



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

GREAT GEORGE STREET,

LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Permanent Under Secretary

Mr P J Woodfield CB CBE

Covering TOV SECRET

Personal

Dear Robin,

I have mentioned in my letter that the draft may be a bit long. This is just a personal note to say that my staff will be upset if something like paras 8 & 9 are left out not included: but of course he recognises that it is to be his own personal message.

Yours,
Phillips

PERSONAL

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TOP SECRET



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

Dear Robert,

OPERATION PISTON

I should be grateful if you would assimilate the attached draft 'address to camera' with Philip Woodfield's letter to you of last evening. It should have been attached to the original letter but I am afraid was inadvertantly left off.

*Yours sincerely,
David Brooker*

DAVID BROOKER

Private Secretary

TOP SECRET

16 December 1982

PUS/L/2175/MLR

DRAFT TEXT FOR FINAL TV TALK

1. I wanted to come here this Christmas to visit the security forces, who will be on duty, as they always are, over the holiday season. I also wanted to see for myself something of the day-to-day life of people in Northern Ireland.

2. I much enjoyed my brief visit to Bangor. I was glad to be able to meet ordinary people going about their business in the same way as others in the rest of the United Kingdom. I know that many people who have never been to Northern Ireland have no idea that in most of Northern Ireland, most of the time, daily life is as normal as in the rest of the United Kingdom.

3. But we never forget the appalling burden of fear and violence which all sections of the community in the Province have to bear. This hardship and hurt has fallen on civilian and service families alike. I went to Musgrave Park Hospital to see some of the survivors of the murderous attack at Ballykelly and the doctors and nurses who are caring for them, as they and their colleagues in other hospitals have cared for so many others cruelly wounded.

4. I want my visit here today to be a demonstration of the concern which the Government feels for Northern Ireland, and of our determination to secure for the people of the Province the chance to live normal, decent, prosperous lives free from the blight of terrorism.

5. Let me repeat once again that I stand foresquare with the security forces - with the RUC who are now in the forefront of the fight against terrorism, and with the Army and the UDR.

6. Terrorism is not the only problem from which Northern Ireland suffers. I am only too aware of the economic problems of the Province and of the need to reduce the high rate of unemployment.

7. The restoration of our national economy is a task to which this Government has committed itself. We accept that the economic problems of Northern Ireland are especially difficult and especially deep-seated. We are therefore doing all we can within our national policy to provide support and incentives for industry here. These measures, which are rightly generous, must and will continue.

8. But both the struggle against terrorism, and our efforts to attract investment and get the economy of the Province back to work are made more difficult by continued political instability. Parliament has provided a framework for the healthy revival of political life in the Province. It is for you to determine the ways in which that revival can be achieved.

9. It is the Government's hope, and its expectation, that this opportunity will now be seized. We shall give you all the help and encouragement we can.

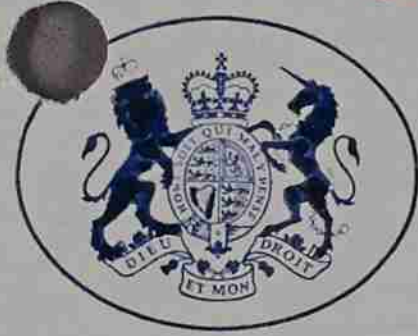
PUS/L/2175/MLR

10. What I have seen today confirms my firm belief in the decency, the resilience, the steadfastness and the courage of the people of Northern Ireland. I cannot promise you an easy solution. But I give you wholeheartedly my pledge that the Government will continue to work tirelessly for the defeat of the gunmen, and the creation of a peaceful, just and fulfilling life for all sections of the community.

11. To you all, I send my best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

GREAT GEORGE STREET,

LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Ref: PUS/L/3000

Permanent Under Secretary

Mr P J Woodfield CB CBE

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

Dear Robin,

OPERATION PISTON

Further to Philip Woodfield's letter to you of last night, I enclose the alternative programme for use in non-flying weather.

*attached
to Woodfield
to FERB
15/12/82*

*Yours sincerely,
David Brooker*

DAVID BROOKER
Private Secretary

16 December 1982

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Copy No 1 of 4

TOP SECRET



PUS/L/2184/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

15 December 1982

Len Rubin,

OPERATION PISTON

1. I enclose -
 - a. A programme for Operation Piston assuming flying weather
 - b. Car plan for the programme
 - c. A draft text of a talk 'direct to camera' to be made at the end of the visit.

now attached

I will send you shortly an alternative programme for non-flying weather.

2. The Secretary of State intends to accompany the Prime Minister throughout the visit.

3. The GOC and the Chief Constable will be among the small party at Aldergrove for the arrival and the GOC for the departure. The Chief Constable will leave Aldergrove immediately after the arrival to take a passing out parade at the RUC Training Centre in Enniskillen and will not be back in time for the departure, but the Deputy Chief Constable will be there.

4. The local MPs and civic representatives are shown as being present at appropriate points. There are however security problems about firming this up until very near the time of the visit. There is a danger that proxy names will be rumbled and civilian guests will therefore not be approached until at most 24 hours before the arrival and may not be able to attend. (We shall, of course, even at that late stage use proxy names).

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5. Bangor has been chosen for the shopping area visit. We concluded that an open street was better than an enclosed centre both for crowd control and to enable the Prime Minister to be seen. A great deal of bomb damage was done to shops in Bangor but most of this, if not all, has been made good. If we have to use the non-flying programme it is likely to be very wet and a covered-in shopping centre would be preferable.

6. I am afraid that it is not practicable to visit the Army and the Police on the border if flying is out. The roads are slow and, more important, there are security risks on the return journey which would have to be more or less by the same route as that by which the party went in. But the alternative programme (to follow) based on Army HQ at Lisburn will be made as lively as possible.

7. The draft text for the talk 'direct to camera' is perhaps a bit on the long side.

8. David Gilliland is preparing a note on press cover which I have asked him to send direct to Bernard Ingham.

9. Personality notes and a short general brief on the security situation will follow. If you agree I suggest that the brief should reach you on December 20, so as to be as up-to-date as possible.

10. I am, of course, available if you want to discuss. On present plans I shall be in London for the rest of the week and on Monday 20 December.

*Yours ever,
P. J. Woodfield*

P J WOODFIELD

Encls

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*now
worked
over and
shortened*

*now
attached*

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OPERATION PISTON

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FLYING PROGRAMME

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2. Arrival Party at Aldergrove
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4. Musgrave Park Hospital Military Wing
5. Bessbrook Army Camp
6. Armagh RUC Barracks
7. Aldergrove - TV Talk
8. Northern Ireland Political Affairs :
Background Note
9. Security Situation : Background Note

(Yellow tabs)

NON-FLYING PROGRAMME

Item

1. Programme and Car List
2. Newtownards
3. Musgrave Park Hospital Military Wing
4. Lisburn
5. Aldergrove - TV Talk

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CAR LIST A

BANGOR HELIPAD to BANGOR SHOPS

1. RUC Pilot Car, RUC VIP Escort (Supt Donaldson) and Secretary of State's 2nd Escort
2. S of S and PS/S of S 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. A/PS to VIP, Mr Merifield and Miss J Owens
7. Spare car and secretarial support staff
8. RUC Rear Escort car

CAR LIST B

MUSGRAVE PARK and later

All stages on Alternative Programme

1. RUC Pilot car - RUC VIP Escort (Supt Donaldson) and Secretary of State's 2nd Escort
2. S of S and PS/S of S and RUC Escort Mr Bamford
3. VIP + 1 + Security (Met)
4. PS/VIP + Press Secretary and Mr D Gilliland
5. A/PS to VIP, Mr Merifield and secretary
6. RUC Rear Escort

OPERATION PISTON - Flying Programme

0830 Depart Northolt

Main Party (2): 2 Private Secretaries:
Special Branch: 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 Hermon)
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 escorts
(Mr Bamford + 1)
Army Liaison Officer (Maj Paul)
Supt Donaldson RUC

0950 Depart by helicopter for Bangor

- H1 (Main Party, Private Secretary: Special
Branch: Supt Donaldson RUC: Press
Secretary: Mr Merifield) (7)

- H2 (Secretary of State, A/Private Secretary,
Mr Gilliland, Mr Lyon, Mr Bamford,
2nd RUC escort, Maj Paul, NIO Secretary)
(8)

1010 Arrive BANGOR (Open area near Bangor Castle)

- H2 arrives followed by H1

- Met by MP for North Down (Mr James Kilfedder,
Speaker to NI Assembly) and Mayor and
Deputy Mayor North Down Borough Council
(Rev John McConnell Auld and Mr W Baillie)

In attendance
Miss Joan
Owens NIO

1020 Travel by car to Bangor town centre

Car Plan A

1025 Arrive BANGOR MAIN STREET, Boots Chemists
entrance

- Met by Chamber of Commerce representative.
RUC commanded by ACC Charles Rogers, with
Chief Supt M Ford and Supt Tom Brown

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- Tour shops on foot: calling at Boots; Hoggs (local crystal glass) and if desired Wellworths (general department store on way down 100 yard high street)
- 1100 Leave Main Street (near harbour) by car for helicopters Car Plan A
- 1105 Depart Bangor by helicopter
- H1 (as before)
 - H2 (as before)
- 1115 Arrive MUSGRAVE PARK ARMY ECHELON BASE
- H2 lands and takes off followed by H1
 - Met by CLF (Major Gen Peter Chiswell)
Lt Col Garry C Barnett, 1st Bn
Black Watch
 - Walk to Musgrave Park Military Wing (200 yds)
- 1125 Arrive MUSGRAVE PARK HOSPITAL MILITARY WING
- Met by Consultant Surgeon (Lt Col O'Donovan (RAMC) and Deputy Matron (Major Alison Anderson (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 CLF and CO Black Watch in attendance Cars stand by
- H1 and H2 as before
- 1220 Arrive BESSBROOK BARRACKS
- H2 lands followed by H1 (short walk to mess)
 - Met by Commander 8 Brigade (Brig Colin Mattingley OBE)
CO 1 Coldstream Guards (Lt Col Sir Brian Barttelot)
 - 10 minute break
 - Buffet lunch for 30-35 officers, WO's and Sergeants of 1 Coldstream Guards (about 20) and 10 UDR (about 12)
 - Tour of barracks to meet other ranks
- 1400 Leave Bessbrook by helicopter

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|------|---|------------------------------|
| 1410 | <p>Arrive <u>GOUGH RUC BARRACKS ARMAGH</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H2 lands followed by H1 - Met by Regional RUC Commander (Asst Chief Constable Maurice Johnstone) and Deputy Div Commander K Division RUC (Supt Hodgett) - Tour of RUC operations area including Special Branch HQ - 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 Charles Armstrong, and Mr D Hutchinson) to be present. | <p>Tea will be available</p> |
| 1510 | <p>Depart ARMAGH by helicopter</p> | <p>7 cars stand by</p> |
| 1530 | <p>Arrive ALDERGROVE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Met by RAF Station Commander (Group Capt Whittaker) - Meet RAF staff in operations room (about 50 yards walk) | <p>6 cars stand by</p> |
| 1545 | <p>Move to VIP DEPARTURE LOUNGE to prepare for TV 'direct to camera' spot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PUS, GOC and Deputy Chief Constable (McAtamney) to be present | |
| 1600 | <p>TV talk 'direct to camera'</p> | |
| 1615 | <p>Depart from Aldergrove</p> | |

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BRIEFING ON EACH STAGE

ARRIVAL ALDERGROVE

1. SECRETARY OF STATE2. PERMANENT UNDER SECRETARY NIO

Mr Philip Woodfield, CB, CBE. PUS 1981. Deputy Secretary NIO 1972-74. (Parent Department - Home Office; Private Secretary to Prime Minister 1961-65; Secretary to Mountbatten Prison Security Enquiry 1966)

3. 2ND PERMANENT UNDER SECRETARY AND HEAD OF NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL SERVICE

Sir Ewart Bell KCB. 2nd PUS NIO 1981; Head of NICS 1979 (Northern Ireland Civil Service since 1948 incl Perm Secretary Department of Finance 1976-79)

4. GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING

Lieutenant General Sir Robert Richardson, KCB, CVO, CBE. GOC NI June 82; Commander 39 Brigade NI 1974-75. (Latterly GOC British Sector Berlin 1978-80 and Vice Adjutant General/Director of Manning Army 1980-81). Has also commanded Royal Scots in NI.

5. CHIEF CONSTABLE

Sir John Hermon, Chief Constable RUC 1980. Educated Larne Grammar School. RUC since 1950.

6. STATION COMMANDER

Group Captain David Whittaker (leaves NI shortly for Canada on promotion to Air Commodore)

To accompany visiting party

7. UNDER SECRETARY (POLITICAL) NIO

Mr Anthony Merifield. NIO October 1982; DHSS London 1965-82 (latterly Director of Establishments HQ)

8. DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION NIO

Mr David Gilliland. Under Secretary NIO Information Department. NI Civil Service now working in Stormont Castle. Accompanied Secretary of State on his recent visit to USA.

9. PRIVATE SECRETARY TO SECRETARY OF STATE

Mr John Lyon. Assistant Secretary. Private Secretary 1982, on secondment from Home Office.

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET *M*BANGOR

1. Provincial seaside town and headquarters North Down Borough Council in strongly Unionist area of about 60,000 population.
2. Formerly thriving yachting and holiday centre but this trade (much of it from Scotland) has declined in face of the troubles and rival holiday attractions in Europe. Light industry being developed on outskirts.
3. Many shops at lower end of Main Street (including Wellworths and the Co-op) were damaged by a car bomb in the mid-70's and have been rebuilt. Bangor is now a popular residential area, having expanded rapidly as people moved out from Belfast because of the troubles. Its shopping streets, and shopping arcades attract shoppers from Belfast.
4. Arrival by helicopter will be on an open space about 1/2 mile from the Main Street.
5. The programme includes a walk down the Main Street on what is Bangor's market day.
 - call at Boots: Manager Mr P G White. Recently opened after move from smaller premises (a move made for normal business reasons not because of bombing).
 - call at Hoggs: owner Mr Alan White (son of founder). Family business with Belfast and other provincial branches stocking high class china, glass and crystal including some from the Republic. Ulster products include TYRONE crystal from Dungannon, and BELLEEK china from Co Fermanagh.

If desired calls could be made at lower end of street to other shops including:

 - Wellworths: Manager Mr Boardman. A local "Woolworth-style" store completely rebuilt after car bomb destroyed original shop.
6. Should the weather turn exceptionally wet on arrival at the helicopter landing place, it would be possible to visit the enclosed shopping centre arcade on the outskirts of Bangor at Clandeboye. The centre houses a largish supermarket (STEWARTS), together with 15 or so other shops round a central open space. The Clandeboye Centre Management's local manager is Mr Desmond Gilpen.

PERSONALITIES

ON HELICOPTER ARRIVAL

1. MP for North Down (Speaker to NI Assembly)
Mr James Kilfedder BA, BL, MP. Educated Portora Royal and Trinity College Dublin. MP for West Belfast 1964-66 (defeated by Gerry Fitt); MP for North Down (currently 24,000 majority) since 1970. Topped the poll in North Down in 1962 Northern Ireland Assembly election and was elected (as compromise candidate) as Speaker with the support of DUP and Alliance. Firm devolutionist who opposes direct rule:

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Takes a firm line on security and wants more troops operating on the ground. Highly individualistic politician. In Jan 1980 he set up Ulster Progressive (later 'Popular') Unionist Party, with its blueprint for devolution which mixes British, Irish and American constitutions.

2. Mayor of North Down Borough Council

Rev John McConnell Auld (OUP). Elected to the Council in 1973, Deputy Mayor 1981-82, Mayor 1982-83. Presbyterian Minister, teaches at Royal Belfast Academical Institution. Mid 50s, bachelor, flamboyant in dress, outspoken and slightly eccentric.

3. Deputy Mayor of North Down Borough Council

William Bailie (OUP). Elected to the Council 1977 (for the Unionist Party of Northern Ireland). Chairs the Finance and Policy Committee. Keen Rotarian and actively involved in organising the Save the Children Fund in Northern Ireland. Local estate agent.

AT SHOPPING AREA

4. If practicable within timescale, a Chamber of Commerce representative.

5. Regional Asst Chief Constable Charles Rodgers OBE who will be supervising local police operations unless Ballykelly work intervenes. RUC since 1942, ACC since 1981. His region includes Ballykelly and he is currently handling the bombing investigations.

6. RUC Divisional Commander Chief Supt Michael Ford of Newtownards and Bangor Sub Division Supt Tom Brown are also expected to be on duty. Chief Supt Ford has 38 years service in RUC including command of Springfield Road Division, Belfast; and Supt Tom Brown served in Belfast and Londonderry before moving to Bangor in October 1980.

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MUSGRAVE PARK HOSPITAL MILITARY WING

MILITARY WING

1. Military wing, adjacent to civilian Musgrave Park Hospital, handles army and police service personnel injured in terrorist incidents.
2. The wing also has a secure unit for treating terrorist prisoners or suspects on remand.
3. The army unit is based in what is called "the Echelon" adjacent to the hospital. Helicopters will land in the Echelon compound.
4. Programme after landing at echelon will involve short walk (or car journey if inclement weather) to the Military wing, followed by visits to military and RUC patients and hospital staff. Every effort is being made to discharge patients before Christmas, but a visit to those who are likely to remain, and to the staff who handle the emergency surgery and its follow-up, will be greatly appreciated. A list of patients will be prepared this weekend when the prognosis of each is better established.

PERSONALITIES AT ECHELON

5. Major General Peter Chiswell, CBE, Commander Land Forces since Jan 82. (Formerly Parachute Regiment).
6. Lt Col Garry C Barnett, 1st Black Watch. This is the second day in Belfast for the Black Watch who have moved from Germany. Col Barnett hands over command at the end of this "roulement" tour.

AT HOSPITAL

7. Consultant Surgeon [MO in charge, Col Thoresby, is on leave] Lt Col J P J O'Donovan, RAMC. Belfast and St Barts graduate. Served in Province before. Third month of current tour. Married, but unaccompanied by doctor wife.
8. Deputy Matron [Matron Major Margaret Hudson, is on leave] Major Alison M Anderson QARANC. Joined AQRANC on special regular commission. Hopes to obtain regular commission. Served Musgrave Park since May 1982.

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CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Injured at Ballykelly

24557129 L/Cpl DUNNETT S 12 Intelligence and Security Company

Fractured Right tibia and ruptured right eardrum
Was seriously ill - now removed from all lists

24221117 Cpl TAYLOR WC 2 Royal Anglia

Burns to both legs and multiple shrapnel wounds
Was very seriously ill - now removed from all lists

24332599 L/Cpl WABY P A 1 Cheshire

Back injury - recovering

Others

23953878 Sergeant DILLON S D 1 Queens

Suspected infective hepatitis

24398812 Sergeant LAUNCHBERRY S 1 Royal Scots

Cellulitis right leg

491841 Captain RICHARDSON R 8 UDR

Fractured right femur

24558598 Fusilier ELSE 3 RRF

Tonsillitis

24548794 Guardsman NEW 1 Coldstream Guards

Hepatitis

INJURED IN BOOBY TRAP INCIDENT IN CROSSMAGLEN ON 20 DECEMBER

Guardsman CULLESS - 1 Coldstream Guards
shrapnel wound to left side. Lost left eye. Seriously ill.

Guardsman WATTS - 1 Coldstream Guards
shrapnel wound. Suffering from shock.

CONFIDENTIAL

BESSBROOK

BESSBROOK ARMY CAMP (County Armagh)

1. Old mill taken over early in troubles. Situated in small (2500 pop) country town.
2. HQ of a roulement battalion (4½ month tours, no accompanying families).
3. Currently occupied by 1 Coldstream Guards, and an RUC unit detached from RUC H Division Newry. 10 UDR are on duty in border area.
4. Programme includes
 - Buffet lunch for 30-35 officers, WO's and sergeants from 1 Coldstream Guards and from 10 UDR.
 - short tour of barracks to meet other ranks.

PERSONALITIES

1. Commander 8 Brigade
Brigadier C Colin Mattingley OBE. 4th tour in Province. Brigade Commander since November 82; commanded 1 Kings Own Scottish Borderers 1978-81.
2. CO 1 Coldstream Guards
Lt Col Sir Brian Barttelot BT. Involved in MOD planning of South Atlantic campaign. Assumed command July 82 and after Bn trooped colour on 1982 Queen's Birthday moved to Northern Ireland from Caterham.

C. ARMAGHGOUGH BARRACKS, ARMAGH

1. Old 18th century barracks taken over mid 70's by RUC.
2. Situated in town of Armagh (pop 12,500): country town and seat of the All Ireland primates of both the Church of Ireland and the Roman Catholic Church.
3. Currently HQ of Assistant Chief Constable (South), whose RUC region covers the whole Southern border of the Province including Armagh and Fermanagh.

Base for some Divisional Mobile Support staff
(the RUC's main anti-terrorist and public order arm)

includes anti-terrorist - search training area; special branch information unit; and one of the RUC's two main interrogation wings (the other is at Castlereagh).

4. Programme includes -

tour of operational areas

meeting with group of RUC wives and RUC widows, as well as some RUC officers disabled by service injuries. The local MP and the Chairman/Vice Chairman of the District Council would be invited to join that meeting.

PERSONALITIES

1. RUC

Assistant Chief Constable Maurice Johnstone MBE; ACC since 1981; met PM when Divisional Commander, Londonderry; married with 2 daughters.

Supt Les Hodgett, Deputy Divisional Commander (deputising for DC Chief Supt George Harrison who may be away after undergoing minor hospital treatment).

2. MP

Mr Harold McCusker. Age 42; Ulster Unionist MP for Armagh since 1974; Member of NI Assembly 1982. Former teacher and personnel officer. Takes a hard line on security issues and has pressed for more resources for security forces and reintroduction of death penalty, stop and search, ^{and} internment.

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3. Armagh District Council Chairman

F CHARLES ARMSTRONG JP (OUP)

Long standing Councillor. Moderate Unionist; quiet, diplomatic but firm. Close friend of Harold McCusker. Manager of the local gas company. Prominent officer holder in the Orange, Black and Masonic Orders. Part-time Major in 2 UDR, but relieved of his 2 I/C position and assigned to the unposted list because Commander UDR was unhappy with his performance. (Mr Armstrong alleged that this was a politically-motivated decision).

4. District Council Vice Chairman

DOUGLAS HUTCHINSON (DUP)

First elected to old Armagh Rural District Council 1953/ Vice Chairman since 1978. Former Assembly and Convention Member. Unsuccessful in 1982 Assembly election. Straightforward, firmly held loyalist views, and particularly strong line on security. (Was expelled from Orange and Black Orders in mid '60s for opposing their leaders "appeasement", and in 1968 and 1969 was sentenced to short imprisonment after anti-civil rights disturbances). Owns large fruit farm.

KEYNOTE (see also security brief)

There will be strong feeling about the security situation, with recently the 26 October culvert explosion at Lurgan (about 20 miles away) when three policemen died; the death of a UDR member shot in the Customs Yard, Armagh on 10 November; and the deaths of two RUC officers shot on 16 November at Markethill, Armagh.

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ALDERGROVE

1. Shortly before the preparation for the TV 'direct to camera' interview there will be an opportunity to visit some staff on duty in the RAF operations.
2. The RAF Station Commander, Group Captain David Whittaker, will have met the party on arrival. He is coming to the end of his tour and will shortly be moving, on promotion to Air Commodore, to a post in Canada.
3. Aldergrove provides servicing and staging facilities for flying troops to and from the Province, together with heavy helicopter support for the Army. It currently houses a full-time Wessex helicopter squadron, a squadron of the RAF regiment and an air movements squadron; and provides lodgement for Army Air Corps Fixed Wing crews.

TOP SECRET

E.R.

~~TOP SECRET~~

I have been delighted to be able to come here to Northern Ireland this Christmas. I went briefly to Bangor ^[Newtownards] this morning and then to Musgrave Park Hospital; and I have been able to visit some of the security forces who will be on duty, as they always are, over the holiday season.

^[Newtownards]
In Bangor I was glad to meet some of those who were doing their Christmas shopping. My brief visit there underlined the fact that in most of Northern Ireland, most of the time, daily life is as normal as in the rest of the United Kingdom.

But that fact does not diminish the burden of suffering and anxiety which the actions of a few inflict on civilian and service families alike. In Musgrave Park Hospital I visited some of those injured in the terrible and cowardly attack at Ballykelly and in other acts of terrorism. For them and their families, and the families of those who have died, this Christmas has been made a cruelly sad season. Our thoughts are with them and with the doctors and nurses who are doing such wonderful work in the hospitals.

That sadness and suffering can have only one effect, and that is to set all decent people foursquare with the security forces who work to prevent terrorism - with the RUC who are in the forefront, and with the Army and the UDR.

Terrorism is not the only enemy we face. We also fight to overcome unemployment and the deepseated economic problems of

/Northern.....

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Northern Ireland. The lasting solution to those problems can only come in Northern Ireland as in the rest of the United Kingdom by producing goods which compete in price, quality and design with the best in the world. That depends in the last resort on the qualities and efforts of those engaged in industry as management or work force. Government cannot do the job for them. ~~But~~ We will continue to give all the support we can through the special programmes of help which we provide to Northern Ireland.

The struggle against terrorism, and our efforts to attract investment and increase employment, need a third factor if they are to be successful - and that is a stable political ^{background.} ~~life.~~ The Northern Ireland Assembly has now been established and is providing a forum for political debate in the Province. There are problems and hesitations but there are also grounds for hope in the start which the Assembly has made. It is important that the opportunity which it presents should be seized and built upon.

All I have seen today confirms my belief in the resilience, steadfastness and courage of the people of Northern Ireland and of the forces which work for law and order here. I cannot give you the Christmas present of ^{an} easy solution to the problems we face: I wish I could. But I give you whole-heartedly my pledge ^{that} /I, the Secretary of State and his Ministers and the whole Government will continue to work for the defeat of violence, and the building of a peaceful, just and fulfilling life for all sections of the Northern Ireland community.

/To you.....

E.R.

TOP SECRET

3.

To you all in Northern Ireland I send my best wishes for
Christmas and the New year.

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CONFIDENTIAL

NORTHERN IRELAND POLITICAL AFFAIRS : BACKGROUND

1. The continuation of violence, deterioration in relations between the UK and the Irish Republic over the spring and summer, and the SDLP boycott so far of the Assembly, have emphasised the rifts in the community in Northern Ireland. The main political issues remain security, unemployment and (to a larger extent) housing.

2. On the unionist side the Official Unionist Party, led by Mr Molyneaux, continue in some disarray. Mr Molyneaux and a number of his colleagues regard the Assembly as a potential threat to the Union and a denial of majority (especially OUP) rule in Northern Ireland. The majority of the OUP members in the Assembly (and of the party as a whole), while they would like to see majority rule returned, are much less ready to see the Assembly written off. There is some discontent with Mr Molyneaux's leadership, though no obvious challenge has emerged.

3. The Democratic Unionist Party, led by Rev Ian Paisley are, by contrast, united and committed to making the Assembly work. While they too would welcome the return of majority rule, they seem persuaded that Parliament will not countenance it; and that the Assembly gives good opportunities for local representatives to exercise influence over Northern Ireland affairs. They also see the Assembly as a possible brake on Anglo-Irish relations; like the OUP, they distrust the Government's motives and fear movement towards Irish unity.

4. In the Assembly the OUP (26 members) have found themselves constantly outmanoeuvred by the DUP (21 members), together with the small Alliance Party (10 members). Moreover, they are increasingly at logger-heads with the Assembly Speaker, Mr Kilfedder, who a few years ago was a member of the OUP and is regarded as a defector. The OUP have taken issue (on the whole unreasonably) over Mr Kilfedder's allocation of Chairmanships of the six Statutory Committees of the Assembly, claiming that he has given the two best jobs to his friends the DUP. Mr Molyneaux is advocating a boycott of the Assembly, though most of his colleagues are resisting such a move. The row is likely to simmer on until the Assembly resumes on 25 January.

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5. On the nationalist side, the SDLP are in considerable difficulty. They decided to boycott the Assembly on the grounds that the Northern Ireland Act 1982 did not prescribe powersharing and the Government provided no strong Anglo-Irish dimension to accompany the legislation. They feel threatened by the electoral performance of Sinn Fein (who are trying to make inroads into the SDLP's constituency) and see no easy way to play a role on the political stage. Mr Hume will try hard to establish relations quickly with the new Irish Government (he got on badly with Mr Haughey) but there is no prospect of early participation by the SDLP in the Assembly, which they see as a body for unionists. The restoration of good Anglo-Irish relations would ease their position considerably (and in particular make it easier for them to repel the Sinn Fein threat). Thus Anglo-Irish relations will be very important to keeping the moderate nationalist constitutional party afloat.

6. Despite these not unexpected problems, the Assembly has begun to provide a useful forum for debate. It has also forced OUP, DUP and Alliance politicians to negotiate with one another, a process they have not had to undertake for some years. The attractions of the Assembly are likely to persuade the OUP to come to terms over the Chairmanships issue, and there is a chance that in time the SDLP will come to see the advantage of participation. No dramatic early moves are however likely.

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PUS/L/2367/MLR

OPERATION PISTON

SECURITY SITUATION : BACKGROUND NOTE

Current Situation

1. The last quarter of 1982 has shown a resurgence of terrorist activity, following a relatively quiet period. Tensions have been raised, especially in the Protestant community, and the new political outlet for anger given by the Northern Ireland Assembly has contributed to that. But in cold figures there has been no marked deterioration over recent years, even including the disaster of the Ballykelly bombing. This is shown in the comparative statistics for the last two years (both up to 19 December):

	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>
<u>Deaths</u>		
Army	10	21
UDR	13	7
RUC	13	8
RUC'R'	8	4
Civilians	57	56
	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/>	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/>
	<u>101</u>	<u>96</u>
Injuries	1,327	515
Shooting incidents	794	379
Explosions	388	207

There is a marked falling off in all types of incidents, except in deaths, which have been at much the same level.

2. The most significant factor underlying these figures is the high incidence of successful assassinations by comparison with less dramatic terrorist activity. This reflects more skilled targetting and execution by the terrorists. From the community's point of view, it is seen as the ruthless picking off of individual

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members of the RUC and UDR, usually part-time, and sometimes even retired; as they go about their daily business, they are very much at risk. The Provisional IRA and the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) have both been active in this direction, the former raising their profile after Provisional Sinn Fein's participation in the elections to the Assembly. There have been a couple of flurries of counter-action by Loyalist terrorists, with several uninvolved Catholics killed, but these have not persisted.

The Security Forces

3. The police and army have been operating at a high level since early October, when the Assembly election campaign began. They have successfully aborted a number of attempted terrorist actions, and have found a quantity of arms and ammunition. They have been particularly active in County Armagh, especially in the northern part, around Craigavon and Armagh City itself. The police have three times been engaged with terrorists in this area, resulting in the shooting dead of four members of the Provisional IRA and two of INLA. This area, together with East Tyrone (to the North-West), has also seen the bulk of individual terrorist attacks on members of the security forces.

4. South Armagh and the border have been rather quieter, since the kidnapping and assassination of a UDR Corporal in October, but the presence of experienced gangs demands continual vigilance. There has also been little activity in Fermanagh to the West, but the local Unionist population remains edgy and needs firm reassurance.

5. The cities of both Belfast and Londonderry have been relatively free of violence. In part this reflects the dislocation to terrorist forces caused by the success of the police in obtaining information against them, significantly through evidence given by terrorists turned informers. A major case depending on such evidence, against three dozen Belfast Provisionals is being heard in Court at present.

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Co-operation with the Garda

6. Valuable co-operation has continued between the RUC and the Garda in the Republic. The latter have made some large finds of explosive, destined for use in the North. Political developments in the Republic have had no perceptible effect. The meeting between the Heads of the RUC and the Garda on 18 December was one in a regular series. Contrary to press reports no matters arising from the change of Government were discussed. The Supreme Court in the Republic has confirmed an Extradition Order against a leading Provisional (now active with INLA on the border); while the ruling may not have effect at all generally, it is a significant breach in the hitherto rigid application of the 'political offence' principle.

Outlook

7. There may well be a short lull over Christmas, as is common, but the Republican terrorists will continue to look for targets, especially in the rural areas and among members of the security forces. They are motivated by the recent deaths of several colleagues. Members of the 'establishment' are also at risk, particularly from INLA.

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TOP SECRETOPERATION PISTON - Non-flying Alternative Programme

0830	Leave London - Main party (2): 2 Private Secretaries; Special Branch; 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 Hermon) 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 escorts (Mr Bamford + 1) Army Liaison Officer (Maj Paul) Supt Donaldson RUC	
0950	Depart by car for NEWTOWNARDS	Car List B
1040	Arrive NEWTOWNARDS POLICE STATION - Met by Assistant Chief Constable (ACC Charles Rogers) Divisional Commander (Chief Supt M Ford) Supt Austin Anderson RUC - Short visit to Police Station	
1100	Depart by car for NEWTOWNARDS WOOLCO SHOPPING CENTRE	Car List B
1105	Arrive SHOPPING CENTRE - Met by MP for North Down Mr J Kilfedder (Speaker of the NI Assembly) Mayor (and/or Deputy Mayor) Ards Borough Council (Ald R E Gaw and Mr J McBriar) - Tour centre	In attendance Officer from NIO
1130	Leave Woolco Centre for Musgrave Park Hospital Military wing	Car List B

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

- 1215 Arrive Musgrave Park Hospital
- Met by Consulting Surgeon (Lt Col O'Donavan
RAMC)
Deputy Matron (Major Alison Anderson
QARANC)
 - 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
- Met by Commander Land Forces (Maj Gen
Peter Chiswell)
Commander 39 Brigade (Brig Michael
Hobbs)
Commander UDR (Brig Peter Graham)
 - Short break
 - Buffet lunch with officers, WO's and
Sergeants from HQNI and HQUDR
 - Visit other ranks and specialised Units
- 1435 Leave Lisburn by road for Aldergrove Car List B
- 1505 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

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

CAR LIST A

BANGOR HELIPAD to BANGOR SHOPS

1. RUC Pilot Car, RUC VIP Escort (Supt Donaldson) and Secretary of State's 2nd Escort
2. S of S and PS/S of S 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. A/PS to VIP, Mr Merifield and Miss J Owens
7. Spare car and secretarial support staff
8. RUC Rear Escort car

CAR LIST B

MUSGRAVE PARK and later

All stages on Alternative Programme

1. RUC Pilot car - RUC VIP Escort (Supt Donaldson) and Secretary of State's 2nd Escort
2. S of S and PS/S of S and RUC Escort Mr Bamford
3. VIP + 1 + Security (Met)
4. PS/VIP + Press Secretary and Mr D Gilliland
5. A/PS to VIP, Mr Merifield and secretary
6. RUC Rear Escort

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMME

- NEWTOWNARDS

1. Newtownards (10 miles from Belfast) gained a Borough Charter in 1937 and now has about 25,000 population. It is a busy agricultural centre with light engineering, hosiery and knitwear factories. It has been largely unaffected by bombing.
2. The visit will include the Divisional Police Station, recently completed.
3. There will also be a visit to the large and busy "WOOLCO" shopping centre. Its principal shops are Stewarts and Woolco (both food, clothing and hardware), with 15-20 smaller shops. It is owned by a London-based consortium.

PERSONALITIES

AT POLICE STATION

4. Regional ACC Charles Rogers OBE. RUC since 1942, ACC since 1981. His region includes Ballykelly and he is currently handling the bombing investigation.
5. Divisional Commander Chief Supt Michael Ford. 38 years RUC service, including command of Springfield Road Division Belfast till Feb 82, and service at Newry and Castlereagh.
6. Supt Austin Anderson - Newtownards since April 82, previously in RUC HQ.

AT CENTRE (If they can be contacted in time)

1. MP for North Down (and Speaker NI Assembly)
Mr J Kilfedder BA, BL, MP. Educated Portora Royal and Trinity College Dublin. MP for West Belfast 1964-66 (till defeated by Gerry Fitt); MP for North Down (currently 24,000 majority) since 1970. Topped the poll in North Down in 1982 Northern Ireland Assembly election and was elected (as compromise candidate) as Speaker with the support of DUP and Alliance. Firm devolutionist who opposes direct rule; with firm line on security and wants more troops operating on the ground. Highly individualistic politician. In Jan 1980 he set up Ulster Progressive (later 'Popular') Unionist Party, with its blueprint for devolution which mixes British, Irish and American constitutions.

TOP SECRET

AT CENTRE cont2. Mayor of Ards Borough Council

Alderman R E Gaw. Councillor for nearly 30 years: only Labour Party councillor in Northern Ireland. Deputy Mayor 1979-80, 1980-81; Mayor 1981-82 and 1982-83. Active and popular. An Inspector with Ulsterbus.

3. Deputy Mayor Ards Borough Council

Mr T J McBriar (Alliance Party) Councillor since 1973, Deputy Mayor 1981-82, 1982-83. A farmer in his early 40s, married with a young family. Area Chairman of the Round Table 1982-83, and formerly prominent in UFU Young Farmers' Association.

4. Managing Director Woolco Centre or the Head of the Service Unit will be called if possible.

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMME

MUSGRAVE PARK HOSPITAL MILITARY WING

MILITARY WING

1. Military wing, adjacent to civilian Musgrave Park Hospital, which handles army and police service personnel injured in terrorist incidents.
2. The wing also has a secure unit for treating terrorist prisoners or suspects on remand.
3. An army unit is based in what is called "the Echelon" adjacent to the hospital.
4. Programme includes visit to injured army and RUC Officers, and hospital staff. Every effort is being made to discharge patients before Christmas, but a visit to those who are likely to remain and to the staff who handle the emergency surgery and its follow-up, will be greatly appreciated. A list of patients will be prepared this weekend when the prognosis of each is better established.

PERSONALITIES

1. Consultant Surgeon [MO in charge, Col Thoresby, is on leave]
Lt Col J P H O'Donovan, RAMC. Belfast and St Barts graduate. Served in Province before. Third month of current tour. Married, but unaccompanied by doctor wife.
2. Deputy Matron [Matron Major Margaret Hudson, is on leave]
Major Alison M Anderson QARANC. Joined QARANC on special regular commission. Hopes to obtain regular commission. Served Musgrave Park since May 1982.

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMME

LISBURN

1. Lisburn is the Army HQ for Northern Ireland, and the senior Army and UDR commanders are based there together with bomb disposal teams, Royal Signals and other support staff.
2. After a short break the programme will proceed with
 - buffet lunch with Officers, WO's and sergeants from HQNI and HQUDR
 - visit to other ranks and specialist units.

PERSONALITIES

1. Commander Land Forces
Major General Peter Chiswell CBE. CLF since 1982.
Takes over as Commander Wales Aug 83 (Formerly Parachute Regiment)
2. Commander 39 Infantry Brigade
Brigadier Michael Hobbs CBE (1982). Assumed command March 82, formerly Grenadier Guards.
3. Commander Ulster Defence Regiment
Brigadier Peter Graham CBE (1981). Assumed command May 82.
Formerly Gordon Highlander.

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMME

ALDERGROVE

1. RAF Aldergrove provide servicing and staging facilities for troops flying in and out of the Province, and heavy helicopter support for the Army.
2. The base houses a full-time Wessex squadron, a squadron of the RAF regiment and an air movement squadron; and provides lodgement for Army Air Corps "Fixed Wing" crews.
3. Programme includes tea with representative gathering of all ranks, and families, before preparation for TV talk 'direct to camera'.

PERSONALITIES

1. Station Commander

Group Captain David Whittaker (leaves shortly for Canada on promotion to Air Commodore)

TOP SECRET