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CONCLUSIONS of Meeting
held at Stormont Castle on
Monday 11 December 1972, at 11.00 am

PRESENT

The Rt Hon William Whitelaw MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

Lord Windlesham
Mr Peter Mills MP
Sir David Holden
Sir Harold Black
Mr J T A Howard-Drake
Mr F A Rowley
Mr F F Steele
Mr K D McDowall

GOC
Chief Constable
Mr M K Harris, Ministry of Home
Affairs
Mr C Macmahon, AG's Dept

Mr R Stevens
Mr R M Whalley

Secretariat

Mr L S Duncan

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1. SECURITY REVIEW

- (1) The GOC and the Chief Constable summarised the incidents, arrests and finds over the preceding five days. Among the deaths reported were those of:-
 - (a) an Army NCO who had been examining a part of a rocket launcher;
 - (b) a high-ranking Officer in the UDA;
 - (c) a Roman Catholic workman murdered on a bus.
- (2) The exchange of prisoners between Belfast and the Maze Prison had been carried through without incident.
- (3) The joint RUC/Military Police Task Force was building up in strength and acquiring useful information.
- (4) The interrogation of Father Desmond Wilson had been justifiable but was, in the circumstances, regrettable.
- (5) Arising out of a discussion on interrogation procedures Ministry of Home Affairs was to investigate the Army's responsibility for finger-printing.

2. DETENTION OF YOUNG OFFENDERS

The Secretary of State spoke of the concern expressed by Lord Diplock about the frequency of escape of young offenders from approved training schools. Mr Harris said that the problem, which was under examination, was one of balancing security against education. Lord Windlesham thought however that in present circumstances the educational aspect might be subordinated, at least insofar as the convention that education could only be given by members of a certain religious order. Ministry of Home Affairs was to report back at the meeting on Wednesday 13 December about the possibility of securing alternative accommodation in a more favourable locality than St Patrick's Training School.

3. CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT THE ARMY

The GOC highlighted the main features of his Paper of 25 November. The Secretary of State and Lord Windlesham commended the Paper, the former emphasising that the campaign of denigration which had done so much damage

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in the past to the RUC must not be allowed to develop against the Army. Mr McDowall gave some indication of the counter-propaganda measures being undertaken by his department.

4. EXTENSION OF ARREST POLICY

Discussion was based on the GOC's Paper of 9 December. The meeting recognised the difficulty in reconciling on the one hand the need for explicit orders which could be immediately implemented and on the other hand guarding against the dangers of a premature disclosure of intent. It was agreed that Mr Howard-Drake would look into the question with the Army and Police and report back on Wednesday, 13 December.

5. BORDER POLL

Sir Harold Black indicated that a meeting with the Under Sheriffs and Chief Electoral Officer's staff had indicated that 8 March would be the earliest date on which the Border Poll could be held. The Secretary of State said that he intended to have the administrative considerations examined at the following day's meeting (Tuesday, 12 December) and to confirm the date on the next day (Wednesday 13 December) when the GOC would be present.

L S DUNCAN
12 December 1972

Belfast 63011 x 288

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