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SECRETARY OF STATE'S PRESS CONFERENCE - 13 JANUARY 1976

S. of S:

..... the Parliament representing 53,000,000 people have to take decisions about Northern Ireland. It's a place to which I am ultimately responsible. A great deal was said yesterday on a wide variety of matters and I think the best way I can help you is to simply ask if there's any questions that anybody wants to ask.

(WEEKS)

Q.

Do you have any plans for after the four months? I mean suppose nothing happens and nothing eventful takes place?

A.

Well following the 1974 Act after the fall of the Executive and the Assembly there was new legislation at Westminster and under that I am responsible for Northern Ireland to the Westminster Parliament and that is not due for renewal in the House of Commons until July 24. So Direct Rule is there.

Q.

Mr Rees were you disappointed by the reaction of many of the Loyalist politicians yesterday who ruled right out of court any chance of participation on the level you asked for?

A.

Well, this wasn't said in the House of Commons.

No, it was said over here.

S. of S:

Well this is a point. There is a UUUC Party with 9 members I suppose it is no: at Westminster and that wasn't said there. But of course I have to take it seriously. I heard it on the radio in the car going home afterwards. Mr Molynou, who is leader of the UUUC, said that the democratic processes will be followed. Mr Paisley spoke and certainly said nothing that I read here outside. But I still have to take it seriously. It is odd that it wasn't said in the House of Commons which was the purpose of the debate yesterday. Of course, I repeat, everything that I read and hear I have to take seriously. All I hope is that, given the seriousness of the situation, that the politicians of Northern Ireland will show themselves capable of rising to the occasion.

Q.

Have you gone soft on power-sharing Mr Rees. You said yesterday you avoided the phrase power-sharing and used a phrase something like form of partnership in Government. Are you going to insist on power-sharing as we understand it?

A.

Well there is no doubt at all from what I said that the report is not acceptable. There is not the slightest doubt unless the two communities

here - because this is the thing that marks Northern Ireland out different from Scotland and from Wales - unless there is a means whereby the representatives of the two communities here can work together in Government it won't be accepted by the Westminster Parliament. That is for sure. Now the reason for the words is that I am putting it back to the Convention and the form of participation and so on I think is extremely important, but it's a matter that they should discuss at the Convention. I didn't want to be precise. That was the reason for the words. There is no doubt that emotion and mythology plays a part over here. I'm quite clear what I want. I am quite happy to use different words, but that's what it adds up to precisely.

Q. Does that mean that nothing less than Cabinet jobs will be acceptable by you?

A. Well what matters in the first instance is what is acceptable to the politicians of Northern Ireland. That's what they have got to come back to me with. What seems to be the situation in the discussions so far is that in a Cabinet or an Executive that this is the means that at least one party to the discussion wants. No system of power-sharing can be imposed, because that's what happened the last time round.

Q. Mr Rees what actual part of the Convention proposals did you find unacceptable?

A. Well if I could for a moment go the other way round. Yesterday I made it clear on the unicameral part of it I made clear that in the course of time law and order and so on - basically the sort of thing that was in the 1973 Act. The bit I found unacceptable and the Government found unacceptable and the House of Commons found unacceptable - the Conservative Opposition, the Liberal Opposition as well as the Government Party - was the fact that in order to get through the problems of Northern Ireland there has got to be a means in this community - in a divided community - which isn't divided as was made out by some people in the House last night - not in terms of Labour and Conservative, that in Wales Labour wins most of the seats for historical reasons and in the South East of England the Conservatives win more seats than the Labour Party. It's not that sort of division. It's a basic cultural, religious, historical divide. The main acceptability is not the form of government, which is relatively easy to do, it is this fact that we've got to find a means whereby people who are traditionally Republican with a small 'r', whose outlook on life is different politically and in every other way, that the only way through

here is for both sides of the community to accept Northern Ireland - that's why I said what I did about the Oath, the Oath accepting what they said - the Oath that they put in their Bill in the Report was basically the same as the one in the 1973 Act to Northern Ireland - that any members of Government would have to accept the Security Forces, support the Security Forces of Northern Ireland and so on. That is the aspect that matters. Working for Northern Ireland in a split community. That's the thing the other way round now that we couldn't accept as a Government.

Q. Which part of the proposals though do you feel that's not going forward?

A. Because it's majority Government.

Q. Did you get the impression from the speeches of the UUUC yesterday that the report is in fact only a smoke screen for the real intention, which is the old Paisley option of integration with Britain?

A. Well frankly I didn't. Mr Molyneau got up on behalf of the UUUC - he is the leader of the UUUC at Westminster - and talked in terms of the rest of the United Kingdom and the developments that are taking place there and I think there is little doubt that the UUUC at Westminster want to get the debate of yesterday and the arguments of yesterday involved in the discussions and arguments of today, tomorrow and the day after on devolution as a whole. That I think was Mr Molyneau's desire. I can only confess that I didn't deduce that from Dr Paisley's argument. But integration is not the policy of the UK Government. It seems not to be ^{the} policies of the other Parties in the way they spoke yesterday. I wonder if I can add one other point there? You will all have read the report on the Act. I certainly don't suppose I would have done if I had not been in this job - I've read it in some detail and looked over it with the aid of officials and so on. The point I made in the House yesterday is quite clear to me that all the political parties over here are talking about government in Northern Ireland outside the main stream of the devolution discussion in the rest of the United Kingdom and that is the rub for historical reasons. Much to my surprise incidentally I find there was a Speaker's conference on devolution in 1919 to 1921 in the UK, which arose out of all the Liberal arguments about that stemming out of the Newcastle programme of 1893 etc. My strong view is that when people have spoken to me about the Report it has not been in the context of devolution that has gone on in GB in the last 10 years - which is decentralisation. It is deeper than that. I understand why. One of the basic reasons is that for 50 years here has been a Government here in Northern Ireland and there's not the slightest doubt from what Convention members of all parties have told me -

and told me very forcibly in the days when we were discussing what status they could be given - that as much as they want extra representation at Westminster for tallysmanic reasons, they told me very firmly that their members over here are the ones that they turn to for things and that they didn't turn to the Westminster members. That's part of the difference that is around. It's something in all parties.

Q. Do you think that the achievement of any political partnership will make the slightest difference to a terrorist campaign?

A. Well I think the difference would be in this respect. If I have got right what was taking place in the discussions between the parties, that if you got the main representatives of the minority groups supporting the Security Forces - not just in the sense, and it is very meaningful that Gerry Fitt and John Hume have always said - as Gerry Fitt said again yesterday - if anybody has any information about terrorists of any sort it should be given to the Security Forces. The point is that the difference that will be made is that there would be major support for the Security Forces and it would make the fight against terrorist organisations that much easier. Now to answer your question more precisely - do I think that if there were agreement the terrorists on either side would necessarily then say 'well that's it', it's all over and done with, no I don't. Indeed there was some times last year - I'm sure of one, I'm not so sure of the other - that I remember when I first came here there was a major - the campaign of bombing was at its height - which we didn't have last year - and it went on throughout the year, that there were times when it was related to what was going on ~~in~~ the Executive and Assembly up the hill. No doubt if there were agreement I think you might find an upsurge in activity by the Provisional IRA. Because they do not want agreement of this kind.

Q. Secretary I have just arrived back in the company of some Loyalist types, who probably didn't send you a Christmas card, and they seem to have only a limited area of confusion which is related to the word 'permancy' which you used yesterday. Whether you meant permancy in the sense of lasting partnership or how this relates to other words that you use like that you wanted to see/pure politics emanate in the long term.

A. Yes. The point is this that I used the word permancy yesterday in this sense - I used it in this way - I was saying that I understand that what the majority ^{want} ~~wanted~~ - because that is what it added up to the UUUC report - was a permanent government in Northern Ireland. I accept that. What we want is a permanent government in Northern Ireland. Now whether power-sharing, participation is a necessary feature for all time is another matter and I

don't think I am saying anything new there, because so many people have talked to me about that at some time or other, when one is over the hump, that normal politics will break out and people won't vote for their tribal party. So I was talking about permanent government in the sense of structures. Now I also put in and indeed it's the third point - may I talk a bit longer on this, if you wouldn't mind, because there is a lot in it. Under the legislation - I'll go aside for a moment and then come back to the point. Under the legislation which set up the convention I have the power to put matters before the Convention. The three matters that I intend to put before the Convention in a letter to the Lord Chief Justice - which will be published shortly as a White Paper - is first of all, you will remember yesterday, whether there can be agreement on partnership. 2. Whether the Committee system, as part of that, not by itself, is useful. The third one was the evolution argument and this is where, perhaps, the question comes in. Now what I meant by that is this. If we are to have new legislation for Northern Ireland. Supposing there were agreement, drawing up an Act and getting it right takes some time - I wasn't Secretary of State at the time but I'm absolutely sure that the length of time it had taken to draw up the legislation when Willie Whitelaw set up the Assembly and that, took some time. It must have gone on for a long time before any agreement was reached over here at that time, that Bill was being drawn up. It must have been. It takes time. Now if there is to be legislation which is new and if it gets caught up, as it would, in legislation for Scotland and Wales - there is the wide debate this week, there will be further discussions and I think I am right in saying that what we have said in the Government is, legislation in the next session for Scotland and Wales. Scotland will obviously be more complicated than Wales. If the legislation is in the session of 76/7, then I mustn't hazard any guess then, it's a matter for somebody else. If the legislation goes through in the course of the next session of Parliament which starts in November, it's going to take a long time to get through the House. It must do. Now if we are talking about that sort of legislation we are putting a Government for Northern Ireland on a long finger - not by desire, but by the practicalities of it. And so the third point that I put in was this, is there something in the argument that we have an Act, which is the 1973 Act, which is the Assembly, which is the Executive and which is also transferred powers all the bit out and the role of the Secretary of State and the rest of it, is that something which could be used soon and then any changes that have to be made would be made over a course of time, because that could be used as a basis for it. I am very sure from what I remember of the discussions before my time that the role of the Secretary of State in Section 2 of the 1973 Act informing the Government - which was gubernatorial - that that was an objection to it. I am only saying that it may be that if you want to evolve rather than wait for the permanent legislation - I am not talking

about permanent power-sharing, I'm talking about permanent legislation - the third point there is an evolutionary ^{way} through. Have I explained that reasonably.

A. Yes.

Q. Are the lastest security measures merely token window dressing or do you expect some achievements from them?

A. Let me tell you this. We are talking obviously always about security in the Province as a whole. We are talking in particular about Armagh and South Armagh in particular of a certain deployment of the military, although there are extra police down there. We are talking in the North and South of the county from evidence that the Chief Constable has given me about a small group of people. From forensic evidence, and I'm not talking about individuals, there is not the slightest doubt that the weapons that killed the 10, that the weapons that have killed the soldiers - the other day 4 killed - that the weapons that killed the Protestants in the Orange Hall, and I would rather not mention the name because of familics, and other murders that have taken place down there in recent months, have been carried out by the same group, in exactly the same way. There's not the slightest doubt that the same weapons were used in terms of murders of Catholics in the North of the county. There is no doubt that we are talking about a small group of people. And the advice given me absolutely firmly by those whose job it is to advise me on the security side is that it is right to have an extra Battalion here to relieve in many senses the extra duties that have been carried out in that area in recent months. To draw in large numbers of soldiers and deploy large, large numbers of policemen - the police and Army are different in a numerical sense - for dealing with small numbers of people is wrong. That's not to say we don't need more, that's not to say we don't need surveillance, that we don't need to watch and so on. But they are in both instances looking for small groups of people. I feel very strongly on this that some people are getting it wrong and believing that this is solvable by larger numbers of soldiers as if it were a military campaign crossing the Sangro river or something of that kind. And it's not.

Q. Would you comment on Mr Heath's statement last night.

A. I believe Mr Heath was wrong.

Q. Which group is it that you think you are dealing with?

A. I'd rather not say that.

Q. Is it a renegade IRA group? Is it a regular unit of

A. I think - I thought this question might come up and I asked my Security Advisers to confirm what I knew this morning. I think I'd rather not because people I hope will be brought to Court and it is wrong to say ought else than I know it's a small group.

Q. Are you saying two different groups or -

A. I propose two different.

Q. There^{are} distinct.

A. Oh different.

Q. What size?

A. You see I said 20 in the House last night. Mr Heath came back and said he'd always thought it was between 20 and 30. I understand that a Colonel down there on the television last night talked in terms of 10 or 12.

Q. Is this a group or both groups?

A. Well this is the point of confusion, I understand that. I am talking about a group of twentish down in South Armagh who did the 10 Protestants and who have done other things as well and they operate backwards and forwards across the Border. There is a similar smaller group to which I would rather not even attempt to put a number - it is rather a different ball game - of a Protestant paramilitary group operating in the northern part of the county.

Q. Why is it a different ball game?

A. It is a different ball game because ... perhaps I can give it by analogy. Remember that and again it would be better to leave the name of the man out it's always a b i thing to name people, I was concerned about the murder of somebody in the earlier part of this year and the Chief Constable reported to me that they were on to it. They knew what they were doing. They were getting forensic evidence and getting evidence from people here and putting it all together and I think it was 6 months later that a man was charged with that murder. Now police investigations, similar all over the world, piecing together bits of information and that kind. I'm saying that it is very much a police matter in the north of the county. When you come to the southern

part of course it is a police matter in terms of evidence and that, but it's compounded by the fact that the 3 British soldiers, for example, at Forkhill were shot from just across the Border and there is a difficulty because of going backwards and forwards across the Border which makes it difficult and it is much more an Army operation down there than a police operation, although of course there are extra police down there. That's all I meant. Policing I've learnt since I have done this job is slow and patient and in the south of the county it might well be slow and patient but by the nature of the terrain and that down there it's rather different from evidence that policemen know, that they know of people and they piece it together. It is different in organisation.

Q. How do you see the SAS fitting in to this fabric which you have just explained?

A. Well surveillance and watching and keeping tabs on people crossing the Border is important and is important all the way along the line and it is because of their skill in that, that we require them.

Q. Any comment on the press report this morning that there are only 20 SAS down in South Armagh.

A. Yes. Well there's two things on that. The first is that the Secretary of State for Defence is answering questions on this in the House - he is first for questions today. As far as I am concerned I don't talk about numbers and neither will he. I shan't comment about it. I think it would be very wrong to do so in terms of numbers and when they arrived and what they are doing. The whole point of surveillance is not to be known.

Q. Yes but if, I mean, it were a number as small as that, Mr Rees, the whole operation would be ridiculous.

A. If it were.

Q. You have said that if there were only 20

A. It all depends. All I am saying is that the speculation is incorrect.

Q. It's incorrect.

Q. Are you at one with Mr Wilson on his decision to send in the SAS?

A. Yes.

Since it is a problem that will not yield to a large number of troops and large numbers of police and since these people can move backwards and forwards across the Border and indeed in the north of the county can move in relatively safe areas, would the Government be totally and invariably opposed to the use of specialist Army units licensed to kill?

Yes completely. No soldiers licensed to kill. Every soldier is licensed to shoot back at someone that shoots against him under the yellow card procedure. Perhaps I could say that we are not in a Vietnam ball game.

Yes, but I was thinking that since you haven't got internment to bring those in society who are a threat speculation that the shortest and cleanest way would be for a specialist unit to go after

No. I quiteanybody who did that to the Reavy's last week and the 10 Protestants, psycopathic is too god a word.

I wonder if you could spell out the exact problems there are in catching these groups.

First of all it is the mere size that makes it difficult. The police have done rather well against Protestant assassinations in recent months - I am trying to chose my words carefully. One part of the unit has been broken up and so on. They've done rather well. The problems of a small unit that do what they do in South Armagh is the fact that they are probably northerners, but the fact that they can move backwards and forwards across the Border makes life extremely difficult. The co-operation I get from the South, police to police, is absolutely first rate.

But the Protestants presumably don't hide across the Border.

No. But I am saying that in terms of the northern part of the county and in other parts of Northern Ireland in terms of Protestant assassinations and you will know that there has been more Catholics assassinated than Protestants, I think that's general knowledge

Have you got figures?

Well it's very difficult to get figures because sometimes it's not sectarian killing it is inter-sectarian killing and so on. But there is no doubt that there have been more Catholics killed. In the last year the success of the RUC against Protestant assassination squads has improved

very greatly. It's part of the general story of more and more people going through the courts. They have done very well indeed and praise for the police for the normal policing and tying bits of evidence together it is really very greatly improved.

Q. Mr Rees I know you don't want to get involved in talking about particular groups, but it seems to me that a very key issue is the gang that killed the Protestants has been responsible for what you call other murders are operating from across the Border, whether or not this is part of the Irish Republican Army controlled from Dublin in the South or is a renegade group. Can you answer that please?

A. One can speculate about it, but speculation is something that I am usually dead against, because speculation becomes rumour and I wouldn't want to do that. But I won't be unhelpful. There is no doubt that the group operating down there has never taken much notice of ceasefires. Whether they are out of control is a different matter. Completely different matter. There is no doubt in my mind that they are Provisional IRA.

Q. Still within the organisation? Not possibly ex-IRA men?

A. Well it is easy to be an ex. But as far as we are concerned they are PIRA. The question I was speculating on was whether they are out of control or not. I think you should take that any organisation that has a command structure down the line which is complete: That they have taken no notice of ceasefires, whether by design or otherwise is the case.

Q. Well you are saying you are in doubt.

A. in effect that
I am saying/I don't know.

Q. Mr Rees the one thing that the politicians locally did agree on last night was that there should be either an Election or a Referendum in the near future to show the public opinion. What's your attitude to either or both of those things. How could they be brought into effect?

A. Well I have powers to have a Referendum under the Act. It's there.

Q. Are you in favour of it?

A. I think a Referendum has got to be used carefully. It's not just something that one uses for the hell of it and I'M not just saying that one wants the right result. I have powers to do that and I think this will be brought to

the notice of the Convention that I have powers to do that and I will be interested to know what they say. What is for sure, I was surprised in the House last night, perhaps it is always a surprise when you have spent weeks in getting something ready and after all one has spent weeks getting it ready and it is written on one's mind; that at some late hour something about the evolution thing meant that there wouldn't be elections and that the Convention would somehow be transmogrified into a Government. Certainly that is not the case. Before there could be a Government here again there would have to be an election. The Convention is finished when it's done it's job here. One way or the other, success or failure, the Convention is over.

Q. Mr Rees earlier you were saying that the 1973 Constitution Act gave a possible base for evolution, yet last week that previous solutions ----- do you have any regrets that what was achieved in 1973/74 slipped away.

A. I very much regret it. Very much regretted it. I supported it to the nth degree. What I found when I came here was that on the Loyalist side the support for it was not great. No Government operates without support.

Q. Do you think the support for it this year might be greater, more permanent, more assured?

A. I think there's a possibility of that, yes, I do. But only if it is supported, only if it arises out of agreement. Otherwise it won't.

Q. Would you agree with Brian Faulkner that Ian Paisley is standing way out, that he doesn't really want a government here?

A. He seems to spend his time saying what I want I don't think it is my job to say what he wants.

Interruption

There is going to be no integration.

Q. Is it quite deliberate to suggest more Westminster MPs after agreement?

A. Yes. Because if I can take that point up, it's not just an arithmetical proportional discussion that we are in. My reading of Irish history is that in the 20's and 30's people were elected here who never came to Westminster abstentionism and all the rest of it, which people can look at in whatever way they like. There is no point in having at Westminster extra representation for a Province a large part of the Province who don't support

the Government in the Province. What we said is that if there is a generally accepted government here then of course we are prepared to look at it. That is as far as I am prepared to go. There will be no extra representation here out of the blue. That is for sure. Or out of the green or out of the orange.

Q. Secretary of State I recall at your news conference following the fall of the Executive in May 1974 you talked then about your reading of an upsurge of a feeling of Ulster nationalism. In view of the reaction to yesterday's events and despite the sabre rattling which went on as to what might happen but hasn't and doesn't look like it's going to either, do you feel that that feeling of Ulster nationalism has receded somewhat?

A. Well I wouldn't stick by those words or that phrase. That there is something common to both sides here which is Ulsterism, Northern Irelandism, call it what you will which is markedly different from Scots nationalism and Welsh nationalism, there some other tang to it I still believe. The word may be too emotive. Indeed, what I was saying earlier is that common to all groups here is not an argument about devolution but an argument about Ulster wanting to govern itself within the United Kingdom. Perhaps I could say to you and please take it as it is given, it's not some view put because it's some clever ploy, I assure you, I hope we are treating each other on these terms. If you look at the occasion when a government for Northern Ireland was set up in the context of a government in the South and all that was implied in that, Councils of Ireland that never came off, obviously there was a purely Irish aspect about it in terms of the Civil War and so on, but I think it is worth looking at it in another sense and I am simply giving this as background, to answer your question, no more, is that at that time there was still something called dominion status in the Constitutional textbooks. Now no longer there. It began to change in 1931 in the Statute of Westminster, which in typically British terms says whatever has been not what will be. It's always pragmatic if you like. That was something to do with the development of Canada and Australia in particular, Canada more than the other which had been going a long time, which was next door to the United States and so on. My view is that forgetting the Irishism of it and what was trying to be done in the context of the Civil War, that the government that was set up here was in the context of Dominion status as it was then, not as it is now. And if you look at the Government of Southern Rhodesia Act, the Southern Rhodesian Act of 1923, which was a year or two later, it is out of the same stable. That's all I am saying. All I am saying is that is of the same ilk, coming to your question. It is not in the same context of devolution/decentralisation argument in the rest of the United Kingdom, in my view.

- Q. When the Convention ends, Mr Rees, the politicians will have no salary presumably and no place to go. Does that worry you that it will leave no political set up here?
- A. Well I'd certainly like to see some political set up here. The answer is that I want to see local, regional, if you like, Northern Ireland politics. It will be very difficult for some of the politicians whom I would be very sorry on either side to see disappearing in a political sense. Perhaps I can give you the legal aspect of it, which might be helpful to all of you. When I say a month for the extension from about two or three weeks' time, so in other words there's about six weeks for discussion, because discussions can take place before the Convention re-meets, is resurrected, is this - I using my powers ended the Convention in November 7, midnight I suppose, it was dissolved and is ended. I have the power under the legislation only to bring it back for 6 months. You therefore might say how can I say a month. I also had the power to end it at any time. Under those two powers of bringing it back for 6 months which is all I can, and the other part of the scissors, ending it whenever I want to, is how I get about a month. Right, those are purely machines. Now as far as payment of members is concerned I said that I would pay them, when they finished, for three months. I would pay them and I would give them three months' notice of when I would end it. Now therefore if I left it until the end of February, about which time the Convention will end, and I had taken no steps I would have to pay them for another three months. If I decided to do it that way the day it comes back I could announce and say although you are only back for a month in accordance with what I told you I will pay you for another three months, which will be two months after it ended. If I decide to say it today I would say that I will pay you for another three months from today. So the payment is unrelated to the Convention coming back.
- Q. Do you expect an Election in early May or June?
- A. Not following that. Not following what I have just said. If you're speculating about Elections I should start from different premises.
- Q. From what you have said it would mean that the local politics, which have always been very healthily, would in fact end. They would have
- A. It would be surprising if Ulstermen of all sorts were only in politics for for the money that they got.
- Q. No, the point I am trying to make is that they have had the Convention, they have had some reason for being in existence which they would not have had.

A. If you remember what I did before because I was aware of this. When the Assembly fell I kept paying them even though the Assembly had gone - for about 9 months - then they started getting paid from the Convention and I increased their salary on a proportionate rate to what was done at Westminster and so on. No there would be very real difficulties.

Q. Mr Rees I have just come back with a question on the SAS. Mr Younger is at this moment in London maintaining that there is firm evidence to show that there are only 11 SAS members here.

A. I see.

Q. Is that also inaccurate?

A. Yes.

Q. / Did you imply earlier Mr Rees a figure of 20 and those 20 would in fact be inadequate. It's not quite clear from what you said.

A. The numbers of SAS that are coming here are a matter for the Army and there's no doubt that the numbers that we require here are larger than that. But I'm not really going to comment on the numbers. Roy Mason will be in the House this afternoon. It's his responsibility.

Q. What is your programme here now that you have returned?

A. It seems that most of today I am meeting you gentlemen and from other parts of the media. But if I take your question in a general sense it is the Lord Chief Justice who has the functions in the Assembly and I am not going to interfere in those. But I will be as helpful as I can in this stage of the Convention and again with no weakness, with no limitation on the Lord Chief Justice, by any means, he has done an admirable job, I obviously in the next six weeks, I will be talking to politicians, whereas I didn't when the Convention was meeting last.

Q. You had an arrangement to meet the UUUC people today, but it was reported that was cancelled

A. That was last week, when I agreed to see them on some other matters and other people too. In view of the developments this week I am not meeting them. But it's nothing to do with the Convention.

Q. When will you meet them?

A. I don't know.

Q. Mr Rees is the vow of silence now ended. Remember the vow of silence from March 27 when the Convention was declared, you said that the British Government from then until the end of the Convention date no comment would be made by the British Government?

A. I think I shall probably break my vow of silence.

Q. Assuming that all this falls down what are the implications of prolonged Direct Rule?

A. I think that when I said at the beginning and I certainly I hope I said it in no pompous way that I hope people will understand, that people will rise to the occasion, it's a very serious situation and always has been, there will be Direct Rule and July is the time when we go back to the House of Commons. I think there is no doubt that the House of Commons will not look kindly on prolonged Direct Rule.

Q. What will happen after that?

A. Then I think somebody or other said we'll have to wait and see.

Q. You must have a view as to what effect that would have on the situation if it falls?

A. Well what I'm telling you is this that I am not in business and the Government is not in business to then say ah well to hell with it, pull out let them get on with it, which is the sort of general view which is around the United Kingdom. We have a responsibility here, a continuing responsibility and it would be the height of irresponsibility not just in a normal sense of the term. I see that Airey Neave talked last night about a quarter of a million casualties. Well I don't know. But that we have a responsibility to see that that sort of thing doesn't happen. That we are not talking about some colonial territory, however much the phrase can be used. We have a responsibility and we shall carry on.