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ASST
SEC

23/10

FROM: S J LEACH
SECURITY POLICY AND OPERATIONS DIVISION 1
1 OCTOBER 1993

ASST./
SEC 20/10
- 4 OCT 1993
C.C.R.U.

Slus
Pl copy to Mr Cusker
of change for us to
have a discussion
4/10

- cc Mr Legge - B
 - Mr Thomas - B
 - Mr Steele - B
 - Mr Bell - B
 - Mr Blackwell - B
 - Mr Lyon - B
 - Mr Watkins - B
 - Mr Maccabe - B
 - Mr Marsh - B
 - Mr Rickard - B
 - Mr Brooker - B
 - Miss Presho (B&L) - Personal - B
 - Mr Perry o/r
- (all without attachment)

Mr McCusker
Cent Sec

FAMILIES AGAINST INTIMIDATION AND TERROR (FAIT)

I attended the meeting which the Minister of State had with FAIT on 29 September. Miss Presho has circulated a note of this; and following the meeting the Minister asked me to invite Central Secretariat to pursue the main action point.

2. The meeting was of course called to discuss the possible proscription of the Ulster Young Militants (UYM), but in the event this was only glancingly mentioned. Instead, FAIT used the meeting to give a presentation on their work and hopes for the future, and left a booklet with us setting out their main points (copy attached for you only).

3. FAIT argued with some cogency that they were the only organisation which supported local people who were willing to stand up to paramilitary threats; that their information activities

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(publicising particular cases of intimidation, punishment shootings, etc) seriously disconcerted the paramilitaries (especially Sinn Fein) both domestically and internationally whenever they came up against them (they were the only organisation with which Gerry Adams had refused a public debate!); that they had been instrumental in influencing international organisations like Amnesty and Helsinki Watch to take a more balanced approach to Northern Ireland by examining human rights abuses by the terrorists as well as allegations against the security forces; and that, while the Government's central theme was that in order to defeat terrorism ordinary people had to stand up and help the security forces, realistically this would scarcely happen without a credible local support organisation which would run risks to encourage and give confidence to people who were willing to put their head above the parapet.

4. The presentation ended with a bid for considerably expanded funding of the organisation by Government - £1m spread over a 5 year period. FAIT argued that, while this seemed a great deal, it was not so much when set against the compensation costs which could arise from a single bomb, or the cost of our recent TV security advertisements (FAIT thought these were excellent and highly effective, but the effect would inevitably dissipate without a locally based organisation in place to encourage those who might be tempted to help the security forces to carry through their commitment to doing so).

5. Sir John gave no commitment at the meeting, other than agreeing to consider what FAIT had said. He also drew attention to the possible danger to the credibility of the organisation if they were seen to be wholly funded by Government, and suggested that they might be able to tap into a number of private sources (for example the Rowntree Trust). FAIT indicated that they would do so although they were, in fact, experienced in facing up to the Government from Sinn Fein that they were a Government front organisation which had backfired on Sinn Fein, since it was evident to them that the charge was simply a device to avoid facing up

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of PIRA intimidation and thuggishness which FAIT was able graphically to illustrate.

6. The Minister told the FAIT representatives that he had been impressed both by their courage and the quality of their presentation (I thought that Ms Imelda Hynds, the Vice-Chairperson, was particularly impressive). In discussion after the meeting, he said that he thought the organisation had made out a strong case for significantly increased funding (a judgement which I must say I wholly share), though perhaps not at the level their presentation had suggested. There was, of course, no new money available in the Survey years, but he would like to see from Central Secretariat a list of the community and voluntary groups in Northern Ireland which were currently being funded by Government, together with possible flexibilities in allocation, so that he could consider what scope there might be for reprioritising. (The Minister incidentally noted a suggestion at the meeting that the Falls Community Council, which recently provided the occasion for the President Robinson/Gerry Adams handshake, receives around £100,000 pa in public funds.)

7. As you will see from the meeting note, Miss Presho has asked for a progress report by 29 October. I should be most grateful if this could be copied to me for information.

SJZ

S J LEACH
Ext 27028

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