

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



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Mr Hanford 9/10
for file

7 October 1991

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Dear :

You telephoned the Information Service on 19 September to express your concern at the recent murders of businessmen in Northern Ireland, and in particular the killing of Mr John Haldane earlier that day. The Secretary of State has been made aware of your remarks and he has asked me to write to you.

Mr Brooke was horrified and saddened by the murder of Mr Haldane. He shares your view that attacks such as this are attacks not only on an individual but also on the jobs and livelihoods of many ordinary people and on the entire framework of society.

The Government fully acknowledges and appreciates the valuable contribution of contractors and suppliers who work for the security forces, and it recognises and welcomes the support of those in the general business community who in so many ways provide a service to the police and the Army and to the community as a whole. Measures exist to help those at specific risk, and any businessmen or individual who is concerned for his or her safety should contact the RUC for advice and assistance.

The Government is conscious of the sincerely held view of many people that somehow more could be done to 'hit back' at the



terrorists and bring an end to their vicious murder campaign, which has caused so much tragedy. clearly demonstrated the future which they have to offer the people of Northern Ireland. The violence and

The Government has made it absolutely clear that there is no acceptable level of violence and that the security forces will pursue terrorist killers relentlessly in order to bring them to justice. The way to deal with terrorism is through the vigorous and impartial actions of the police and Army, who are achieving real results in bringing terrorists to justice. During the month of September, for example, the police charged forty-nine persons with terrorist-related offences, of whom eight have been charged with murder. The remaining forty-one face charges including attempted murder, possession of firearms and explosives and membership of terrorist organisations.

DAVID FERGUSON

The Government is determined to bring an end to the sickening terrorist violence which has tried for so long to exert a stranglehold on the Province. The support and assistance of the community for the security forces is an indispensable part of this process. The Government, similarly, is committed to ensuring that the security forces continue to have the moral and material resources they need to undertake their difficult and dangerous work, and to providing the legal framework within which they can act to defeat terrorism. The recently enacted Emergency Provisions legislation, with its new powers to counter terrorist financing, is a tangible example of this commitment - as is the continuing support provided to the police and the armed forces.

The frustration which many feel when confronted with savage acts of terrorism is perhaps natural; but it is the terrorists' wish to provoke law-abiding people in the Province into retaliation. This would help the terrorists destroy the fabric of society and would make it easier for them to impose their will by force of arms.

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In carrying out the despicable murder of Mr Haldane, and of so many others, the terrorists have clearly demonstrated the future which they have to offer the people of Northern Ireland. The violence and destruction for which they have been responsible is in stark contrast to the contribution which those like John Haldane have made to the life of the Province, by providing employment for people on both sides of the community, thus bringing prosperity from which all benefit, and by providing an example for all to follow.

Yours sincerely

David Ferguson

DAVID FERGUSON
Private Secretary

*h.c.c. PS/S of S (BEL)
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PS/mr J. J.
Mr Leslie
Mr Wood
Mr Leach
Mr Percival
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Mrs Collins*

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