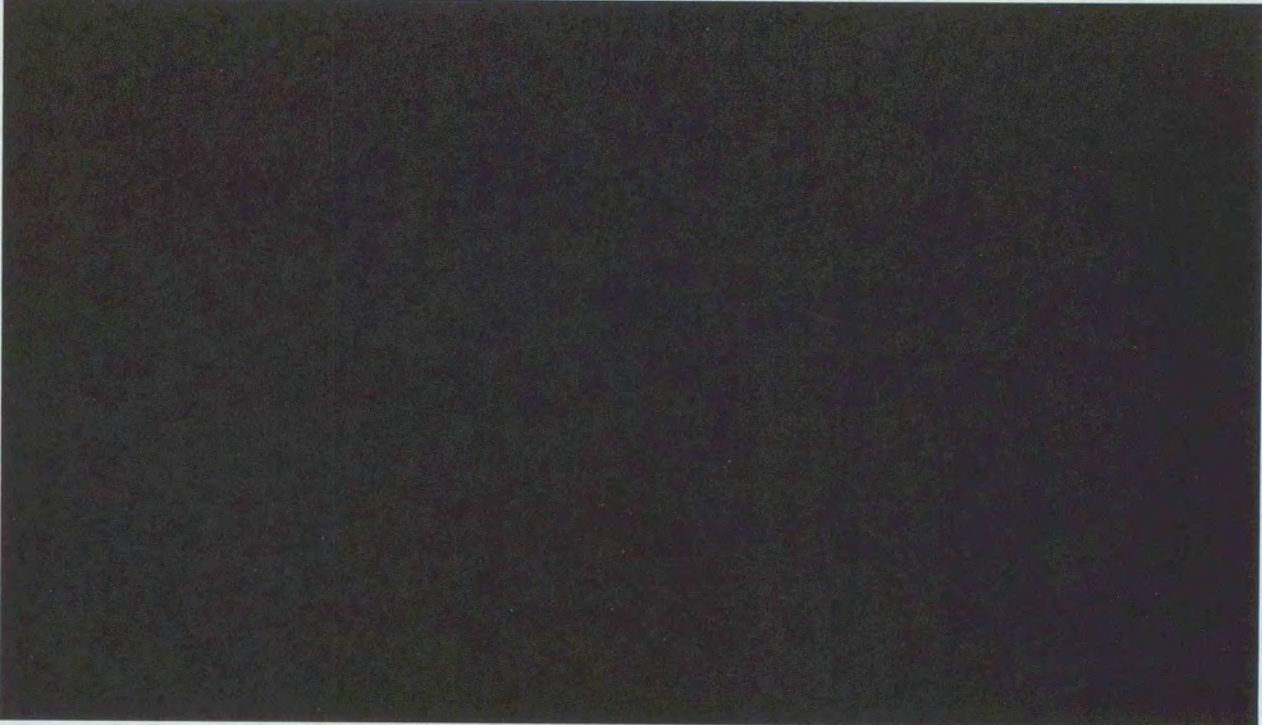
- CLF
- Mr Marsh

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REVIEW OF SECURITY SITUATION

DCC Wallace reported that both ceasefires were holding. PIRA continued to gather intelligence, to target, and to train. [REDACTED]



2. Continuing, DCC Wallace said that "civil administration" beatings were still going on. Sinn Fein continued also to orchestrate street protests - the previous Sunday a crowd of some 400 people attended an event at Maghera. This was something of an achievement, especially since large numbers were not bussed in. This contrasted with the cavalcade to the Maze recently where only 30 cars could be mustered. The thrust of the protests were the unacceptability of the RUC, the removal of troops, and a rejection of second-class citizenship - the latter was a particularly strong recent theme.

3. Looking ahead, DCC Wallace anticipated that internal pressure would increase on Sinn Fein to show results from exploratory dialogue. Initially, the opening of XD had eased pressure on the leadership and silenced some criticism. Within the movement the release of prisoners was being pushed hard. At grass roots level it

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was clear that PIRA would not accept the handing over of weapons to anyone, North or South, even to an "honest broker". [REDACTED]

4. Mr Steele summarised the first few meetings on XD and LXD. There was a significant contrast between the approach of Sinn Fein, who had not initially dissented at the prospect of a paper on the modalities of arms decommissioning, but had then refused to take it, and the Loyalists who had accepted such a paper and agreed on a schedule for discussion of a range of issues including arms. The next LXD meeting would focus on prisoners issues, followed by a meeting on arms. There was sufficient fuel for discussions on these and other subjects at least until March. However, on the Republican side, the initial push had been on political issues and there was talk of a walk-out by Sinn Fein at the next meeting. Whilst our strategies would of necessity be heavily influenced by the tenor and content of discussion, it was clear that arms and prisoners were critical issues. On arms, the core approach was to attempt to agree how decommissioning might be achieved, discussing but not necessarily agreeing timing, and, if possible, to begin the process. Both the Loyalists and the Republicans had set their sights very high on the release of prisoners: nevertheless it was probable that there would be discussions on the potential scope for movement.

**SECURITY FORCES' RESPONSE TO THE CEASEFIRE**

5. Mr Steele emphasised the desirability wherever possible of continuing to reduce the public profile of the security forces. Both parties to XD would want the high moral ground in the event of a breakdown of the talks - to avoid Sinn Fein getting there first, it would be helpful to be able to demonstrate, both nationally and internationally, that the Government and the security forces had done a very great deal since the ceasefires, and that we continued

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to respond imaginatively and constructively. Mr Steele briefly referred to the Prime Minister's meeting the following day with Ministers to overview recent developments.

6. DCC Wallace commented generally that "demilitarisation" was in the hands of PIRA and Sinn Fein - it was the actions of the IRA that had made increases in the size of the security forces necessary. Much had been done to reduce the profile of the security forces on the ground, and more could be done. The objective remained that of an unarmed police force - as the Hunt report had recommended. Already, side arms were very much the order of the day and, if the circumstances were right, it might be possible in daylight hours to withdraw weapons entirely. Already in much of Northern Ireland - notably Co Antrim, Co Down and South Derry - there was no routine military support provided to the police. From the beginning of March it might be possible to withdraw the first of the additional battalions that had been provided to Northern Ireland, the roulement battalion at Drumadd, with cover provided from other units. DCC Wallace's view, however, was that this could not be done before the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis.

7. DCC Wallace however said that at PEC the previous day the police had discussed a plan to do without routine military support in most areas of Belfast in daylight hours. The decision would be manifest on the ground during the following weekend, and the police would be making an announcement on Thursday 12 January. Mr Steele very much welcomed this. He said that whilst the Secretary of State took a very strong view on operational independence, he would nevertheless appreciate the initiative and the timing. The Secretary of State was likely to appreciate advice from security chiefs on the total removal of military support, and troop withdrawals, for which there were currently very strong political arguments. If possible, it would be most useful if the police might consider a wider public statement, taking credit for the profile reductions already taken but not fully apparent to the public at large. DCC Wallace readily accepted this and would consider with the RUC press office. Col Snagge, whilst noting the exceptionally

poor conditions in North Howard Street Mill and other locations, said that the Army would be able to contain the accommodation of troops in the short term. He added that the long term withdrawal of troops from the streets would risk losing continuity with the community and sensitivity to issues of local concern. DCC Wallace noted the potential difficulties in all such moves of raising Unionist fears. Another consequence might well be that the move would be used to increase the scale and pace of criticism of the police. However he looked forward to increased support from ordinary people, although this was unlikely to be acknowledged by critics. In a brief discussion about morale, DCC Wallace emphasised the importance of official support for the security forces and reassurance wherever possible about the future. He and Mr Steele agreed that the RUC Reserve and the Royal Irish were particular concerns.

#### SECURITY FORCES' WORKS PROJECTS

8. Mr Steele was grateful for the decisions taken at the handling meeting on Op POSITION - this had been most valuable. DCC Wallace said that on Monday 16 January local politicians would be briefed. A press release would issue that afternoon and there would be a press conference with local police commanders. That evening a presentation to councillors would be made. The environmental and traffic benefits of the project at Newry would be highlighted and the hardening element of the work downplayed as much as possible. DCC Wallace told Mr Steele that he would be informing the Garda Deputy Commissioner on the evening of 12 January - cover was not being sought but for the Warrenpoint rebuild a check by the Garda on their side of Carlingford Lough of the Narrow Water route to Warrenpoint would be helpful. The Garda would also be told about Corry Square. The removal of Kilturk Patrol Base by the Army would be linked with Op POSITION.

9. DCC Wallace noted that work had started the previous day at Fintona. The rebuilds there and at Beragh were not expected to create controversy. Both projects would take some 12 weeks. Col Snagge reported that the demolition of the old base at Aughnacloy was still underway and troops were shortly to vacate the checkpoint at the border there - the integrity of security would be maintained by the installation of cameras at the PVCP. The work at South Armagh observation posts (Op SNAITH) was ongoing and remained uncontroversial. The Newtownhamilton rebuild should be completed early in March - the seals may be in place until then but the security forces continued to examine the requirement regularly.

#### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

##### Civilian Search Unit

10. DCC Wallace would be replying to Mr Steele's letter confirming that there was no valid security role for the unit in Belfast. Nor were there other areas in central Belfast where they could be used in any other role. A working party was considering what steps should be taken in relation to traffic management in the city and would be reporting soon. DCC Wallace suggested that discussions with private security contractors should be held in order to assure everyone concerned that appropriate security could be applied to the city centre should the threat increase. The police were looking at the removal of control zones as well as considering measures which would improve the appearance of the city centre streets, including the removal of some barriers and gates. He expected that by Easter the bulk of the improvements to the city centre would be complete.

##### Arms Decommissioning

11. Mr Perry reported on the meeting with the Irish the previous week. A further meeting was scheduled shortly, primarily to complete a joint paper for the two Prime Ministers. The Attorney General had recommended the use of legislation to provide the basis for any amnesty scheme, particularly if forensic tests were not to

be carried out on arms recovered. DCC Wallace accepted Mr Steele's point that the evidential value of such testing was likely to be very small - the benefit to the police was in confirming that used weapons had been surrendered. Mr Perry added that discussions with the police soon on the mechanics of any scheme would be helpful.

Punishment Attacks

12. DCC Wallace noted a number of particularly savage attacks recently, some of which had been on persons suspected of having committed sexual offences. Most attacks were for "civil administration" purposes to punish petty offenders. Since the PIRA ceasefire until 9 January, 20 people had been assaulted by Loyalists, 30 by Republicans.

(Signed)

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