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ASST. /
SEC RW / 229 / 6
19 JUN 1990
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DUSB/8143/18.23

FROM: J K LEDLIE
19 June 1990

cc Minister of State (B&L) - B
Sir K Bloomfield - B
Mr Burns - B
Mr Spence - B
Mr A Wilson - B
Mr Blackwell - B
Mr J McConnell - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Hamilton - B
Mr R Wilson - B
19/6

PUS (B&L) - B

THE SECURITY FORCES AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Thank you for your note of 14 June.

2. I take the points you make. But I hope you will forgive me for saying that I think you are being a little harsh in your interpretation of some of the points Brigadier Mike Jackson makes in his letter. On re-reading it, I can see that his remarks could in certain places be read in the way you suggest. But I do not believe that he (or indeed any of the more reflective RUC and Army officers to whom I have spoken on this) take the view that, as and when the security forces make "mistakes", they should not be brought to book for it - and that will usually include being exposed to the full glare of the media. They also quite understand that, for important policy reasons that they fully appreciate, Government must in its public pronouncements be seen to be cautious and entirely objective. What they do fervently believe, however, as you know, is that, within this framework, there is scope for putting more resources into information work in order to ensure that a whole range of messages is put across more effectively in a multitude of ways.

3. This said, the main purpose of Brigadier Jackson's letter was to respond to an invitation I gave him to set out ways in which we might improve contacts and relationships between the Security Forces and the Community - an area to which, as a follow up to "Defeating

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Terrorism" and in the context of the Confidence Issues Working Group, I and a number of colleagues here in Belfast are currently paying a good deal of attention. I think this is a very worthwhile and important objective, in pursuit of which I believe there is a lot that is still to be done. Following the Minister of State's helpful note of 13 June, I shall, if you are content, be discussing with Mr Cope later this week exactly how best to proceed in what is a difficult and sensitive area. It is indeed, I think, the case that the Security Forces are not always well informed about the range of contacts that already exist; I hope that the initiatives we are now carefully developing will help to remedy this.

Signed JKL

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J K LEDLIE

ID 19039

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