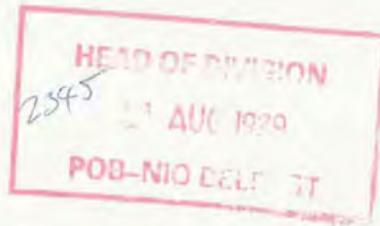


C O N F I D E N T I A L

FROM: R C MASEFIELD
18 AUGUST 1989

RM/7484/89/JEC



cc Mr Shannon - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Blackwell - B
Mr McKervill - B

Mr A P Wilson - B

COMPLAINTS MONITORING COMMITTEE AND THE FUTURE

It may be helpful if I try to set out - briefly - some salient Secretariat perspectives.

2. The establishment of the Committee, though not deriving solely from Irish pressure, has been a tangible symbol of our commitment to tackling confidence issues, especially important in an area where in most respects, partly due to the absence of direct drive responsibility, progress is inevitably measured in years or at best months.

3. I very much welcome your review. From my standpoint, two concerns have been increasing. The first is that we have not yet included a police element in our deliberations. If we do not it is likely that the Irish will criticise us, potentially in public. I do not of course deny that there are considerable statutory and other sensitivities, but the NIO (and I would have hoped that that could have included the British side of the Secretariat in some appropriate form) surely has a locus. We have perhaps been fortunate in that the main issues of "harrassment" which have come to the fore since the CMC was set up have concerned the Army or the UDR, rather than the police; controversies over questioning at Castlereagh or RUC riot control might, though of course one would hope not given the ever-increasing professionalism of the police, become issues (again).

4. My second concern is the increasingly and, to a large extent inevitably, blander monthly summary prepared for Ministers and the

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

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

Irish. It is not essential that every report contains a Sun style spectacular, but the most recent draft, and here I emphasise there is no disrespect, will butter relatively few Dublin parsnips.

5. It is true that the Committee takes up a lot of senior officers' valuable time discussing relative trivia. However Principal Secretariat and I would argue that the cumulative approach (putting together reports from PAB, Ministers Cases, CIVAD, CIVREPs and us) has been demonstrably successful on some occasions; examples would be the curbing of the activity of some Paras in Mayobridge, and perhaps the Glosters in East Tyrone.

6. I would like to offer one comment on the distinction between criminal and non-criminal allegations. I do suggest that the Committee, and indeed the NIO, would be failing in its duty if we were, and I do not suggest we have, to hold ourselves aloof from noting allegations of criminal behaviour. If there are trends or patterns in cases which are prima facie likely to be more high profile in confidence terms, then we should surely be satisfied that appropriate remedial action is - where justified - being taken.

7. On a more philosophical note, it would be helpful if our rethink could include consideration of the confidence dimension affecting the community in its dealings with the security forces, before complaints are generated, let alone come to the Committee. Is what we require a fundamental change in ethos by the members of the security forces themselves, not only at senior officer level, but also, and probably more importantly, among the individuals on the ground who come daily into contact with the public? Are we trying to achieve a difference of kind or degree only? And does it differ between the regular Army, the UDR and the RUC? It is perhaps arguable that we have done enough, at least with the regular Army, in terms of putting across our message for them to convey from the top down. We may need to do more with the police, and the proposal in paragraph 5 of your note may well be the right way forward there. Perhaps, as Mr McKervill suggests in his note, where we next need to focus is on communicating with the actual "practitioners". This is very difficult and even more time-consuming, and - from my

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

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

point of view - scoring fewer points with the Irish, but possibly more effective in the long run. But, and here may be the rub, if we think that in face of the provocation they so regularly receive, there is little more that can be done with Privates and Constables, are we obliged to accept, potentially even in public, that there is and will always remain an irreducible and acceptable level of "unprofessional" behaviour?

(Signed)

R C MASEFIELD

18 August 1989

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