

COVERING CONFIDENTIAL

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

CC/R
CC/BUP



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

WHITEHALL

LONDON SW1A 2AZ

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON

18 April 1986

COP 21/4.

Dear Charles

Thank you for your letter of 10 April covering Sir Eldon Griffiths' letter urging the Prime Minister to see a delegation from the Police Federation for Northern Ireland. I attach a draft reply in the sense suggested by the Prime Minister.

I should mention that since the Prime Minister wrote to Mr Wright NIO Ministers have had 2 meetings with the Federation - Mr Scott met a Federation delegation on 11 April, and the Secretary of State and Mr Scott met a further delegation on 15 April. These meetings were well received by the Federation and will have helped to reassure them about the Government's concern for the plight of their members, and buttressed the position of the elected officials within the Federation, who are under considerable pressure from hard liners. While the meetings were ostensibly about the welfare of police officers and their families in the wake of the continuing campaign of intimidation, the Federation's main preoccupations were the effects of the impact of the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the Chief Constable's policy on parades. The attached copy minutes will give you some idea of the flavour.

We think there might also be some merit in Sir Eldon's suggestion that the Prime Minister might dedicate a plaque, or meet some police widows at Garnerville, the Federation's HQ, during her next visit, but we would need to ensure that the Chief Constable was associated with this and was fully on side. This is perhaps best left to another day and need not be covered in the draft reply.

I understand that the Prime Minister has now arranged to meet Sir Eldon on Tuesday next; separate briefing will be provided for this.

Yours sincerely
J A Daniell

J A DANIELL

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COVERING CONFIDENTIAL

MEETING BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE POLICE FEDERATION
HELD ON 15 APRIL.

Present:	Secretary of State	Mr Wright
	Mr Scott	Mr Elder
	Mr Radcliffe	Mr Milliken
	Mr McVeigh	Mr Beattie
	Mr Daniell	

1. Mr Wright said that the Federation was grateful for the speed with which the Secretary of State had issued an invitation to a meeting. The RUC were being alienated from the majority community, which put particular pressure on the wives and families of police officers. Families, left at home while policemen were at work, were the RUC's weak point; certain politicians saw the RUC as the Achilles heel of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. While the Federation welcomed the efforts being made to look after officers who had had to leave their homes, it had to act as a safety valve for the Force. Indeed, Mr Wright's public statement last week had helped defuse a crisis of confidence in the RUC. The Federation would resist pressures to take a stand against the Agreement; its role was not political. While the police would stand firm, they could reasonably look to others to make progress in the political field and thus help alleviate the pressures in the Force.
2. The Secretary of State welcomed the frank way in which these points had been put and recognised the pressures which the RUC were under. The Government would not make concessions on the Agreement which could be construed as a victory for loyalist terrorism; rather the aim would be to get talks going and encourage dialogue, rather than confrontation. Violence and intimidation against police families was a cause for legitimate concern on the part of the Federation. There were signs that

the level of such behaviour was reducing in the face of public condemnation and that much of it was now born of hooliganism as opposed to orchestrated political violence. Mr Milliken confirmed that for the present disturbances in his operational area, the Shankill, were not orchestrated but this was because the paramilitaries were holding back for the moment. There were a large number of paramilitaries armed and looking for an excuse to use their guns. These people were going through extensive training and would be supported by the local community if they shot policemen. In the country areas there was a real fear of civil war; this could be stopped but time was running out. Despite all of this, morale was good, especially "at the coal face" in those areas where the police had a real job to do in countering the threat.

3. Mr Wright said that statements made by Seamus Mallon could be very damaging, in that they fostered the impression of political influence on the RUC. Also it was very hurtful to hear suggestions that the Force needed to get through the present difficulties in order to prove its impartiality. He hoped that such ideas were not behind the present policy on marches. The Secretary of State gave an assurance that Ministers did not issue directives to the RUC on operational matters. He had complete confidence in the Chief Constable's operational role and the RUC could expect the Secretary of State's full support, not his interference.

4. Mr Milliken asked how the Secretary of State would define his role in relation to the RUC. He believed that Ministers could advise and give general directions and from what he had read it appeared entirely wrong to suggest that the Chief Constable had complete operational independence. Mr Scott said that Ministers provided administrative support, and the policy framework within which the security forces acted; but the Chief Constable was responsible only to the law for his operational judgements. The Secretary of State said that while inevitably such matters as the level of available resources had implications

for operational decisions, within that framework the Chief Constable was his own man in operational terms.

5. Mr Elder reiterated the concern that the RUC was being drawn into politics. While there were entrenched attitudes in the community, his members also saw such entrenchment at the political level. There should be no climb down on the part of the Government or the Unionists in order to allow for talks to take place; but perhaps it might prove possible for the Conference not to meet for a number of weeks in order to facilitate talks. It needed to be recognised that loyalist paramilitaries were opening up on a number of fronts - not just attacks on policemen, but also sectarian attacks, attacks on policemen's families, intimidation of the business community, etc. The log jam had to be broken soon.

6. Mr Milliken said that in 1970 there had been big changes in the RUC with Sir Arthur Young seeking to transform it into a modern, non-aggressive, unarmed and civilian force. Recruits wanted to join a civilian force. Yet the RUC, with its armed deployment, especially in border areas, was becoming a paramilitary organisation. It was not right that youngsters should be trained as policemen, given weapon training and then sent to the border areas as commandos. When there was a terrorist threat the Army should be used to the full. Also, Sir Arthur Young ordered that all references to a man's religion be removed from his records; yet this anti-discriminatory principle had been compromised by the Agreement which talked of improving recruitment from the minority community. How could this be done when ostensibly there was no means of monitoring religion^{us} affiliation within the RUC. The Secretary of State replied that the RUC had evolved to meet the ever-changing circumstances of the Province. Mr Scott noted that in the early seventies the RUC had been essentially a "civilian" body while the Army carried out security duties. This approach was modified in 1976 by a policy of police primacy in which the RUC took the

lead in dealing with terrorist crime; this was an important step forward towards normality. It would be a retrograde step, leading to claims of victory on the part of the PIRA, if the Army were to re-assume responsibility for security matters. But the RUC had to be equipped to meet the threat.

7. Mr Wright expressed concern about reaction to the death of Kevin White. The Government should play a calming role in these circumstances. He went on to say that the Federation had had a useful meeting with the Chief Constable to discuss marches and had urged him to consult the staff association before recommending any bans. He had accepted this point which was an important step forward; it would not result in the staff association negotiating with the Chief Constable on operational issues.
8. Summing up the Secretary of State said he appreciated the professional way in which the RUC had continued to carry out their duties in the face of all the current difficulties. Government would continue to give the Force the backing that it required. The RUC's role was critical in that if violence succeeded it would be catastrophic; loyalist terrorism needed to be defeated before it could constitute a threat to the union. The RUC could not be expected to take all of the strain and the Government would play its part in seeking to get talks under way.
9. Mr Wright said that if the Prime Minister felt able to accept the Federation's request for a meeting, that would contribute significantly towards easing the pressure. The Secretary of State replied that he had told the Prime Minister of his meeting with the Federation and she took the view that his meeting should proceed in the first instance; but that did not rule out a meeting between the Federation and the Prime Minister at a later stage.

MR POWELL

We have received this further
letter from Sir Eldon Griffiths
which relates to his meeting with
the Prime Minister to take place
next Tuesday.

-154.86.

SHANA HOLE
18.4.86



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Personal &
Confidential
15 April 1986

Dear Michael,

RUC

Though overshadowed by Libya, the situation in N.I. continues to be fraught with difficulties within the RUC.

I attach a letter from a senior police figure which I hope you will read, and convey - at least in brief to the P. I.

For obvious reasons, I cannot allow him to be identified: but he is a far better figure than anyone in the P. I.

I begin to think that John Hermon is soon going to be more at risk to his own men, than he is to either the IRA or the ~~UDF~~ UDF.

Yours
—

Dear Eldon,

DATE: 7. 4. 1986.

Further to my recent letter to you, it is with regret that I must inform you that the situation has deteriorated, to the extent that the Boss Man is not now taking into his confidence, not only his deputy, but also his Assistants. I can give instances of this if necessary. The situation with the Supers is one of suspicion, & I need not tell you the position with regard to the other people whom you met recently is now one of mistrust and a feeling of "who the hell cares".

I know it must be frustrating to people like yourself, who may not understand the Ulsterman, simply because one must live here & be a part of society to come to terms with the past & the present. It is very difficult to make sense of the citizen who relies on the policeman to protect him & his property one minute, & then clobber him the next, but in view of recent happenings, let me assure you that had the R.U.C., been given leadership & guidance, this would not have happened. It is no good for the Boss to say we shall not allow this or that, & then give no details as to his reason. As you know the Ulsterman does not like to be kept in the dark about his future, but let me assure you that if he is given a full and

and outrage. so what I am saying why do the S.O.S., & his ministers not have a little more thought for the police, & before embarking on one of their "talking missions" or whatever, think and say "Is journey really necessary".

I personally think that what is needed, is not more talking, or police or troops, but let everyone examine himself and ask himself, what can I personally do to help in the present situation ?

As far as the police are concerned, we urgently need leadership, cooperation with ALL ranks, like Gen. Montgomery, explain to the men what is happening dont keep them in the dark, unless you have something to hide. As for the politicians, well all I can say is, like the Miners Strike, when politicians require to get their own way, throw in the police, alas this will not work in Ulster.

Although I did ~~not~~ get a reply to my last letter, nor were my telephone calls returned, not that I am unduly worried as I know only too well how desperately busy you are, I do beg you to please read what I have said very carefully, and as you know, I am neither in any political organisation, Orange Order or the Masons, & for that reason, I must consider myself an ordinary man in the street.

With Best Wishes



Our confidence

(Not conveyed to Barrett)

(He returns)

Michael

The situation in NI is

deteriorating — despite appearances to
the contrary, For your information

(and P.T.'s only):

(1) 80 policemen met last night in
Dungannon and demanded of the PF

(a) No more policing of bans on
majority parades.

(b) Vote of no confidence in blair
Barrett.

(c) Rebel Federation to be formed if
TCC did not act as at (a) & (b).

MO

② Attached is the list of points

Alan Wright is mandated by JCO

to convey to the Chief and Tom King.

— please write 1, 2, and 5.

③ Credibility of NIO is at rock bottom

with police, due to

(1) broken promise our "protection" of
their homes

(2) rejection of their advice on parades

(as conveyed by me to S & S many months ago)

(3) Support for Hermon's "gag".

I do BEG you to try to get briefings
to see them — at least me! — Ted