

TOP SECRET

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Prime Minister
Here is the detailed plan
for Operation Abercorn.



PUS/L/1800/MLR

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

FERB
20.12

Permanent Under Secretary
Sir Philip Woodfield KCB CBE

F E R Butler Esq
Principal Private Secretary
to The Prime Minister
No 10 Downing Street

20 December 1983

19
Mud
no

Dear Mrs Butler

OPERATION ABERCORN

I enclose a programme with supporting briefing for OPERATION ABERCORN.

We have, after further consideration, omitted a visit to Musgrave Park Hospital. When we came to work it out it would make the programme too tight and in any case the hospital will try to let as many patients as possible out for Christmas. Last year you remember it was just after Ballykelly and we hope not to have a repeat of anything like that.

Note
by Bernard
at flag A

I understand that Bernard Ingham and David Gilliland have been in consultation about the information side.

I confirm that as last time we shall be providing a secretary with portable typewriter throughout the visit.

You will, of course, let me know if you want any further information or any variation in the programme.

Yours sincerely
M. J. Lunde
APS/PUS

Dictated by Sir Philip Woodfield
from Belfast and signed in his absence

Encl

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OPERATION

FLYING PROGRAMME

08.00 Depart No. 10

08.50 Depart Northholt
Main Party (2), ¹/₂ Private Secretaries
2 Special Branch, Press Secretary

10.00 Arrive ALDERGROVE
Met by Secretary of State
~~Speaker of the Assembly~~ - Mr. Kilfedder
PUS (Sir Philip Woodfield)
2nd PUS (Sir Ewart Bell)
GOC (Sir Robert Richardson)
Chief Constable (Sir John Hermon) Limited TV facility
RAF Station Commander (Gp Cpn Salter) to record arrival
In attendance
Asst Under Secretary NIO (Mr Merifield)
Director of Information NIO (Mr Gilliland)
Private Secretary to S of S (Mr Lyon)
S of S's escorts (2)
Army Liaison Officer (Maj Trigger)
RUC Protection Officer (Supt Donaldson)

10.10 Dept by helicopter for Newtownards
H1 Main Party (2), Private Secretary,
2 Special Branch, Supt Donaldson RUC (Blankets reqd)
Press Secretary, Mr Merifield (8)

H2 Secretary of State, ~~A/Private~~
~~Secretary~~, Mr Gilliland, Mr Lyon,
Sec of State's escorts (2), NIO
Secretary, Major Trigger (8)

10.20 Arrive NEWTOWNARDS (adjoining Regent House
School)
H2 lands followed by H1 RUC cars
Car Plan A
Transfer to cars and travel to Miss Owens with
Newtownards Town Centre Sgt Craig in
attendance

10.30	<p>Arrive Regent St Newtownards opposite <u>Queen's Hall</u> Met by MP for Strangford Rt Hon John Taylor MP, MEP); Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Ards Borough Council (Councillor McBriar and Councillor Johnston); Chamber of Trade President Mr Cecil Hull; RUC commanded by Assistant Chief Constable David Cushley Walk to Conway Square (Chief Supt Pordo on duty). Call at <u>shops</u>, including visit to <u>Woolworth's entrance and Brown's Drapery.</u></p>	<p>Mrs Morrow in attendance</p> <p>Miss Owens and Mrs Morrow in attendance</p>
11.15	<p>Leave town centre from corner of Pound Street by car for Newtownards RUC Station</p>	<p>RUC Cars Car Plan A</p>
11.20	<p><u>Arrive RUC STATION NEWTOWNARDS</u> Met by Assistant <u>Chief Constable Cushley</u> with Chief Supt Ted Elliott Call at Control Room. Meet staff, serving officers' wives and recent RUC widows over coffee in Station Canteen</p>	<p>Possible press presence - subject to space constraints</p>
11.55	<p>Depart RUC station by car for helipad</p>	<p>RUC cars Car Plan A</p>
12.00	<p>Depart by helicopter H1 as before H2 as before</p>	
12.20	<p><u>Arrive DRUMADD BARRACKS ARMAGH</u> H2 lands followed by H1 Met by GOC Lt General Sir Robert Richardson and Brigadier Mike Rose Commander 39 Brigade Guard and Patrol with Lt Col Alexander Heroys, Commanding Officer 1st Grenadier Guards</p>	<p>Press Photographs</p>

	Cars to lunch	RUC cars
		Car Plan A plus
		CO 1st Grenadier
		Guards
	Outside lunch hall met by Lt Col	
	Mike Nicholson CO 2 UDR	
12.25 -	10 minute break	
12.35		
12.35	Buffet lunch for Officers, WOs and Sergeants of 1st Grenadier Guards and 2nd UDR with representatives of 1 Devon and Dorsets, 1st Queen's Own Highlanders and Chief Supt Leslie Hodgetts, H Div Commander RUC	Guests will include Mr Nicholson MP for Newry and Armagh Mr Hutchison Chairman of Armagh District Council
13.30 -	Break	
13.40		
13.40 -	Tour of barracks to meet other ranks	
14.00	and call on RUC Divisional Mobile Support Unit	
14.00	Leave <u>Armagh</u> by helicopter for Army Base at Aughnacloy	(RUC cars stand by)
14.10	<u>Arrive AUGHNACLOY ARMY BASE</u> H2 lands followed by H1 Met by Brig Colin Mattingley Commander 8 Brigade, Lt Col Robin Draper 8UDR and Supt David Hall Tour of base to meet troops	(Wellingtons required) at base meet MP for Fermanagh and S Tyrone Mr K Maginnis and Chairman Dungannon DC Mr W R Brown
14.30	Travel to RUC/Army border check point by car	RUC cars Car Plan B
14.35	<u>Arrive check point</u> and meet personnel on duty	
14.40	Return from check point by car Remainder of party assemble in forecourt of base	

14.45 Leave Aughnacloy by helicopter
H1 followed by H2

15.05 Arrive ALDERGROVE
H2 lands followed by H1
Met by RAF Station Commander
Group Capt Salter
Meet RAF staff in Operations
Room (about 50 yds walk)

(RUC cars stand by
Car Plan A)

15.15 Move to HQ Offices Tea
Not necessary -
see Bernard's note
~~Preparation for any final press
appearance~~
PUS, GOC and Chief Constable
(or Deputy)
to be present

RUC cars
Car Plan A
plus: PUS with
RAF Gp Capt
(RAF cars) GOC and
Chief Constable
(CC car)

15.30 Leave VIP lounge for runway

RUC cars
Car Plan A
plus: PUS with
RAF Gp Capt (RAF
cars) GOC and
Chief Constable
(CC car)

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BRIEFING ON EACH STAGE

SERIAL 1: ARRIVAL ALDERGROVE RAF

1. SECRETARY OF STATE

2. PERMANENT UNDER SECRETARY NIO

Sir Philip Woodfield, KCB, CBE

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).

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. Colonel of Royal Scots. (350th Anniversary this year)

5. CHIEF CONSTABLE

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

6. STATION COMMANDER

Group Captain Tony Salter (assumed command early 1983).

To accompany visiting party

7. UNDER SECRETARY (POLITICAL) NIO

Mr Anthony Merifield. NIO October 1982; DHSS London 1965-82

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.

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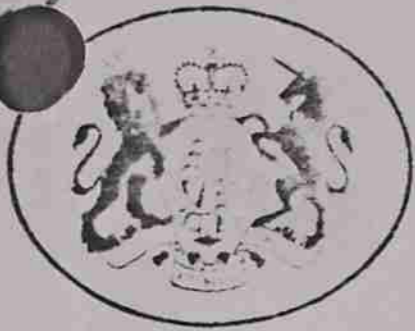
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for Operation Abercorn.

21/12/83



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Permanent Under Secretary
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Dear Mr Butler

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*Note
by Bernard
at flag A*

I understand that Bernard Ingham and David Gilliland have been in consultation about the information side.

I confirm that as last time we shall be providing a secretary with portable typewriter throughout the visit.

You will, of course, let me know if you want any further information or any variation in the programme.

*Yours sincerely
M. J. Rundle
APB/PUS*

Dictated by Sir Philip Woodfield
from Belfast and signed in his absence

Encl

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OPERATION

FLYING PROGRAMME

- 08.50 Depart Northholt
Main Party (2), ¹/₂ Private Secretaries
2 Special Branch, Press Secretary
- 10.00 Arrive ALDERGROVE
Met by Secretary of State ← letter
PUS (Sir Philip Woodfield)
2nd PUS (Sir Ewart Bell)
GOC (Sir Robert Richardson) ← letter
Chief Constable (Sir John Hermon) ← letter
RAF Station Commander (Gp Cpn Salter) ← letter
In attendance Limited TV facility to record arrival
Asst Under Secretary NIO (Mr Merifield)
Director of Information NIO (Mr Gilliland)
Private Secretary to S of S (Mr Lyon)
S of S's escorts (2)
Army Liaison Officer (Maj Trigger) mention
RUC Protection Officer (Supt Donaldson) - mention
- 10.10 Dept by helicopter for Newtownards
H1 Main Party (2), Private Secretary,
2 Special Branch, Supt Donaldson RUC (Blankets reqd)
Press Secretary, Mr Merifield (8)
- H2 Secretary of State, ~~A/Private Secretary~~, Mr Gilliland, Mr Lyon,
Sec of State's escorts (2), NIO
Secretary, Major Trigger (8)
- 10.20 Arrive NEWTOWNARDS (adjoining Regent House School)
H2 lands followed by H1 RUC cars
Car Plan A
Transfer to cars and travel to Miss Owens with
Newtownards Town Centre Sgt Craig in attendance

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10.30

Arrive Regent St Newtownards opposite Mrs Morrow in
Queen's Hall attendance

Met by MP for Strangford Rt Hon John
Taylor MP, MEP); Mayor and Deputy Mayor — letter
of Ards Borough Council

(Councillor McBriar and Councillor
Johnston); Chamber of Trade ← letter
President Mr Cecil Hull; RUC commanded Mrs
by Assistant Chief Constable David Cushley

Walk to Conway Square (Chief Supt Miss Owens and
Pordo on duty). Call at shops, Mrs Morrow in
including visit to Woolworth's entrance attendance
and Brown's Drapery. Mr. Brown

11.15

Leave town centre from corner of Pound RUC Cars
Street by car for Newtownards RUC Car Plan A
Station

11.20

Arrive RUC STATION NEWTOWNARDS

Met by Assistant Chief Constable ← letter
Cushley with Chief Supt Ted Elliott Possible press
Call at Control Room. Meet staff, presence - subject
serving officers' wives and recent RUC to space constraints
widows over coffee in Station Canteen

11.55

Depart RUC station by car for helipad RUC cars
Car Plan A

12.00

Depart by helicopter
H1 as before
H2 as before

12.20

Arrive DRUMADD BARRACKS ARMAGH

H2 lands followed by H1
Met by GOC Lt General Sir Robert ← letter
Richardson and Brigadier Mike Rose Press
Commander 39 Brigade Photographs
Guard and Patrol with Lt Col Alexander
Heroy, Commanding Officer 1st Grenadier
Guards

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- Cars to lunch
- Outside lunch hall met by Lt Col
Mike Nicholson CO 2 UDR
- 12.25 - 10 minute break
12.35
- 12.35 Buffet lunch for Officers, WOs and Sergeants of 1st Grenadier Guards and 2nd UDR with representatives of 1 Devon and Dorsets, 1st Queen's Own Highlanders and Chief Supt Leslie Hodgetts, H Div Commander RUC
- 13.30 - Break
13.40
- 13.40 - Tour of barracks to meet other ranks
14.00 and call on RUC Divisional Mobile Support Unit
- 14.00 Leave Armagh by helicopter for Army Base at Aughnacloy (RUC cars stand by)
- 14.10 Arrive AUGHNACLOY ARMY BASE
H2 lands followed by H1
Met by Brig Colin Mattingley Commander 8 Brigade, Lt Col Robin Draper 8UDR and Supt David Hall
Tour of base to meet troops
- 14.30 Travel to RUC/Army border check point by car
- 14.35 Arrive check point and meet personnel on duty
- 14.40 Return from check point by car
Remainder of party assemble in forecourt of base
- RUC cars
Car Plan A plus
CO 1st Grenadier
Guards
- Guests will include
Mr Nicholson MP for
Newry and Armagh
Mr Hutchison
Chairman of Armagh
District Council
- (Wellingtons require
at base meet MP for
Fermanagh and
S Tyrone
Mr K Maginnis
and Chairman
Dungannon DC
Mr W R Brown)
- RUC cars
Car Plan B

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- 14.45 Leave Aughnacloy by helicopter
H1 followed by H2

- 15.05 Arrive ALDERGROVE
H2 lands followed by H1
Met by RAF Station Commander
Group Capt Salter
Meet RAF staff in Operations Room (about 50 yds walk) (RUC cars stand by Car Plan A)

- 15.15 Move to HQ Offices Tea RUC cars
Not necessary - see Bernard's note ~~Preparation for any final press appearance~~ Car Plan A
PUS, GOC and Chief Constable (or Deputy) plus: PUS with RAF Gp Captn (RAF cars) GOC and Chief Constable (CC car)
to be present

- 15.30 Leave VIP lounge for runway RUC cars
Car Plan A
plus: PUS with RAF Gp Capt (RAF cars) GOC and Chief Constable (CC car)

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HELICOPTER SUPPORT

H1

Main party (2):

Private Secretary

2 Metropolitan Police protection officers

Supt Donaldson (RUC Head of Security Branch)

Press Secretary

Mr Merifield

H2

Secretary of State

~~Asst Private Secretary~~

Mr Gilliland

Mr Lyon

Secretary of State's escorts (2)

NIO Secretary

Major Trigger (army liaison)

H3

Doctor and medical team

H4

Army protection unit

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CAR PLAN A

- No 1 RUC Pilot car. Metropolitan Protection Officer
- No 2 Main Party (2)
+ Supt Donaldson
- No 3 Sec of State and Mr Lyon
2 escorts
- No 4 Private Secretary
Mr Merifield
2nd Metropolitan Protection Officer
- No 5 ~~A/Private Sec~~
Press Sec
Mr Gilliland
- No 6 Major Trigger
NIO Secretary
Miss J Owens
- No 7 RUC Rear Escort

CAR PLAN A1

As above plus

- No 8 Mr J Taylor
+ 2 escorts
- No 9 Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Ards Borough

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NON FLYING TIMETABLE

If helicopters are grounded the final serial (Aughnacloy) will be deleted, and the main programme will be re-timed as follows:

10.00	Arrive Aldergrove	
10.05	Depart by car for Newtownards	Car Plan A
10.55	Arr Newtownards Regent St (Car parking area facing Queens Hall)	
	Tour shops in Conway Square calling in Browns (General drapery store) in High Street	
11.30	Leave town centre by car	Car Plan A1
11.35	Arr RUC Station Newtownards	
11.55	Leave RUC station by car	Car Plan A
13.05	Arr Drumadd Barracks, Armagh	
13.05 -		
13.15	Break	
13.15 -		
14.00	Buffet lunch	
14.00 -		
14.15	Tour of barracks	
14.15	Leave Drumadd by car [15 minutes later than in main programme]	Car Plan A
15.05	Arr Aldergrove [as in main programme]	

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BRIEFING ON EACH STAGE

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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. Colonel of Royal Scots.
(350th Anniversary this year)
 5. CHIEF CONSTABLE
Sir John Hermon, Chief Constable RUC 1980. Educated Larne Grammar
School. RUC since 1950.
 6. STATION COMMANDER
Group Captain Tony Salter (assumed command early 1983).
- To accompany visiting party
7. UNDER SECRETARY (POLITICAL) NIO
Mr Anthony Merifield. NIO October 1982; DHSS London 1965-82
 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.
 10. SUPERINTENDENT WILLIAM DONALDSON - RUC PROTECTION OFFICER
Superintendent Donaldson joined RUC 1961, wide range of posts;
Superintendent 1980; Protection Officer 1982 (and saw PM
last year). His brother, Constable Samuel Donaldson, was
murdered in Crossmaglen, Co Armagh in 1970 in the first booby
trap car bomb.

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SERIAL 2 VISIT TO NEWTOWNARDS

Newtownards a Plantation town now a Belfast dormitory and market centre serving North Down agricultural area: 20,000 pop, largely Protestant and relatively unscathed by sectarian troubles. Has some light industry, and a new shopping centre (the largest in Ireland) which has taken trade from town centre shops.

Programme

Walk to town centre (Conway Square) bounded on 3 sides by a selection of small shops. Visit Woolworths (a small branch) and Browns of High Street an old established family draper business which has recently been extended. This shop stocks a large selection of Ulster made shirts (made in Londonderry).

Note

If the weather in Newtownards is so poor as to preclude a visit to the main streets and square, cars will move direct to the WOOLCO shopping centre, to arrive at the main entrance. Mr Hewitt NIO will be in attendance with Mr Cecil Hull, and with the Head of Operations and Security at the centre who will guide the party on a tour of the centre visiting interesting shops such as Easons, large newsagents with a fine display of recently published books on NI.

Personalities

Rt Hon John D Taylor MP MEP Official Unionist MP for Strangford 1983- Member of Northern Ireland Assembly. Former Stormont Minister for Home Affairs. Mr Taylor survived an IRA murder bid in 1972 in which he was severely injured.

Mr Thomas J McBriar Mayor of Ards Borough Council. Alliance Party. Deputy Mayor Ards Borough 1981-83, Member 1978- Area Chairman of the Round Table 1982-83. Formerly member of the Young Farmers Association. Age 40, married with young family.

Mr Oliver W Johnston Deputy Mayor of Ards Borough Council. Democratic Unionist Party (but formerly Officier Unionist). Has business interests, including concrete products firm. Age 60, married 1 son, 1 daughter.

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Mr Cecil Hull President of the Newtownards Chamber of Trade. Has held this office for less than 1 year. Owns two jewellers shops (one in High Street and in the Ards shopping centre).

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SERIAL 3 NEWTOWNARDS POLICE STATION

Background This station is Headquarters G Division (covering the Eastern portion of County Down, including Newtownards, Downpatrick and Newcastle) and sub divisional headquarters for Newtownards. Building fully completed in 1981 and serves a population of 118,700.

The total strength of the force based at Newtownards is 535 men and women: of these 350 are full time and the remainder part time.

Programme will include a visit to the Operations Room followed by coffee in the station canteen with serving officers, their wives and 3 widows whose husbands were killed on duty this year.

Personalities

Assistant Chief Constable David Cushley

Regional Assistant Chief Constable David Cushley has operational responsibility for all NI except Belfast. He will be supervising local Police operations in Newtownards. Has been in the RUC since June 1955. Assistant Chief Constable since May 1983.

made
prosecutor

Chief Superintendent Michael Forde, Divisional Commander, G Division, is based at Divisional Headquarters, Newtownards. Joined RUC in 1944. Promoted to Chief Superintendent in May 1974. Was Divisional Commander at Springfield Road, Belfast, during a period of much unrest and terrorist activity.

Superintendent Austin Anderson, Deputy Divisional Commander has been at Newtownards for past 2 years. Previously served in Newry as Border Superintendent.

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SERIAL 4 DRUMADD BARRACKS (ARMAGH CITY)

Background

Armagh. Cathedral city (RC and Prot). One of the cultural centres of Northern Ireland. Centre of religion and learning. Situated on one of old routes between Belfast and Dublin.

Drumadd Barracks. Modern barracks. Currently occupied by:

- a. Battalion HQ, and one company 1 Grenadier Guards;
- b. One company 1st Devon and Dorsets. One company of 1st Queen's Own Highlanders under operational control of 1st Grenadiers;
- c. Battalion HQ and three companies of 2 UDR;
- d. RUC Divisonal Mobile Support Unit (DMSU), a quick reaction RUC unit.

PROGRAMME

Brief meeting with military patrol immediately after landing.

Buffet lunch for Officers, WOs and SNCOs of 1 Grenadier Guards, 1 Devon and Dorset, 1 Queen's Own Highlanders, 2 UDR. Guests will include RUC Div Commander, Mr Nicholson MP, and Chairman, Armagh District Council.

Short tour of barracks to meet other ranks and DMSU.

PERSONALITIES

1. Comd 39 Inf Bde. Brig H M (Mike) Rose OBE QGM. Assumed comd 39 Inf Bde this month. Last job was Col GS in ASD, MOD.

2. CO 1 GREN GDS. Lt Col Alexander Beroys, who assumed command Sept. 82. Been moved to NI from Hounslow October 1983 for a "roulement" tour which ends in February 1984.

3. CO 2 UDR. Lt Col M (Mike) J Nicholson MBE RA. Assumed command May 1982.

~~TOP SECRET~~ 3 -

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4. Mr James Nicholson MP. Official Unionist. MP for Newry and Armagh 1983. Assembly Member for Armagh. Council Member since 1975. A quiet man, who just defeated Mr Mallon (SDLP) when the Catholic vote split SDLP 17,000: 10,000 (Sinn Fein), and the Unionists fielded only 1 candidate. Farmer.

5. Mr Douglas Hutchinson. Chairman of Armagh District Council. Democratic Unionist Party. Became Chairman following the murder by terrorists of Mr Charles Armstrong in November. Councillor since 1953. Former Assembly and Convention member. Strong line on security. (Was expelled from Orange and Black Orders in mid 60's for opposing their leader's "appeasement", and later received short sentences for anti-civil rights disturbances). Owns large fruit farm. Met PM in December 1982 when Deputy Chairman.

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SERIAL 5 AUGHNACLOY ARMY BASE (COUNTY TYRONE)

Background

1. Aughnacloy. Border village in an agricultural community. Has always been close to a principal border crossing point and has therefore always been a focus of security force attention. Army base in village since early days of campaign. RUC station is located elsewhere in village.

2. Army Base. Currently occupied by:

a. Company of 1 CHESHIRE detached from barracks at Ballykelly.

b. Part-time company of 8 UDR.

3. Vehicle Check Point (PVCP). This check point operates between the village and the border to cover an approved road crossing point. Permanently manned by Army and RUC. Border at its closest is 200m away across fields.

4. Programme.

a. Tour of base to meet officers and other ranks.

b. Brief visit by principal visitors to PVCP to meet soldiers and policeman on duty.

PERSONALITIES

1. Comd. 8 Inf Bde. Brig C (Colin) Mattingley OBE. Brigade Commander since Nov. 82; commanded 1 KOSB 78-81.

2. CO 8 UDR. Lt Col R (Robin) A Draper. Assumed command in September 1983.

3. Mr Ken Maginnis MP. MP for Fermanagh/South Tyrone 1983. Official Unionist Member of the NI Assembly and until his party's walkout, Chairman of its Security Committee and Deputy Chairman of its Finance and Personnel Committee. Member of the Dungannon District Council. Formerly principal of a primary school and UDR Major. Age 45.

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4. Mr W Ralph Brown. Chairman Dungannon District Council. Official Unionist. Sixth term as Council Chairman; Council member since 1973. Owner of Dungannon Electrical Store. Late 40's.

5. Supt David Hall. Deputy Div Commander. Based at Cookstown, has responsibility for Aughnacloy. Previously served in Bessbrook, Newry and Dungannon. .

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17

NORTHERN IRELAND: CURRENT POSITION

1. Politics in Northern Ireland are currently unsettled, ostensibly deadlocked. (The constitutional parties see little immediate room for manoeuvre and are under no pressures from their supporters to take risks). There are some signs of serious thinking in most of the parties, but no sign of movement at present. The murder of Edgar Graham makes it difficult for the UUP to resile from their withdrawal from the Assembly even if their pro-integrationist leadership favoured renewed participation. Mr Paisley's DUP have had little reward for their relatively positive approach in the Assembly and may contemplate reverting to a more populist and harder line. Alliance have as usual been moderate and constructive but the electoral breakthrough they seek seems as elusive as ever. On the nationalist side the SDLP's grip on community politics (particularly in Belfast) has been loosened by Sinn Fein. The party has staked its future on the New Ireland Forum (as to a lesser extent has Dr FitzGerald's government) and the European election in June 1984 will be a severe test of its capacity to resist the Sinn Fein challenge.

2. There is no possibility of the SDLP taking their Assembly seats before the Forum reports, and without their participation and that of the UUP the Assembly is unable to submit proposals for devolution. While Mr Kilfedder occupies a potentially crucial role as Speaker (technically presiding officer) of the Assembly, he can do little at the moment to enhance the prospects for political development (and he perhaps also lacks the weight to act with full effectiveness as an honest broker between the parties). Mr Molyneaux hopes to develop proposals for administrative devolution, but whilst he might be able to devise arrangements acceptable to the DUP and perhaps Alliance, there is little prospect of the UUP securing SDLP support.

3. There have been a number of very serious security incidents recently. In addition to the murder of Mr Graham, there have been a number of attacks against the security forces. But the

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overall level of violence has continued to decline since the mid-1970s. For instance, as of 20 December this year there had been 74 deaths attributable to terrorist activity compared with 97 in the whole of 1982 and 101 in 1981. Similarly, the number of injuries due to terrorism has continued to decline. On the other hand, the number of people charged with serious crimes continues to increase: 63 people have been charged with murder so far this year and 59 with attempted murder.

4. The Chief Constable and the GOC have made a number of fresh dispositions following recent incidents both to protect individuals and to provide some reassurance in the border areas. The Secretary of State has given public assurance of his support for the security forces and his readiness to consider any requests for additional resources. At the same time has confirmed his commitment to the existing broad policy of police primacy, with the army in support, and of actions within the normal conventions of the law, and has stated his continuing belief that this is the most effective long term means of securing the kind of community support which is essential to the long term defeat of terrorism. The RUC remains committed to effective cooperation with the Garda and there is no reason to believe that at operational level collaboration is unsatisfactory. But relations between the two Chief Officers remain uneasy because of the McGovern affair. Mr Prior hopes to discuss these matters with the Republic's Justice Minister next month.

5. Political instability and violence have discouraged potential investors and currently, through the Industrial Development Board and the Local Enterprise Development Unit, every effort is being made to promote local jobs and attract new inward investment. Fresh investment incentives were announced in March 1983. In November this year the number of unemployed was 119,748 or 21.5% of the workforce. The Government has allocated a proportionately higher share of resources to Northern Ireland and a comprehensive youth training programme was introduced a year ahead of the GB scheme.

~~TOP SECRET~~

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