



5 a.

CONFIDENTIALOPERATION "PEACE LINE"Narrative of Events - II

At 10.15 a.m. on 10 September, I visited Cardinal Conway by arrangement at his Palace at Armagh. Please see separate record of conversation. On my way back from Armagh I called on the Governor at Hillsborough at 12 noon, at his request, to keep him up-to-date with the situation. I then went to the lunch which the Prime Minister was giving for the officials of the Soviet Union football team at Stormont Castle, since all the people I wished to discuss business with were there.

2. At 2.30 I informed the Prime Minister at Stormont Castle in general terms of my visit to Armagh and discussed with him the Cardinal's proposal that a statement should be made that the Government would not use the Special Powers Act when the barricades were withdrawn. Mr. Harold Black was present. The Prime Minister was sympathetic to this proposal and asked that it should be examined and a form of words submitted. At 4.30 p.m. a meeting was called, chaired by the Minister of Home Affairs, with the Attorney-General present, to discuss a possible form of words. At 5.15 p.m. a form of words was approved as follows :-

"Fears have been expressed that on the removal of existing barricades, the Minister of Home Affairs may invoke the Special Powers Act to detain or intern those who have been involved in the erection or maintenance of barricades. The Minister has no such intention. Those persons against whom there is evidence of breaches of the Criminal Law will be liable, of course, to prosecution in the ordinary way."

3. I then tried to telephone the Cardinal at his Palace in Armagh to let him know what had been achieved, but was told that he was in passage from Armagh to Belfast to see Bishop Philbin. At 6.30 p.m. I managed to catch him at Bishop Philbin's, put the form of words to him and get his agreement to it. I emphasised that this text had not yet been approved by the Northern Ireland Government, but it was a form of words which, if he agreed, could, I hoped, be put to the Government and their agreement to it secured. Cardinal Conway agreed the form of words. I so informed the Minister of Home Affairs. The Northern Ireland Ministers on the Joint Security Council were then consulted individually by telephone : they all agreed. (This means, I believe, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Home Affairs (Mr. R.W.Porter), the Minister of Development (Mr. Brian Faulkner) and the Minister of Education (Capt. W.J.Long)). The form of words was

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agreed by the Northern Ireland Government at 8.20 p.m. Mr. Harold Black at my request cleared it with the General Officer Commanding. I then telephoned the Cardinal to tell him that the statement had been approved and was being issued. The Prime Minister's Office issued the statement at 8.25 p.m.

4. While all this was going on, I received at 6.30 p.m. Father Murphy and Mr. Conaty prior to their attending a meeting of the Peace Committee at Stormont Castle at 7.30 p.m., which had been called, extraordinarily, at their request. Please see separate record of conversation.

5. I subsequently spoke to Mr. Waddell at the Home Office on the telephone and told him in general terms the day's events and received from him an indication of the Home Secretary's current thinking and intentions.

(Oliver Wright)

OFFICE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM REPRESENTATIVE  
IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

11 September, 1969

cc. Mr. Waddell, Home Office  
Sir E. Peck, F.C.O.

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