

378/9

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Miss Pease -B

- cc PS/PUS (B&L) - B
- ① PS/Sir K Bloomfield - B
- Mr A W Stephens - B
- Mr Burns - B
- Mr Knight - B
- Mr Innes - B
- Mr Miles - B
- Mr Steele - B
- Mr Radcliffe, PANI
- Mr Hodges, DFP
- Mr Daniell
- Mr Forsythe
- Mr Shannon - B
- Mr Robinson, DFP
- Mr Barclay, C&E
- Mr Wills, IR
- Mr Collins, PSA

*J. O'Connell*  
*The sum to be paid of this money. R. odd*  
*W.A.*

BRIEF NOTE OF A MEETING WITH  
BRANCH) ON FRIDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 1988

(SECURITY

The aim of the meeting was to review progress in re-assessing the threat to civil servants in the aftermath of the attack on Sir Kenneth Bloomfield and PIRA's threat to all senior civil servants involved in formulating or advising on "British Military Strategy", and agree on the steps needed to counter it. Both sides of the NIO, PANI, DFP and other Government Departments working in Northern Ireland were represented.

CHANGES IN THE THREAT

reiterated that the PIRA threat seemed to exclude all civil servants who were not "senior"; hence the threat to most civil servants working in Northern Ireland seemed to be unchanged. The difficulty lay in deciding who PIRA might consider fell within the terms of their threat. Those most obviously falling within it are staff at Grade 3 and above working in the NIO, PANI and other areas of the 'Law and Order' field (such as staff of the Court Service, Crown Solicitor and DPP).

However, the Government has recently made clear its determination to clamp down on paramilitary fund-raising and racketeering. Publicity

C O N F I D E N T I A L

surrounding the creation of the ARU has made it clear that this will entail a multi-disciplinary approach aimed at coordinating the efforts of a number of Government Departments. The importance of the work of Customs & Excise and Inland Revenue staff to this process has already been mentioned publicly. In other fields it is widely known that DOE(NI) and the HE are trying to curb rackets in the building industry, and grants to enterprises suspected of being "fronts" have been curtailed, causing resentment against - amongst others - Central Secretariat staff. Hence few senior staff (i.e. Permanent Secretaries and Under Secretaries) in Government Departments and Agencies operating in Northern Ireland clearly fall outside the terms of PIRA's threat.

Finally, it has been stressed that it will be PIRA and not the Civil Service who will determine whether a civil servant is important enough to attack - both in terms of demoralising the Civil Service and in reaping publicity. There are staff at Grade 5 and below - particularly in the Law and Order field - who have, either as the result of their work or their social life, a particularly high profile in the community.

. The threat to such staff might increase either as a result of their 'high profile' or as a 'displacement effect' if the steps taken to protect more senior civil servants proved to be effective. Hence the need to identify such staff.

As to the nature of the threat, clearly PIRA have the skill and weapons to attack civil servants in a variety of ways, and not only in their homes. In recent months PIRA has demonstrated in and around Belfast the capability of placing booby traps on vehicles parked in public places, assassination shootings and, now, using high-power explosive devices against a target's home. It would be foolish to assume that PIRA would not carry out shooting attacks further afield, but it seems most likely that when operating in, for example, North Down, they would prefer to use timing, booby-trap and

## C O N F I D E N T I A L

remote-controlled explosive devices in order to improve their chance of escaping unnoticed and unmolested from the scene of an attack.

### COUNTER-MEASURES

assured us that the first and most obvious counter-measures for this increase in the level of threat has already been taken by the police. They already know where senior NIO civil servants live and patrols have been increased to provide greater protection for them. Similarly, they have obtained or are obtaining the addresses of NICS Permanent Secretaries and some Under Secretaries deemed to be most at risk, and we will be keeping a similar eye on their properties. This increase in activity would be particularly concentrated around the early hours of the morning when PIRA is most likely to carry out stealthy attacks using explosives.

In addition RUC Crime Protection Officers will shortly be briefly the latter group about the measures which they ought to be taking to protect themselves. The RUC will also be, with the help of the CBI, compiling details of senior businessmen from GB and overseas who might be considered by PIRA to be "prestige targets". However, Mr Cushley particularly stressed that RUC and UDR resources were finite, and the more people who had to be kept under observation, the less thorough, frequent and effective such observation measures would be. Hence, it was important to identify those most exposed to risk in order to concentrate scarce resources upon them.

From the Civil Service's point of view I said that our approach had to be two-pronged. Firstly, staff who were not deemed to be directly effected by the changes of the threat had to be reassured, without being lulled into any false sense of complacency. Both they and others who might be at increased risk had to be advised on the best methods of protecting themselves against changes in the perceived threat. Advice to staff was being revised and would be issued shortly.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Secondly, staff who are deemed to be at heightened risk as a result of any combination of factors such as seniority, public profile, domestic circumstances (such as the location of the family home or their route to work) would need to be identified and the risks to them assessed. This was the responsibility of departmental security officers. However, clearly they do not have a sufficiently detailed knowledge of these factors to be sure of identifying all staff who might be at risk. Hence, within the NIO this task was being carried out by asking Heads of Divisions to identify and provide a brief 'security profile' on any staff who might be at risk for whatever reason.

Even though speed is of the essence in this process, the assessment of the risks to each individual needs then to be carried out collectively if we are to achieve proper priorities in allocating scarce resources. Departmental security officers should provide Mr Robinson with the details of any staff thought to be at risk. Where necessary he will consult the RUC and, if the threat seems to warrant physical security measures, refer the case to Mr Shannon for consideration under the VIP Protection Scheme.

This approach should ensure that Departments do not duplicate effort and achieve a consistent approach, the RUC will not be swamped by requests for threat assessments and the risks of staff "falling into the gap" between the various agencies should be minimised.

signed

PAUL COULSON

19 September 1988

JS/1417