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An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
An Rannóg Angla-Éireannach
Teach Iveagh
80 Faiche Stiabhna
Baile Átha Cliath 2

Fón: +353-1-4780822
Facs: +353-1-4785949

Department of Foreign Affairs
Anglo-Irish Division
Iveagh House
80 St. Stephen's Green
Dublin 2

Tel: +352-1-4780822
Fax: +353-1-4785949

Ms Whelan
18.1.2000

Copy Note

Secretary-General had not responded and agreed that I should do so, on behalf of this Department.

I phone this evening to Mr Fergal Mythen, Dept of Foreign Affairs and suggested to him (i) the insertion 4, 33 shown in ink at the top of page 2 of the draft paper (ii) the re-insertion of paras 7 and 8 of the earlier draft after para 2 page 1 of the draft now attached. I indicated that, having regard to pressure of time to finalise the paper, I would not query the point. Incidentally, I nevertheless thought this re-insertion would strengthen the draft.

19.1.2000

FAX

To: D/Taoiseach

For: Secretary-General Teahon

From: Gary Ansbro

Subject: Review of Specific Security Arrangements

Date: 24 January 2000

Pages: 1 + 4

MESSAGE

1. Revised Security Review document follows. Grateful for obs. from your Department.

Urgent

Secretary General

This came to us in 'Kitty' material and was not formally referred to us for views. This may indicate that you have already responded to it.

The new draft gives more specifics, as you wanted, but I feel it loses some force by omitting some good points in the previous draft: we can get these out if you have not already cleared the new draft.

27.1.2000

Mrs Gaffney
For file
31/1/2000

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[DRAFT - REV. 7]
CONFIDENTIAL

Review of specific security arrangements

1. In response to the invitation of 3 December 1999 from the Secretary of State, the following are our views on the proposed review of specific security arrangements. These views are made known within the framework of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference and are to be treated as confidential. We make this submission in the spirit of co-operation which has marked dealings on this issue and the wider process between the two Governments.

Current Security Review

2. It is essential that the security review now underway outlines the steps towards normalisation in a manner which is convincing and compelling, with an implementation plan which includes detailed proposals and timetabling. The review must establish benchmarks which are clearly time-based and which apply to the progressive removal of security installations and the reduction of troop levels.

Opinion in local areas

3. The reaction from the broad nationalist constituency to the publication of last December's strategy paper ranged from disappointment to cynicism. The maintenance of high troop levels and extensive installations may well defeat its own purpose by exacerbating rather than reducing a security problem.

4. Our attitude is also informed by the detailed evidence of the counterproductive effect that a large and obtrusive security presence has on the confidence and attitudes of the nationalist community. Significant moves on security measures

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effect impact on the broad community would have a hugely positive impact on the nationalist and republican constituencies, and would also serve to weaken and isolate dissident elements. It is our firm belief that dissidents are most effectively undermined when the wider community, and indeed their own supporters, can see the impact that real change is having on the ground.

Specific normalisation measures

5. Against the above background, and with the objective of moving progressively and speedily towards normalisation by the end of this year, a programme of specific normalisation measures should be adopted and made public. Our thinking on this is set out below:

A) The following measures should be immediately implemented and, in our view, would have an extremely positive effect on the relevant communities:

- an end to any further reinforcement, upgrading and refurbishment of military installations in South Armagh and elsewhere; and the commencement of the dismantling of a number of the observation towers in South Armagh (perhaps one-third);

- a substantial (at least 50%) reduction in the level of Army helicopter activity in the South Armagh and East Tyrone areas; the dismantling of army observation posts in certain areas such as the top of the Broadway, Divis and New Lodge flats; and the removal of army cameras overlooking St Brigids Primary School in Glassdrummond, as well as an end to helicopter flights in the vicinity of the school;

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- Withdrawal by the British Army from private gardens in Crossmaglen (there are four such gardens) and the making good of any damage to these properties; and the dismantling of the sangar in the Square in Crossmaglen;

- the closure of Strand Road and Gough Barracks interrogation centres;

- an end to patrolling by members of the RIR and a scaling back of patrolling by other military units;

B) Other measures should be progressively implemented with a target date of end-2000 for completion. This would include a general reduction in the numbers of armed forces and their role, dismantling of security installations, and the establishment of a broadly based Review Committee (including representatives of the political parties) to keep the public briefed on developments and to receive constructive feedback. We will make detailed proposals on this in due course.

Conclusion

6. Our view is that the review must be pro-active and visionary, and that normalisation cannot be contingent solely on the perception of a threat of violence. Acceptance of the latter involves the real danger of allowing the initiative to slip from the authorities to the paramilitary dissidents, the very elements most likely to benefit from a failure to fulfil the objectives of the Agreement.

7. Overall, it is our firm belief that changes in security arrangements now need to be planned for in a specific and detailed manner, and urgently progressed in the

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light of the great strides which have been made in recent times. The ceasefires, the Good Friday Agreement and the Mitchell Review have together fundamentally altered the security situation. This fact should be reflected in further tangible and immediate ways in security arrangements on the ground.

24 January 2000

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