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29 September 1998 **No of pages including this one: 3**

To: HQ
For: Secretary Gallagher

From: Belfast
From: Joint Secretary

Subj: De-escalatory measures

1. We have just received (7.30pm) the attached draft press release, for issue at 9am on Wednesday, in which the Chief Constable announces further de-escalatory measures.

2. We are seeking clarification of what is involved and will report fully tomorrow morning.

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ANNEX A

PRESS RELEASE

(Hold until 0900 hours, 30 September 1998

Further relaxation in security measures have been announced today by the Chief Constable of the RUC, Mr Ronnie Flanagan.

The Chief Constable said the latest in a series of adjustments were the result of the ongoing review of the security situation maintained by himself and the General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland. This, he said, reflected their commitment to ensuring protection for the public, whilst continuing moves towards a normal policing environment.

Said Mr Flanagan: "We have already seen the total ending of routine military patrolling widely across the Province and significantly reduced patrolling elsewhere. Restrictions on movement around Belfast International Airport have been ended and there have been significant reductions in other security measures in Londonderry and Bessbrook. Troop levels, too, have been reduced."

"I am now in a position to announce that the military presence will be withdrawn from the permanent vehicle checkpoints at the Letterkenny Road and Culmore Road in Derry and on the Lifford Road in Strabane. In addition, two observation sangars at the Crumlin Road in Belfast and on the main Dublin Road outside Newry are to be demolished, as is the permanent checkpoint at Aughnacloy from which the military presence has already been withdrawn".

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The Chief Constable stressed that the security situation continued to be kept under close scrutiny and further progress was planned but will always depend on the operational assessment of the terrorist threat.

RUC Headquarters

30 September 1998

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