

V/for "Accompaniment" file. 24/1/90 23/11

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HEAD OF DIVISION

22 JAN 1990

POB-NIO BELFAST

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

FROM: J MCKERVILL, SPOB
22 JANUARY 1990

PS/Minister of State (L&B) - B cc PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - B
PS/PUS (L&B) - B
PS/Sir K Bloomfield - B
Mr Ledlie - B
Mr Burns - B
Mr Wilson - B
Mr Miles - B
Mr Bell
Mr Blackwell - B
Mr Dodds - B
Mr McClelland - B

WORKING GROUP ON ACCOMPANIMENT

I attach the minutes of the meeting of the Anglo-Irish Working Group on accompaniment which was held in Stormont House conference Room on Wednesday 17 January.

[Signed]

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Security Policy and Operations Division
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DP/9675

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WORKING GROUP ON ACCOMPANIMENT

NOTE OF A MEETING HELD IN STORMONT HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM AT 1100 ON WEDNESDAY 17 JANUARY 1990

Present:	<u>British Side</u>	<u>Irish Side</u>
	Mr Wilson (Chairman)	Mr O'Donovan
	Mr Bell	Mr Ryan
	Mr Dodds	Mr Padraic Collins
	Mr McClelland	Mr McMahon]
	Mr McKervill (Secretary)	Mr Michael Collins] DFA
		Mr Gaffey]

1. After welcoming Mr O'Donovan to his first Anglo-Irish meeting as head of the Irish side of the Secretariat Mr Wilson opened the meeting by referring to the Terms of Reference of the Group. Both sides agreed these could simply be taken as being the remit in paragraph 6 of the joint communique of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference meeting on 18 October 1989 and the joint record of that meeting which recorded the British side's readiness "to share with the Irish side the results of the monitoring of accompaniment in areas to be agreed between the two sides".

2. The Chairman then referred to the British side's paper which had been handed to the Irish side the previous week, and which had been intended to inform the discussion. He said there was no disagreement between British and Irish Ministers on the importance of the security forces having, and sustaining the confidence of, the community which they sought to protect. Further, Ministers had accepted that an important element in achieving this was for security force patrols to be accompanied. The British side's paper had however revealed a number of practical constraints on the RUC's ability to achieve 100% accompaniment. It had also referred to the British side's determination not to be moved into a "blank cheque" exercise or to accept anything which would in any way compromise the efficacy and integrity of the security forces' anti-terrorist effort.

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3. In response Mr O'Donovan said that the Irish side were grateful for the British side's informative paper which, he said, was particularly helpful in its coverage of what constituted a "sensitive" area. He was conscious however that Irish Ministers would expect by the time of the next Conference meeting, to see visible signs of progress. He hoped that by 31 January it would be possible to tell Ministers how monitoring of the level of accompaniment had progressed and what the basis for that monitoring would be in the future. He suggested that, from the British side's paper, it was evident that there would be much agreement between the two sides on what were the sensitive areas. The Chairman explained that he had not come to the meeting with any detailed figures. Nonetheless, on the basis of his discussions with the RUC he was satisfied that there been an evident improvement recently in levels of accompaniment.

4. In further discussion of monitoring, it was agreed that any figures provided for IGC purposes would have to be informative and that figures broken down no further than the RUC's three operational regions of Belfast, Rural East and Rural West would be of little help. In particular, it was accepted that any figure produced would need to assist in an assessment of the trends in levels of accompaniment in so called 'sensitive' areas. The ideal might be for the figures to be presented on a sub-divisional basis - although it was again accepted by both sides that, that, even at sub-divisional level sensitive and non-sensitive areas could lie side by side. But it was thought that this difficulty could at least in part be mitigated by a 'commentary' in suitable cases on points to be borne in mind in the interpretation of the figures.

5. In discussion Mr Bell emphasised that the figures being discussed belonged to the RUC not the Government. Moreover, the most important use of the figures that might be collected would be as a management tool for the Force. The collection of figures within the RUC would need to be handled with sensitivity. It would be disastrous if the impression was created that figures were being

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demanded of sub-divisional commanders so that they could be handed over for inspection at criticism by the Irish Government. Nonetheless the Chairman suggested that the problem of getting the RUC to collect figures might not be too great. As a force, they were committed to the principle of accompaniment and they would be the first to argue that, for their own purposes, they would wish to be able to measure changes in the levels of accompaniment that were being achieved. Mr O'Donovan, in reply, said that he appreciated that any approach to the RUC would need to be handled sensitively; but he, too, thought that it should be possible for the RUC to adopt a system adequate for IGC purposes. He thought also that the internal management needs of the RUC might be greater than any requirements from his side and that it might be sufficient for the RUC to provide for IGC purposes only a summary of the detailed information they gathered for their own use.

6. The Chairman said he regarded that last remark as extremely helpful. He recalled that paragraph 6 of the joint statement issued after the Conference meeting on 18 October had referred the joint working group being tasked to produce recommendations. He said that if both sides could agree that the principal recommendation might refer to the establishing of new arrangements for monitoring levels of accompaniment to produce a product which could be shared with the Irish under the aegis of the Conference, then he thought that the British side could sign up to that approach. But the next stage would be for the British side to discuss the issue further with the RUC. His aim would be to have available before the next Conference meeting either a set of figures on accompaniment which would indicate how and where progress was being made or a "schema" for a set of such figures. Mr O'Donovan re-iterated his hope that figures should be provided on a sub-divisional basis. If that proved to be the case, then, he thought that the RUC, as the most informed party, should be asked to provide an indicative list of the "sensitive areas" in each sub-division. He suspected that any such a list would largely coincide with his own side's views. If it were not possible to produce, before 31 January, a document containing a set of figures, he said that it would be very helpful if the British side could produce an example of what a monitoring document might look like.

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7. It was agreed that, after further discussion with the RUC, the British side would provide a further paper early in the following week. Subject to the outcome of that discussion with the RUC, this paper would either be an example of the sort of report which might be shared as a monitoring exercise or it would be a paper which would explain what it was proposed to offer in due course. Finally, it was noted that both sides would need to agree on what could be said publicly about accompaniment, particularly in reply to questions raised at Parliament or in the Dail. It would be necessary also to agree on what could be said in the joint statement of the Conference meeting on 31 January. These matters would be the subject of further discussion.

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