

15th October, 1970.

CONFIDENTIAL

I have been looking with interest at your initial report on Operation Palaver One. It seems to me that the results of this operation raise again the question of the custody of arms at home. If the U.D.R. is ^{100%} seen to be effective it must be able to turn out and operate effectively in less than one hour. Indeed I am impressed by the fact that 42% achieved this after such short training - none-the-less it must be soul destroying to men called out on emergency duty to have to kick their heels until arms arrive.

The idea of keeping arms at centralised armouries may be politically attractive in times of peace. We are, however, now plainly far removed from that point, as witness our current intelligence, and in my view security considerations must override political ones. In any case the U.D.R. have been well screened and are under Army discipline and it is surely very unlikely that any misuse of arms will occur.

As you know, I am also in no doubt that it would give great encouragement to the U.D.R. to feel that they were completely trusted, and this might well improve their recruitment. Indeed I am a little concerned to notice that the recruiting figures over the past few weeks seem to be rather disappointing.

Perhaps when you get back we could have a discussion on these points.

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