

21 APR 1983

~~Mr. M. Archer~~

for info.

~~Mr. M. High~~

Were we consulted about 2.C? The

~~Mr. M. Vught~~
Thanks

"Campaign" cc
to the
Structure

- Mr Bourn may relate fully
- Mr Buxton implications of the
- Mr Merifield Review. 6
- Mr Reeve
- Mr Radcliffe ✓
- Mr Brown

20 APR 1983

CA 22/4
Mr Radcliffe

Paul Coulson spoke briefly with me about this. He mentioned the line at 2c (without giving me the actual detail) & I advised him that the structure review was coming under fire from a number of sources. I was not aware of the background assessment quoted - I agree with it.

MR TEMPLETON

PRESS CONFERENCE - WEDNESDAY 20 APRIL

You asked for short lines to take and background information on three issues which you thought Mr Scott might have to deal with at his next Press briefing.

see 21/4

2. The points were:

- a. increased protection for TA members;
- b. allegations that security forces are unduly constrained in the use of force; and
- c. disposition of police forces.

3. I attach notes on these points for your consideration.

1. Mr S/A 27/4 old - to see

Mr. Vance ~ PA - file on press briefing
To see & →

[Handwritten signature]

Reg.

see 25/4

P COULSON
Law and Order Division

PI P1A on
P234/83.

19 April 1983

PV
27/4

PROTECTION MEASURES FOR TA MEMBERS

Line To Take

As the Secretary of State indicated to Mr McCusker on 14 April, following the murder of Mr Elliott, the threat to the lives of members of the TA is being reassessed and, if necessary, better measures for their protection will be introduced. You would not expect ^{me} to discuss either the threat assessment or possible protection measures.

Background

Mr Trevor Alexander Elliott was shot dead by an IRA gunman when walking from his grocer's shop in Main Street, Keady, to his car at 1755 pm on 13 April.

Mr Elliott was a Sergeant in the TA as well as being a leading spokesman for the DUP in that area of Armagh. There is no indication that Mr Elliott was chosen as a target by PIRA solely because of his connections with the TA. However, HQNI are conducting a rapid review of the threat to the lives of TA members and will take any necessary measures to improve their security. Clearly it would defeat the object of this exercise if they were to disclose either the results of their review or the nature of the measures being taken to counter the threat.

ALLEGATIONS THAT SECURITY FORCES ARE CONSTRAINED IN THE USE OF FORCE

Line to Take

It is not the Government but the law that stipulates that members of the security forces can use no more force than is reasonable in the circumstances to preserve the peace, uphold the law and effect arrests. Even when they are faced with armed terrorists they must decide what degree of force is reasonable to arrest those terrorists or to protect life. If they decide to open fire and someone is injured or killed they are not answerable to Ministers but to the Courts. This is not an unreasonable constraint because, as the Government has always made clear, if the security forces are to uphold the law they must also be answerable to it; nor, as we have seen, does it prevent them from using firearms when they have felt it was reasonable to do so.

Background

It has always been argued by those who wish to see a more robust line being taken against Republican terrorists, that the actions of the security forces are unduly constrained by political decisions. To some extent this is true. Successive Governments since 1976 have consciously decided to act against terrorists through the normal legal channels for the crimes they have committed, rather than employ extraordinary methods such as executive detention. Bringing these criminals to justice through the courts has not been easy; nevertheless the security forces have achieved considerable success and violence is continuing to decline. The terrorists have the capacity and will continue to carry out isolated crimes intended to provoke the population and the Government into retaliatory countermeasures which they can then use to justify another cycle of violence. The fact that the Government has refused to be provoked does not indicate weakness but rather confidence in the ultimate success of its policies.

DISPOSITION OF POLICE FORCES

Line To Take

I do not think that I can add to the Chief Constable's statement which made it absolutely clear that the policing effort in Northern Ireland is increasing rather than decreasing. It is, of course, for the Chief Constable to decide how to dispose his forces to meet the ever changing threat to peace and security.

Background

The increase in the permanent and reserve police forces announced last [] were intended to relieve the operational pressures which until then had to be met by overtime on the part of the full-time forces and high rates of attendance by the part-time reservists. This increase in force levels has decreased the need for both; whilst this has meant increased operational efficiency it has also led to some financial losses by those who were previously taking the strain. This has led to some resentment and political pressure which has been aimed ^{at} restoring the status quo. Presumably recent Press reports that police stations were to close were linked with this campaign.