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Reference Code:	2016/52/55
Creation Dates:	15 October 1986
Extent and medium:	4 pages
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
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BÉAL FEIRSTE ANGLO-IRISH SECTION

SECRET

Time 11.00 Date 17/10

ANGLO-IRISH SECRETARIAT

518829 BELFAST

16 October 1986

Mr. Eamonn O Tuathail
Assistant Secretary
Anglo-Irish Division
Department of Foreign Affairs

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Tairseach, Tánaiste
Minister
Minister for Justice

Secretary
Mr Rally
Mr Ward
A-I Section
Amb. London

Dear Eamonn

Noel Ryan arranged for Chief Constable Hermon to have dinner with us last night. You will recall that the Chief Constable visited the Secretariat about a month ago and himself suggested that he would, having reflected on what we said to him during his month's holiday, like to have dinner with us here. We asked him if he would like to include anybody else on his side, and he was emphatic in saying no on this occasion.

On our side were, in addition to Noel Ryan and the undersigned, Daithi O'Ceallaigh and Sean Hughes.

The occasion was mainly social and continued over more than six hours.

Hermon said that he had been somewhat encouraged by what we had said to him on the last occasion about the commitment of the Government to security cooperation.

Incidentally, contrary to newspaper reports, he was not at the Police Conference in Nashville. He did attend an INTERPOL Conference in Belgrade.

The main points that emerged during the discussion (which we agreed would be "off the record") were the following:

Security cooperation

He said that Robert Andrew had shown him the document on this subject, handed to me by King. In general he approved of its contents. He looked forward to the Special Ministerial meeting on security cooperation.

On substance he said that, whatever about goodwill and dialogue, "results" were not being produced on our side of the border. He said that Deputy Commissioner McMahon had talked to him at a recent Conference about the high level of arms seizures. He said that this was not enough, in the absence of arrests. He

spoke in laudatory terms of Commissioner Wren and specifically of Mr. Wren's personal professional achievements.

He stressed that he would not try to impose his views on the Commissioner but that it was essential that, however the Commissioner approached the problems, results should be produced: this meant the arrest and conviction of active members of the IRA.

He said the RUC had long and bitter experience of the problem of terrorism and, starting from the position of complete ignorance in 1969/70 and making many mistakes, they had learned that deep cover surveillance was the only way to deal with terrorists of the skill, equipment and commitment of the Provos. Repeating that he could not, of course, tell Commissioner Wren how things should be done in our jurisdiction, he said that he honestly could see no alternative to this form of surveillance.

He said he was aware that four members of the Garda Siochana had been sent for training as instructors to a particular centre. We got the impression that he was encouraged by this.

He was extremely critical of the fact that the IRA Convention had apparently met in our jurisdiction without this being detected. He said the facts about the Convention had been agreed in the joint assessment report and that the fact that it had met in this way underlined in a most serious manner his concern about the surveillance question.

As for his own position, he said that it was fully set out in the joint reports and we should have no doubt about it: he added, rather hotly, that there was really no need for him to develop it further.

On structures and compatibility, he repeated that he would not and could not tell Commissioner Wren how to run his force. He kept insisting however that clarity in the "chain of command" was essential.

He said that the situation whereby his force were dealing with four separate divisions across the border was bad from his point of view. He wondered whether, if the four could not be coordinated under one coordinating command, would our side consider coordinating the four in two lots of two at least.

Bingham

He said he would not shed a tear for Bingham. He said that the UDA had "shopped" him to the Provisional IRA. He said the RUC were having successes in getting convictions of Protestant assassins for murders carried out ten years ago. He said these people were becoming active again.

Stalker

He repeated that he had been absent from Northern Ireland during

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- (iv) The description of each document: **copy of letter .**
- (v) Number of pages: **1**

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Name: *Elaine Kelly*

Grade: *AP*

Department/Office/Court: Taoiseach's Department

Date: *17/11/16*

would look into this and moreover say a word at today's security meeting to the GOC.

On RUC/UDR accompaniment, he said that he had given extremely detailed figures to King before the last meeting of the Conference which showed a considerable effort and improvement.

On the Code of Conduct, he spoke of the Police Federation as being "bigoted" and he was critical of their statement of 10 days ago. He said he had just returned from leave and would be pursuing this matter now.

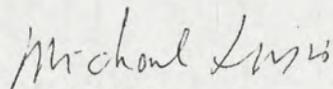
He claimed that the decision on the Garvaghy Road on 12 July had been vindicated completely and was part of a major process of teaching the unionists that they could not have things their own way. Under the surface they were learning this lesson.

RUC Morale

He said that 1986 had been by far the most difficult year in the history of the RUC and it had been his own most difficult year. He said the police had come through it extremely well and were doing "extraordinary things".

He said that the Government and community in the South were traumatised when members of our security forces were killed by terrorists. He could understand this. The same thing was happening far more frequently in the North and was as painful in every case. Nevertheless morale remained extraordinary: there were ten applicants for every RUC vacancy caused by murder in Newry.

Yours sincerely



M.J. Lillis
Joint Secretary