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MuS/A 2/10
p/A on Minister's Case
Mr Bourn
Mr Veyth
2/10

28 SEP 1984
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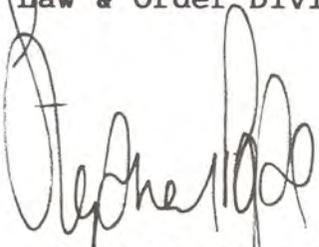
cc: PS/Secretary of State (L & B)
PS/PUS (L & B)
Mr Bourn
Mr Buxton
Mr Lyon
Mr Radcliffe ✓

1. Mr Coulson *27/9*
2. PS/Mr Scott (L & B)

MR SCOTT'S MEETING WITH JIM NICHOLSON MP - 3 OCTOBER 1984

I attach briefing and a line to take for Mr Scott's meeting with Mr Nicholson and a deputation from the Mountain Lodge Elim Pentecostal Church on 3 October.

Law & Order Division will be represented by Mr Coulson and myself.



STEPHEN POPE
Law & Order Division
Stormont House Annexe

26 September 1984

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MOUNTAIN LODGE ELIM PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

MR SCOTT'S MEETING WITH A DEPUTATION LED BY JIM NICHOLSON MP -
3 OCTOBER 1984

Mr Nicholson has asked to meet Mr Scott to discuss possible ways in which HMG (NIO in particular) might assist financially with either rebuilding or relocating the Mountain Lodge Elim Pentecostal Church. Mr Nicholson's request stems directly from Mr Scott's letter to him of 23 August which made it clear that the Government has no provisions to enable the church to be rebuilt (thus offering greater physical protection to the congregation inside) or relocated (presumably to an area in which potential attackers will be less inclined to operate).

2. NIO's position was set out fully in Mr Coulson's minute of 15 August to PS/Mr Scott (copy attached) and has not changed since. Essentially, the problem is one of scale. If, for instance, special provisions were made for the Mountain Lodge Church, similar provisions could be demanded from the owner of any premises, be they public houses, cinemas, churches which were used by the public and which had been the scene of any similar incident. Such demands would be difficult to resist if a precedent existed.

3. The basic principle adopted by HMG during the years of terrorist attack upon property has been that property owners and occupiers are primarily responsible for the security of their premises and this principle has, by and large, been maintained. Thus, if the Mountain Lodge Elim Pentecostal Church feel it necessary to take physical security measures to safeguard their congregation, it is for the Church to fund them.

4. There has been one recent development in the debate between the Church, the RUC and NIO. On 24 September RUC Security Branch wrote to Law & Order Division recommending the provision of street lighting for a distance of 75 metres on either side of the church building. The letter accepts that the security benefits would be minimal but maintains that installation would be a morale booster for the congregation and would indicate to them they had not been neglected. The RUC go on to say that the congregation are aware that lighting would illuminate them as they enter or leave the

building, but that they feel they would be at no greater risk than at present.

5. We have discussed with RUC Security Branch the thinking behind this recommendation, and there appears to be some confusion within that Branch. Although the RUC have discussed with the Pastor various possibilities for security lighting at the church, street lighting has not been considered and, I understand should not have been put forward as a recommendation. Our response would, anyway, have been the same as to requests from the Church for funding of extra security measure or of rebuilding. It would have been even more difficult for us to consider funding street lighting given that the RUC themselves confirm that the security benefits would be minimal. The only option available to the Church if they have thought of the possibility and if they had wished to pursue the question of street lighting, would have been to approach DOE(NI) - their reaction would not have been likely to please Mr Nicholson either, since DOE(NI) base their decisions very firmly on traffic and road safety criteria.

Line to take

6. The Minister may initially wish to invite Mr Nicholson and members of the Church to set out their arguments. In responding to those arguments we would particularly wish to probe the deputation's thinking and invite them to explain why the Mountain Lodge Church should be treated as a special case, distinct from many other locations in Northern Ireland which have been the scene of similar although probably less serious incidents. Should the deputation persist in their request, it will have to be explained to them that Government cannot undertake to relocate, rebuild or strengthen every building which has been subject to the type of attack seen at Darkley. To do so would place an impossible financial burden on Government.

7. We hope that street lighting will not be mentioned. If it is, the Minister might refer the delegation to the DOE while suggesting that any decision could only be taken on traffic or road safety criteria. If the delegation mentions security lighting, that is a matter for the Church to decide (on the basis of RUC advice) and fund. The delegation should not have had wind of the RUC's "recommendation" to the NIO of

...
24 September: if they have it could be mildly awkward, but the central fact remains that the security of the church building is not a matter for the NIO to decide upon or to fund.

8. At the same time, however, the Security Forces will continue to review the threat to this and other places of worship and will alter their pattern of operations to meet that threat. Should particular developments require it, additional resources would, no doubt, be deployed. [For the Minister's own information, the level of Security Forces presence in the area is still higher than it was prior to the incident on 20 November 1983]

E.R.

20 SEP 1984

*Mr Mr Vign... 20/90
/ Mr ...*

CC: PS/SOS (B&L)
PS/Mr Scott (L)
Mr Bourn
Mr Buxton
Mr Lyon
Mr Racliffe

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Mr Coulson

JIM NICHOLSON MP - MOUNTAIN LODGE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH (MINISTER'S CASE 2981 REFERS)

Further to your minute of 10 September.

Mr Scott has agreed to meet a delegation from the church and this has been arranged for 10.30 in Stormont Castle on 3 October with a pre-brief at 10.15.

Can briefing be provided 1 October please.

I will forward names of the delegation as soon as possible.

A.P.

A G PATTERSON
APS/Mr Scott

20 September 1984