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Mr. Legge

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10 JUL 1996
CENT SEC

From: J M STEELE
DIRECTOR (SECURITY)

9 July 1996

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- cc PS/Sir John Wheeler (B&L) - B
- PS/Michael Ancram (B&L) - B
- PS/PUS (B&L) - B
- PS/Sir David Fell - B
- Mr Legge - B
- Mr Thomas (B&L) - B
- Mr Bell - B
- Mr Leach (B&L) - B
- Mr Ray - B
- Mr Watkins - B
- Mr Wood (B&L) - B
- Mr Stephens - B
- Mr Maccabe - B
- Mr Hill (B&L) - B
- Mr Beeton - B
- Mrs Collins - B
- Mr Perry, o/r - B
- Mr Clarke
- Mr Lamont, RID - B
- HMA Dublin - B
- Mr Byatt, MOD - M

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DESK IMMEDIATE

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PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B

DEPLOYMENT OF ADDITIONAL TROOPS TO NORTHERN IRELAND

The Secretary of State met the Chief Constable and the Chief of Staff this morning to discuss the security situation. The decision was taken that two additional battalions were needed as soon as possible to supplement the troops in the Province and that a third might be required thereafter.

2. As a consequence of that decision, I have prepared a short Press Statement announcing it. This gives the decision and provides some detail of which battalions are involved (ie 1 Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, who have been under Notice to Train and will be the third battalion of those withdrawn during the ceasefire to be

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returned to the Province, and the Spearhead Battalion, currently 1 PARA). Both battalions will have deployed the Province by the end of this weekend.

3. I suggest that the Press Statement should be issued in the Secretary of State's name as a press release; neither the RUC nor the Army intend to say anything at the moment and will deploy defensive Q&A material (which we have agreed) once the announcement has been made. As regards timing, the statement might best be issued as soon as possible. Details of timing should be kept confidential for the moment.

4. I also enclose some Lines to Take for use in interviews etc.

[sgd]

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DRAFT PRESS STATEMENT TO BE ISSUED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Additional Battalions deployed to Northern Ireland

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Sir Patrick Mayhew QC MP, has announced the deployment of additional troops to Northern Ireland in support of the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

He said: "On the advice of the Chief Constable of the RUC and the General Officer Commanding, I have today decided that it is necessary to deploy two additional battalions in support of the RUC."

"The battalions concerned are the 1st Battalion the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and the Spearhead Battalion which is currently the 1st Battalion the Parachute Regiment. They will deploy shortly."

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QUESTIONS TO TAKE

Q Why are additional troops being deployed?

A To meet the prevailing threat and to ensure that order is maintained.

Q Will these troops remain in the Province when the current crisis has passed?

A That decision will be a matter for the Chief Constable and the GOC, however, there is no desire to have more troops than is absolutely necessary to meet the prevailing security situation.

Q Where will they be deployed?

A Operational matter - cannot comment further.

Q Is it not insensitive to bring a Parachute Regiment into the Province at this stage?

A It is co-incidental that 1 PARA happen to be ready to deploy.

Q Is the deployment of additional troops not simply escalating the crisis?

A It is in the opinion of the Chief Constable that additional troops are required to maintain law and order and to protect all the citizens of Northern Ireland.

Q Will further troops be deployed?

A Cannot be ruled out. Force levels will be kept commensurate with prevailing security situation.

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