

E. R.

cc: PS/SofS (B&L)
PS/Mr Scott (B&L)
PS/PUS (B&L)
Mr Stephens
Mr Elliott
Mr Innes
Mr McConnell

HEAD OF DIVISION
200 21 JAN 1987
POB-NIO BELFAST

Mr Shannon
Mr Blackwell

MR SCOTT'S MEETING WITH THE POLICE FEDERATION ON MONDAY 19 JANUARY
IN STORMONT CASTLE

| Those Present | | Police Federation |
|---------------|--------------|-------------------|
| | Mr Scott | Mr Wright |
| | Mr Shannon | Mr Elder |
| | Mr Blackwell | Mr Beatty |
| | Mr McCready | Mr Milligan |
| | Mr Hoey | Mr Gilmore |
| | | Mr Burnside |

Please see attached copy of the brief (Annex A) used by the Police Federation at yesterday's meeting. The paper adequately covers the points raised by the Federation with, as far as I can see, only a couple of minor omissions which I will now cover. As the meeting proved to be, in the main, a listening exercise for Mr Scott I do not propose to do a detailed note of our counter arguments/points. It is I feel sufficient to say that these have been well rehearsed and covered in past briefing papers for Mr Scott.

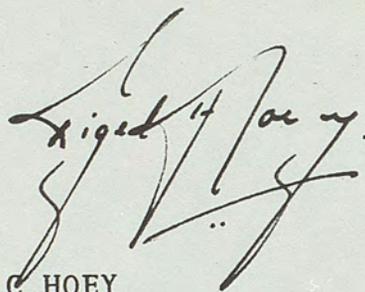
There are two points, which I know you noted for action at the meeting but which, for the record, I think I should mention here. They were:-

- (i) the Federation's specific request for additional helicopter flying hours, particularly in the South Armagh area, coupled with their enquiry as to the position of flights into Carrickmore, and
- (ii) the Federation's suggestion that the NIO should give urgent consideration to the setting up of an NIO 'kitty'

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in order to help reduce some of the severe financial hardship experienced by some of their members, who have been targetted and intimidated out of their homes etc, purely because of their occupation. At the moment the Force charity funds are being used to assist with such cases, and at present some £69,000 is said to be on loan from these funds. I attach at Annex B a list of Officers who it is alleged have suffered severe financial hardship because of the way claims, for incidental expenses etc, are being handled by PANI.



N S C HOEY
APS/Mr Scott

20th January 1987

BRIEF FOR MEETING WITH MINISTER

- 1 Although this meeting is with the Minister responsible for Law and Order we see this as a courteous step towards meeting the Secretary of State.

- 2 The concerns of PFNI revolve around the consequences of policing the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

The simple facts are:-

(i) The entire unionist population objects to this Agreement. The degree of objection from violent outbursts to sullenness may vary but they all object. As a result the police have found themselves in many areas isolated from people who would have been their supporters. The personal pressure on police officers and their families has therefore been intense and has been sustained. Talk about the Force being a professional organisation and that its officers are totally committed is correct but that it does not hide the need to achieve some kind of reconciliation between the police and the majority community. So far about 600 police officers have been intimidated in one way or another.

(ii) The minority community has suffered dreadfully since the Agreement because of intimidation. Figures from the Housing Executive show that over 1000 have been forced to seek new accommodation and undoubtedly many others have been threatened. We condemn the intimidation, being victims ourselves, but this is another consequence of strong feelings against the Agreement.

ii) Because so many of the population are against the Anglo- Irish Agreement and the Force has found itself in confrontation with the majority the Force believes that it is being used for political purposes. This feeling is re-inforced by the Anglo-Irish Conference proceedings which seem to suggest that there is little to talk about other than reforms within the Force. We therefore suggest again respectfully that the Chief Constable and the Garda Commissioner set up a mechanism for co-operating on border security which does not require attendance at the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Border liaison is essential and we strongly support it but the political overtones attached to police attendance at the Conference are damaging to the Force morale.

(iv) Border security has not improved since the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The Irish Security Forces have neither the resources nor expertise to secure their side of the border. ~~Indeed one is prompted to ask why they give greater priority to peace keeping in the Lebannon to peace keeping on the border.~~

(v) The pattern of violence by the IRA has changed over the years. We accept that the RUC has become more professional during the years of violence: that can also be said of the IRA. The number of incidents may have declined but their quality of operation has improved so that we have seen in recent years a significant growth in police deaths. The Force is bearing the brunt of the IRA violence and it seems to us that out of our 10,500 members we can expect to lose about 10-15 officers a year. This is of grave concern to us and from a political view the continued violence renders pointless a major purpose of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, an improvement in security.

) Support for the police is now denied to us only by the SDLP. Yet they in particular have gained most from the Agreement. It is galling that they will not give up this stance because it is quite apparent that they use this as a political card. Having said that we do not care for the messages of support which are qualified to the extent that they suggest that we are only impartial when we are confronting Protestants.

(vii) We are concerned that the maximum opportunity for mischief will be derived from the Repeal of the Flags and Emblems Act. In the present circumstances of Northern Ireland, it seems unwise to give people the opportunity to object to the flying of the Union flag on lawfully occupied premises whether private or public. Nor does it seem just that responsibility for creating the circumstances of a potential breach of the peace should be that of the displayer of the flag rather than of the person objecting to the display.

We do not accept that the current Act is in practice redundant. In any event, that does not invalidate the view that there may be serious law and order consequences to its repeal. As the Government has argued in its explanatory memorandum, there is an interpretation among the minority community that displays of the flag are used to assert dominance of one section of the community over the other, rather than respect. The converse of this, of course, is that creating circumstances whereby the minority community can call for the removal from display of the Union flag, otherwise a breach of the peace will ensue, is to surrender to threats from a section of the community which quite clearly does not respect the national flag of the United Kingdom.

3 CONCLUSION

The overall point is that the Government has got itself on a hook over the Anglo-Irish Agreement and because the Force is an arm of Government law and order we are on a hook as well in relation to the majority community. We do not intend to stay on that hook indefinitely and there may come a time when we will say that the policing consequences of the Agreement are no longer an acceptable burden for police officers and their families.

Police officers are paying a high personal price for the Anglo Irish Agreement. They are also, surprisingly, in view of expressed Government support, suffering a financial loss as a result of a very mean regulation bound attitude by the authorities. These examples which I am giving are typical. We get fine words of support about professionalism but when it comes to sitting down with officials to minimise our financial loss the fine words are forgotten.

As Chairman of the Federation I have received a clear direction from Central Committee to convey these views to you and to the Secretary of State and following that meeting to issue a public statement on our views.

AB 15th January 1987