

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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NA BREATAINE-NA hÉIREANN
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BRITISH-IRISH
INTERGOVERNMENTAL SECRETARIAT
BELFAST

~~30,4,21~~ 33

FAX TRANSMISSION

To: Secretary Gallagher's Office

From: Donal Hamill

Date: 9-5-2000 No. of Pages (including cover page) 3

Subject:

Mr Whelan
I confirmed with Ms. Maloney this morning - that she had this on to the Private Office yesterday.
10/5/00

COMMENT: Kathy

Secretary Gallagher asked if the attached Statements by the Secretary of State and Chief Constable could be copied to the Taoiseach and to Joe Lennon

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SECRETARY OF STATE WELCOMES CHIEF CONSTABLE'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON NORMALISATION

Rt Hon Peter Mandelson MP today welcomed the Chief Constable's announcement of further normalisation steps.

"The IRA statement of Saturday, 6 May is very significant and I welcome the Chief Constable's assessment that it represents an important reduction in the threat. I have always said that I will be guided by the Chief Constable and my other security advisers. Their assessment now enables further significant normalisation steps to be taken without endangering levels of security for society here."

The Secretary of State pointed out that these steps were consistent with the Government's long-standing commitment to normalise security arrangements and practices as quickly as the threat allows. "The changes announced today represent another step along this path, while preserving the security forces' capability to meet the remaining threat from whatever quarter. I hope that conditions on the ground will enable us safely to make further changes in due course. But I have always said that the security of the public will continue to be my highest priority and that essential security interests will not be traded for political progress. The further review of normalisation to be conducted in 3 months' time will take account of the threat and conditions on the ground at that time."

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NORMALISATION STEPS ANNOUNCED

The Chief Constable today announced that he had conducted an assessment of the overall security threat now to be faced.

In consultation with the GOC he has concluded that, notwithstanding a significant ongoing threat posed by dissidents, the weekend's events represent a real lowering of the overall threat.

This makes appropriate the following steps, which will be taken as soon as logistically possible, with work to commence within weeks:

- demolition of the Cookstown base
- vacation of the Fort George Army base on the west bank of the Foyle and the land returned to the Londonderry Harbour Commissioners,
- demolition of the Cloghogue observation base in South Armagh, and
- vacation of the observation posts at Broadway and Templer House in Belfast.

Subject to a continuing reduction in the level of threat, these steps would be followed within 3 months by demolition of the observation sangar overlooking the square in Crossmaglen.

The Chief Constable added that a further review of possible normalisation steps will be conducted in 3 months' time in the light of the security threat prevailing at the time and the circumstances on the ground.

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