

SECRET

PERSONAL

Mr Stephens

cc | PS/Mr Bloomfield
Mr Innes
Mr G Hewitt
Mr R Templeton
Mr Maccabe

20/1

2. Pol 3/2

DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSEMBLYMAN: CONTINGENCY PLANNING

1. This afternoon I attended the second meeting of the ad hoc DOE((NI)/NIO/DFP/RUC committee formed to plan for action in the event of some form of demonstration in Parliament Buildings to mark the dissolution of the Assembly.

2. There was still no firm intelligence available to the committee whether, when, and if so, in what form, such a demonstration would take place. All present were dismayed at the news revealed in Miss Elliott's briefing for the Dissolution debate that the Secretary of State would probably reveal the date of dissolution in the House of Commons tomorrow afternoon.

3. The RUC were strongly opposed to our suggestion that a LOB official should be present at any demonstration to act as an interface between the police and any political interest in seeing the demonstration dealt with. They draw a clear distinction between the authorised official under the Public Order (NI) Order 1981 whose presence was essential and any other official whose presence could be interpreted by the demonstrators as exercising political control of police operational decisions on the handling of the demonstration. They offered, as an alternative, to provide a police liaison officer in my office who would be in radio contact with the senior police officer handling the demonstration. I accepted this offer.

4. The Divisional Commander supported by ACC (Operations) was at pains to make clear that operational responsibility rested

SECRET

PERSONAL

SECRET

PERSONAL

th him alone and that he would be seeking to resolve any demonstration by means other than physical force except as a last resort. I made it very clear that, notwithstanding his position, the Secretary of State would expect very prompt action if a demonstration interfered in any way with the business of government in the Stormont Estate or if the demonstration turned into a publicity stunt, and that the DCC had given assurances that this would happen.

5. We agreed that from the point of view of practical policing and resources the police would restrict their actions to the building or buildings in which the demonstration or demonstrations were occurring - securing the perimeter of the Stormont Estate was not feasible.

6. The committee will meet again at 11am on Monday.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brian Blackwell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

B A BLACKWELL
Law and Order Division

18 June 1986

SECRET

PERSONAL