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CONCLUSIONS of Meeting  
held at Stormont Castle on  
Tuesday, 29 August 1972, at 2 45 pm

## PRESENT

The Rt Hon William Whitelaw MP  
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

Mr Paul Channon MP  
Mr David Howell MP  
GOC  
Chief Constable  
Mr F F Steele  
Mr T M Roberts

Sir William Nield  
Sir David Holden  
Sir Harold Black  
Mr N F Cairncross  
Mr J T A Howard-Drake  
Mr A S Baker  
Mr D J Trevelyan

## Secretariat

Mr L S Duncan  
Mr R C Stevens  
Mr G Clifford  
Mr J Margetts

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Before turning to some fundamental issues the meeting considered several short-term problems requiring early action.

#### 1. SECTARIAN MURDERS

The Chief Constable reported that since 1 July there had been some 48 cases of murder - 26 of Roman Catholics and 22 of Protestants - where political or sectarian motives might be involved; it would be wrong however to attribute all the murders on one side to the other as among the dead were several men with criminal records who might well have been killed by those of their own community. The very high number of these murders was indicative of the general state of lawlessness, the number of arms held illegally and the lack of co-operation by the public in bringing forward information. The Secretary of State accepted a suggestion by Sir David Holden that in attempting to allay public fears about inactivity in dealing with these murders he could, when meeting the press on the following day at least categorise these murders as sectarian shootings of selected victims, random sectarian shootings and the elimination of renegades by their own people. He would also mention the £50,000 award fund for information, the acceptance of anonymous information and the possibility of direct communication with himself.

#### 2. BOMB ATTACKS ON CLAUDY

The Chief Constable reported that the RUC wished to interview 5 people - some believed to be over the Border - in connection with the car bomb attacks on Claudy village and the Secretary of State welcomed the opportunity of Mr Lynch's visit to Mr Heath on the following Monday to confront the former with a direct request for extradition.

#### 3. CASE OF MISS ANNE WALSH

The meeting considered the possibility of bringing charges against Miss Anne Walsh who had been detained for questioning a few days previously. The Chief Constable was to report back the following morning.

#### 4. ILLEGAL ROAD CHECKS

The GOC informed the Secretary of State that there had been some reduction in the number of illegal CESA and UDA road checks but that some fringe elements were still creating a nuisance.

#### 5. ARMY OCCUPATION OF ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The GOC reported on the progress made in vacating some school accommodation and on the need for retaining the remainder until the end of the year. A press statement would be issued the following day on the lines indicated.

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#### 6. PROTECTION OF BELFAST CITY CENTRE

The GOC explained the difficulties of balancing maximum security precautions against minimum interference with normal life and urged that the Corporation and other bodies concerned with the City Centre should keep in close contact with the local Army Commander in the area rather than bring complaints at intervals to Stormont Castle. The Secretary of State wished to have details for his press conference the following day of IRA penetrations of the security screen round the centre of Belfast.

#### 7. LONGER-TERM APPRAISAL

The GOC saw the next few months as falling into 3 separate phases each requiring a different security policy:

1. The present period leading up to the September constitutional conference.
2. The period of further negotiations and planning.
3. The period during which the political solution would be implemented.

In this present period the GOC said that the Army was suffering casualties which compared unfavourably with other internal security operations such as those in Borneo and Kenya but without the special processes of law which had enabled effective action to be taken against terrorists in those theatres. Accurate sniper fire was particularly worrying as his troops felt that they were presenting sitting targets without the will on the part of the authorities to retaliate against the known enemy.

The run-down of internment was presenting its own problems. Of the 341 'Provisionals' released so far, 16 had been charged with security offences but a further 64 (at least) were known to have become actively reinvolved in IRA activities. In his opinion it would be dangerous to release the hard core of 120 Provisionals still in internment.

Phase 2, from the time of the September conference until the announcement of the ultimate solution, would be the most difficult. The two communities would have adopted extreme positions, tensions would be high and, in the absence of any new legal processes to back up an arrest policy, increasing frustration would make Army morale a serious factor.

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Phase 3, during which the political solution would be implemented, was, the GOC thought, the time when the final effort must be made to neutralise the IRA, using special Courts of some sort and with an improvement in Army intelligence and administrative organisation. On the question of intelligence he thought that at present there was an unnecessary duplication of effort between the Army and Police and suggested that while the Special Branch of the RUC should continue to be an integral part of that force it should for operational purposes come under the overall control of a high-powered Director of Intelligence. A force level of 25 to 30 battalions supplemented if possible by a full-time contingent of the UDR might be needed for six months to finally demoralise and liquidate the IRA. On the other hand a force of 20 battalions might be sufficient with the best possible processes of law and the right intelligence organisation. Some 800 to 1,000 'Provisionals' and, if they became reinvolved, 400 to 600 'Officials' would have to be removed from the scene. He was not advocating internment but in the continued absence of any new legal process it might be the only answer. Concluding, the GOC said that it was essential for a soldier to have faith in the organisation which he served and the time had come to cease acting in a civilised way against an uncivilised enemy.

Sir William Niell said that the main flaw in the original introduction of internment had been its implementation by the Executive which had made it extremely vulnerable to press and public pressures. Should a reintroduction of internment be considered some quasi-judicial arrangement would have to be found even at some risk of a high rejection rate of those recommended for internment. The Secretary of State said that consideration was being given to the possibility of introducing some form of alternative judicial process to overcome the difficulties of proceeding against terrorists through the normal Courts.

The meeting then discussed the problem of the making of detention orders during the interim period in which these alternative procedures were under consideration. It was agreed that consideration could be given to signing detention orders against those members of the Provisional IRA who were commanding officers, adjutants, quartermasters, engineer officers and intelligence officers; in exceptional cases detention orders could be considered in respect of other officers and of volunteers who could be shown to be a serious threat to security. In general, the Secretary of State wished arrests and applications for detention

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orders to be as selective as possible and requested that both documentary evidence, and if necessary, the assistance of Special Branch and Army officers, should continue to be made available to him when considering particular cases. The Secretary of State said that these measures should only be considered as an interim solution pending further consideration of alternative procedures and that there should be no sudden large scale increase in the number of detention orders.

The meeting went on to consider the embarrassment caused by Magistrates who granted bail against Police advice - indeed a case was cited from that day's local paper of bail being granted to a resident of the Republic - and discussions centred round ways and means of ensuring a more realistic approach by Resident Magistrates without prejudice to their independence. Mr Trevelyan was to let the Lord Chancellor's department know that the Secretary of State wished to speak personally to the Lord Chancellor on this matter in the course of the next few days.

Referring to the impending departure of two Battalions from Northern Ireland, the Secretary of State requested Sir William Nicol to advise the Ministry of Defence that he would not accept any further reduction of the force level (ie below 25 Battalions) without a Ministerial meeting.

L S DUNCAN  
4 September 1972

This distribution of these minutes has been restricted to the following:

Secretary of State	GOC
Lord Windlesham	Chief Constable
Mr Paul Channon MP	Mr F F Steele
Mr David Howell MP	Mr K D McDowall
Sir William Nicol	Mr T C Hetherington, AG's Dept
Sir Harold Black	Mr A Stephen, DS 10 MOD
Mr N F Cairncross	
Mr P J Woodfield	
Mr J T A Howard-Drake	

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