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- cc PS/Secretary of State (B)
- PS/Mr Scott (B&L) - M
- PS/PUS (B&L) - M
- ~~PS/Mr Bloomfield~~ *KAB 1/2*
- Mr Brennan - M
- Mr Buxton
- Mr Merifield
- Mr Gilliland
- Mr Coulson
- Mr Lyon - M

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (L) - MUFAX

2 SEC/8

UDR

The Chief Constable telephoned me this morning in connection with the recent upsurge of criticism of the UDR and the Secretary of State's statement defending the Regiment. Sir John told me that he had felt it incumbent on the RUC to make what contribution it could towards reducing the temperature in this area. He thought that this could best take the form of an increase, for the time being, in the extent of joint RUC/UDR activity - in the sense of RUC participation in UDR patrols, vehicle checks etc. He believed that this would help in two ways. First, it would demonstrate solidarity with the UDR as an element of the security forces. At the same time, it should help to reduce the risk of further incidents of the type which have been attracting criticism of the UDR.

2. He was about to issue the necessary instructions to his Divisional Commanders. He had already discussed the idea with the Commander UDR and ensured that it had his support. He (Sir John) would, however, be having a word with the GOC as well - especially bearing in mind the Commander UDR does not exercise operational command of the Regiment.

3. I told the Chief Constable that I would see that his initiative was reported to the Secretary of State (as he was clearly hoping). I had little doubt that the Secretary of State would welcome it. We agreed that, whilst we hoped that the increased operational togetherness would not escape notice as a demonstration of solidarity, we should not take positive steps to draw attention to it. If it nevertheless prompted questions as to whether it denoted a change of direction in security policy, the answer should be that, on the contrary, we were doing exactly what it had been our policy to do for a long time past, whenever practicable.

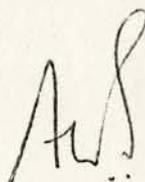
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4. I did not think it was the right moment to press the Chief Constable to say whether he envisaged the practice of increased RUC participation in UDR operations becoming a permanent feature. We may well want to encourage him in that direction later, if the short-term measures prove successful; though the response could be a demand for more police manpower or, at least, for less nagging about police overtime. More generally, it is not inconceivable that the RUC see the present beleaguered state of the UDR as an opportunity to achieve increased police influence over the Regiment's activities. That would not necessarily make the Chief Constable's response any the less useful, in either the short or the longer term.

5. That thought apart, I have not yet spoken to the GOC or CLF about the matter, but will do so as soon as I can.



A W STEPHENS

31 January 1985

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