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cc'd
R.S.
26/10/93

26 October 1993

TO: Belfast

FROM: H. Q.

FOR: Joint Secretary

FROM: P. Hennessy

Shooting in Ardoyne

1. As discussed, reports from local sources suggest that British Army soldier firstly took an aimed shot at a member of a well-known Republican family (the victim is believed to be Eddie Copeland, described locally as a "player"); this was followed by two bursts of fire aimed at houses in the general vicinity of the Begley house where a group of supporters were gathered. The land-rover carrying the soldier then made off. The RUC were believed to be in close proximity during the incident. As you know media report suggest a soldier has been taken into custody by the police. We would welcome confirmation of this.

2. Our sources suggest that the actions of the soldier have greatly exacerbated an already very difficult situation and open the prospect of efforts by Provisional IRA to "get even". In the circumstances there appears to be a strong case for a significant lowering of the Army profile in the area in favour of the RUC, not least in the interest of the soldiers themselves. It has been strongly represented to us that that this minimum step is necessary by way of immediate response if a serious escalation of the situation is to be avoided.

3. More generally, we would wish to have a full account of what transpired, what action has been taken by the British authorities against the soldier concerned (have charges being brought; is he in custody) and whether the regiment (possibly Marines, but not confirmed) concerned will be withdrawn from the area.

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