

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

PROSCRIPTION OF UVF

On Friday 3 October 1975 the Secretary of State held a meeting with the GOC, Chief Constable, and Senior Officials in Stormont Castle. The meeting considered the previous day's violence in which 12 people died. The UVF were thought to be largely responsible.

After considerable discussion the Secretary of State decided that the UVF should be proscribed. It was generally accepted that the direct security advantages would be slight, since convictions for membership were virtually impossible without a confession.

However, the Secretary of State was of the view that the continued legal existence of the UVF was sufficiently offensive to the general public to warrant proscription. Moreover, proscription also had a general inhibiting effect in areas such as fund collecting; holding meetings, and issuing publications.

After the GOC and Chief Constable had considered what their immediate action would be against UVF members, it was agreed that the UVF should be proscribed from midnight on Friday 3 October 1975. The Secretary of State then signed the Order.

The urgency procedure would be used, but the Order would be subject to affirmative resolution and a debate in the House would be necessary within 40 days.

It was also agreed that consideration of means of strengthening the law against proscribed organisations should proceed as a matter of urgency. The Secretary of State asked officials to press on with their consultations with the Attorney General's office, looking particularly at the possibility of making it illegal to associate with organisations known to be involved in terrorism, rather than to belong to a specific named organisation as at present.

It was recognised that the lawyers would be likely to oppose any such changes in the law, since they had always shown a preference for executive detention rather than new laws. However, meetings with the lawyers would start at once, with the first one already arranged for Monday 6 October. It was agreed that there might well prove to be a case for new brief emergency legislation to be passed through

MR. CONFIDENTIAL

the House rapidly at an early date.



D CHESTERTON
Private Secretary

7 October 1975

Distribution: Mr Williams
PS/Junior Ministers
Miss Cook
Mr Janes
Mr England
Mr Bourn
Mr Leahy
Mr Payne
Mr Trevelyan
Mr Middleton
Mr Gilliland
Mr Bampton
Mr F B Hall
Mr Webster

JMcG

CONFIDENTIAL