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PUS/L/2321/MLR

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Permanent Under Secretary

Mr P J Woodfield CB CBE

F E R Butler Esq
Principal Private Secretary
No 10 Downing Street

17 December 1982

Sean Lohan,

OPERATION PISTON

1. I attach the final version of the proposed programmes, one for use in flying weather and an alternative for bad weather. A short background note on political affairs has also been included.
2. I shall be grateful if you will let me know as soon as possible how many Special Branch men will be in the party. We have been working on the basis of there being one, but presumably there could be more. At the moment as you will see we have put John Coles in the second helicopter. Perhaps you would let me know if he would prefer to be in the first one.
3. We will let you have on Monday a note on the security situation as well as the names of the injured security forces personnel whom you can expect to meet at Musgrave Park Hospital.

*Yours sincerely
David Brooker*

DAVID BROOKER
Private Secretary

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OPERATION PISTON - Flying Programme

- 0830 Depart Northolt
- Main party: Private Secretary; Special Branch;
Supt Donaldson RUC; Press Secretary
- 0940 Arrive ALDERGROVE
- Met by Secretary of State; PUS (Mr Woodfield), 2nd PUS (Sir Ewart Bell), GOC (Sir R Richardson); Chief Constable (Sir John Herman). RAF Station Commander (Gp Cptn Whittaker)
- In attendance: Asst Under Sec NIO (Mr Merifield); Director of Information NIO (Mr Gilliland); Private Secretary to Secretary of State (Mr Lyon); Secretary of State's escort (Mr Bamford); Army Liaison Officer (Maj Paul)
- 0950 Depart by helicopter for Bangor
- H1 (Main Party, Private Secretary; Special Branch; Supt Donaldson RUC; Press Secretary; Mr Merifield)
- H2 (Secretary of State, Mr Gilliland, Mr Lyon, Mr Bamford, Maj Paul)
- 1010 Arrive BANGOR (Open area near Bangor Castle)
- Met by Mayor and Deputy Mayor North Down (Rev John McConnell Auld and Mr W Baillie); MP for North Down (Mr James Kilfedder, also Speaker to the NI Assembly)
- In attendance Miss Joan Owens NIO
- 1020 Travel by car to Bangor town centre (see plan A; 7 cars)
- 1025 Arrive BANGOR MAIN STREET, Boots Chemists entrance
- Met by Chamber of Commerce representative
- Tour shops on foot: calling at Boots; Hoggs (local crystal glass) and Wellworths (general department store on way down 100 yard high street)
- 1100 Leave Main Street (near harbour) by car (Plan B) for helicopters

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- 1105 Depart Bangor by helicopter
H1 (as before)
H2 (as before)
- 1115- Arrive MUSGRAVE PARK ARMY ECHELON BASE
1120
H2 lands followed by H1
Met by Lt Col Garry C Barnett, 1st Bn Black Watch
Walk to Musgrave Park Military Wing (200 yards)
(5 cars stand by in case of rain)
- 1125 Arrive MUSGRAVE PARK HOSPITAL MILITARY WING
Met by Medical Officer in Charge (Col S Pat Thoresby RAMC)
Matron (Major Margaret Hudson QARANC)
Tour of Military wing to meet Army and RUC patients
(names of patients in wing to be forwarded on 17/12)
and staff who handled injured from Ballykelly etc.
- 1200 Depart Musgrave Park echelon by helicopter
(Cars stand by at hospital)
H1 and H2 as before
- 1220 Arrive BESSBROOK BARRACKS
H2 lands followed by H1 (Short walk to mess; 5 cars
stand by)
Met by Commander 8 Brigade (Brigadier Colin Mattingley OBE)
CO 1 Coldstream Guards (Sir Brian Barttelot), and
CO 2 UDR (Lt Col M J Nicholson MBE, RA)
10 minute break for tidy up (hairdresser etc required)
Buffet lunch for 30-35 officers, WO's and Sergeants
of 1 Coldstream Guards (about 20) 2 UDR (about 12)
Tour of barracks to meet other ranks
- 1400 Leave Bessbrook by helicopter
- 1410 Arrive GOUGH RUC BARRACKS ARMAGH
H2 lands followed by H1
Met by Regional RUC Commander (Asst Chief Constable
Maurice Johnstone) and Commander K Division RUC (Supt
Harrison)
Tour of RUC operations area including Special Branch HQ

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Meeting with RUC wives, RUC widows and RUC officers incapacitated by wounds received during anti-terrorist duties. MP for Armagh (Mr Harold McCusker) and Chairman and Deputy Chairman Armagh DC (Mr F Charles Armstrong, and Mr D Hutchinson) to be present.

- 1510 Depart ARMAGH by helicopter (5 cars stand by)
- 1530 Arrive ALDERGROVE
- Met by RAF Station Commander (Group Capt Whittaker)
- Meet RAF staff in operations room (about 50 yards walk) (cars stand by)
- 1545 Move to VIP DEPARTURE LOUNGE to prepare for TV 'direct to camera' spot
- PUS, GOC and Deputy Chief Constable (Mr M McAtamney) in attendance
- 1600 TV talk 'direct-to-camera'
- 1615 Depart from Aldergrove.

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CAR LIST A

Bangor Helipad to Bangor Shops

1. RUC Pilot Car and RUC VIP Escort Mr Donaldson
2. SOS and PS/SofS and Mr Bamford
3. VIP + 1 + Security (Met)
4. PS/VIP, Press Sec and Mr D Gilliland
5. Mayor of Bangor and Deputy Mayor and Mr Kilfedder MP
6. Mr Merifield and Miss J Owens
7. Spare car for hairdresser/secretarial support staff
8. RUC Rear Escort Car

CAR LIST B

Musgrave Park and later

1. RUC Pilot car - RUC VIP Escort (Mr Donaldson)
2. SofS and PS/SofS and RUC Escort Mr Bamford
3. VIP + 1 + Security (Met)
4. PS/VIP + Press Secretary and Mr D Gilliland
5. Mr Merifield and secretarial support staff
6. RUC Rear Escort

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OPERATION PISTON (Non-flying Alternative Programme)

- 0830 Depart Northolt
- Main party; Private Secretary; Special Branch; Supt Donaldson RUC; Press Secretary.
- 0940 Arrive ALDERGROVE
- Met by Secretary of State; PUS (Mr Woodfield), 2nd PUS (Sir Ewart Bell), GOC (Sir R Richardson); Chief Constable (Sir John Herman). RAF Station Commander (Gp Capt Whittaker)
- In attendance: Asst Under Sec NIO (Mr Merifield) Director of Information NIO (Mr Gilliland); Private Secretary to Secretary of State (Mr Lyon); Secretary of State's escort (Mr Bamford); Army Liaison Officer (Maj Paul)
- 0950 Depart by car for Newtownards
- 1045 Arrive NEWTOWNARDS RUC STATION
- Met by Asst Chief Constable Charles Rogers OBE and RUC Divisional Commander Chief Supt Michael Ford
- 1100 Depart Police Station
- 1105 Arrive WOOLCO SHOPPING CENTRE, NEWTOWNARDS
- Met by the Mayor of Ards Borough Council (Alderman R E Gaw) and the Deputy Mayor (Mr J McBriar). Also the MP for North Down (Mr J Kilfedder, also Speaker to the NI Assembly).
- 1130 Depart NEWTOWNARDS for Musgrave Park Hospital, Military Wing.
- 1215 Arrive MUSGRAVE PARK HOSPITAL MILITARY WING
- Met by Medical Officer in Charge (Col Pat Thorsby) Matron (Major A Anderson)
- Tour of Military Wing to meet Army and RUC patients (names to be forwarded 17/12) and staff who handle injured from Ballykelly and other incidents.
- 1250 Depart Musgrave Park for Lisburn
- 1310 Arrive LISBURN ARMY HQ

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1310 Arrive LISBURN ARMY HQ

Met by Commander Land Forces (Maj Gen Peter Chiswell):
Commander 39 Brigade (Brig Michael Hobbs) and Commander
UDR (Brig Peter Graham)

Break

Buffet Lunch with Officers, WO's and Sergeants from
HQNI and HQUDR

Visit other ranks

1425 Leave Lisburn by road for Aldergrove
Car List B

1455 Arrive ALDERGROVE

Met by Station Commander (Group Captain Whittaker)

Meet RAF staff and families, station mess

1545 By car to VIP DEPARTURE LOUNGE to prepare for TV
"direct to camera" spot.

PUS and GOC and Deputy Chief Constable (Mr H McAtamney)
in attendance

1600 TV interview; direct to camera 3 mins
Probably in Main Departure Lounge

1615 Depart Aldergrove

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