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CITY OF LONDON POLICE,
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SECRET

24th October 1969

Dear Phillip.

As a result of General Baker's personal invitation to me I had a most cordial discussion with him today.

He expressed the view that H.M.G. did not think it possible to go any further with the rewriting of the G.O.C.'s Directive other than to accept his recommendation to "co-ordinate" the tasking of the R.U.C. General Baker assured me that there was no intention to give any specific orders to the Police and expressed his opinion that this position would be satisfactory, especially having regard to the close personal relationship between the G.O.C. and myself.

I explained that from my point of view two essential elements of my success were the loyalty of the members of the R.U.C. - which is by no means easy to achieve - and, secondly, the integrity of my own command free from any political or external interference. I explained that although I very much appreciated the gesture which the G.O.C. himself had initiated, this was a minimum requirement so far as I am concerned and that an important element of it is that it should be based not only on a personal understanding between the G.O.C. and myself but also that it should be made manifest for all to see.

I pointed out that the present responsibilities of the G.O.C. as Director of Operations go a great deal further than those envisaged by General Baker and that when the G.O.C. is faced, as he is, with the responsibility of such various matters as the general searching of premises, detention of suspects and the arrest of members of the public, all carried out on the initiative and responsibility of the Armed Forces, he is already operating in an area which could lead not only to embarrassment but into very serious political and constitutional problems.

I expressed the view that the Directive as it is now is an expedient which cannot be properly or clearly spelled out and that it relies entirely on the interpretation put upon it by the G.O.C. and others concerned. My own view is that the G.O.C. is put into a position of unnecessary embarrassment by being appointed Director of Operations because, since he does not direct the Government or Administration and says that he will not direct the Police, he is left only with his normal responsibilities and functions as G.O.C.

I assured General Baker that in accordance with my undertaking to the G.O.C. I would not only do my best to see that this modification of the G.O.C.'s Directive

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works smoothly but I would make special efforts to see that the Police at all levels co-operated with the Army fully and willingly.

He asked for my appreciation over the next few months: I said that I hoped, inspite of setbacks that may occur, the position would progressively improve and that I hoped it would be possible for at least some of the troops to be released from their duties in Northern Ireland in the near future: I expressed my view that this would have a great psychological advantage in addition to its other benefits.

X | No doubt the Government of Northern Ireland will be informed of this modification to the G.O.C's Directive. In view of what they have told me I envisage that they will react in the same way as I have done.

In order to make my own position clear let me assure you that in accordance with my undertaking I accept the modification which has been agreed in good faith and that I will endeavour to see that it works smoothly and well. I must, however, make it clear that the present position of the G.O.C. AS Director of Operations is not entirely satisfactory to me and although I do not anticipate trouble arising from it it could give rise both to difficulties and to dangers which would be better avoided by taking a Constitutional assessment of the present situation. I reserve the right to come back to you on this subject whenever I consider it necessary and I rely upon you to see that these views are conveyed personally to the Home Secretary.

John
ALB.

Sir Philip Allen, K.C.B.,
Permanent Under-Secretary of State,
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