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In reply please quote

Your reference

Our reference

Date 27 April 1986

Dear Trevor

COMMUNITY GROUPS

I refer to your letter of 21 April.

The policy referred to in the Parliamentary Statement of 25 June 1985 was devised to meet the particular problem of community groups used in some manner as extensions of the activities of paramilitary organisations; such a policy could no doubt be applied without detriment to a consistency of approach to other groups and institutions similarly so used.

The danger is that the policy will be applied to refuse financial assistance to those who are believed in general to support the aims of paramilitary organisations rather than ^{applied} ~~to apply it~~ in circumstances in which it is believed that the assistance if given would, directly or indirectly, promote the aims of paramilitary organisations. To do that is to stray perilously close to discrimination on the ground of political opinion of the organisers and members of the group seeking assistance.

I have no knowledge whatsoever of the background to the Ward case, and it may be that LEDU assistance was refused in circumstances that were consistent with the Parliamentary Statement. If however the reasons for refusal of assistance for the Michael Davitt GAC are such as outlined in Mr Rogers minute of 18 April such refusal must represent a very stretched extension of the policy. The GAA is no doubt an organisation with nationalist sympathies but a court might not be disposed to accept that the frequenting of the Davitt clubhouse by members of paramilitary organisations and instances of aggression towards security personnel on the premises are adequate grounds to support the contention that to assist the club would improve the standing and further the aims of a paramilitary organisation.

I have not attempted to draft replies to Mr Hume or to Mr Kelly, as the content of those replies concern issues which no doubt will be discussed at the meeting on Friday. As regards the replies to Father Wilson and Mr Archer I enclose drafts which seek to say no more than that the usual processes of consultation and disclosure must inevitably be cast aside in view of the security aspects involved.

Yours sincerely

DENIS J McCARTNEY

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Revised
letter