

~~SECRET~~

Dw Hopkins

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S. of S.Northern IrelandPart-time Military Force

... Yesterday I submitted a draft DOPC paper and a draft White Paper on the new defence force for Northern Ireland. I now attach the latest draft of each paper. Mr. Healey wants to circulate the paper, with your agreement to-morrow morning for discussion on the DOPC on Friday 31st October.

... not attached

Mr. Healey went through the drafts with his officials this morning and invited Mr. Hopkins and me to be present. A note is attached. Mr. Healey, like you prefers the title "Northern Ireland Defence Force". He recognises, however, the importance that the Northern Ireland Government may attach to the title "Ulster Defence Force". This was much preferred by the Working Party to which Mr. Chichester-Clark referred in his letter to you of 24th October and Mr. Chichester-Clark is likely to take the point up when he is consulted. At that stage if he presses Mr. Healey would be inclined to give way.

I told Mr. Healey that you thought the strength of the force (paragraph 13 of DOPC paper and paragraph 6 of White Paper) could be limited to 4,000, as recommended by the Hunt Committee. The figure of 6,000 in yesterday's draft, which rose overnight to 7,000 was based on military calculations. Mr. Healey is aware of the dangers of setting too high a ceiling before the recruiting pull of the new force is known. He is prepared to support a ceiling of 6,000 but no more. Would you agree to 6,000 as a ceiling figure, recognising that the actual strength would probably be less?

It was agreed last night that the proposals for the new police volunteer reserve should be released in Northern Ireland simultaneously with the publication of the White Paper on the new

defence force on 13th November. This is not, and I think need not be, mentioned in the paper. The terms and conditions of service of this reserve are still being discussed, but the strength has been provisionally put at 1,300. Mr. Baker who is in close touch still envisages the date limit of 13th November can be met.

Particular points arising out of the new drafts to which I need to draw your specific attention are as follows:-

(a) Consultation (paragraph 8 of the White Paper).

...
not attached.
This now repeats the wording of the communique issued after your visit of 9th and 10th October (communique attached) rather than making a specific promise that there would be consultation about the calling out and operational employment of the force. The opening words emphasise the responsibility of the GOC to Westminster.

(b) Transitional Provisions (paragraph 15 of DOPC paper)

Included in the communique issued after your visit is a statement by the Northern Ireland Government that they thought it essential that the USC as at present organised should remain in being until a fully effective security force was available to replace it. You accepted that this requirement would be fully met. Paragraph 15 deals with the problem that will occur should the majority of members of the USC take it in their minds not to volunteer for the new force, thus keeping themselves in being ad infinitum.

We discussed this morning how the Northern Ireland Government is to be consulted about the proposals. Mr. Healey takes the view that the OPD may well decide to amend the draft White Paper in some of its

most important features and that therefore the process of consultation with the Northern Ireland Government should take place between OPD on Friday and Cabinet on Tuesday. He considers, however, that it would be quite fair to warn Mr. Chichester-Clark now that he may expect to see a draft at the weekend. I think probably it is wise not to show a draft till it has been discussed at OPD. The first draft of the Ministry of Defence Bill should be available in a day or two and that could be dealt with in the same way.

Mr. Healey now believes that it would be better if Mr. Hattersley did not take the initiative in going over to Northern Ireland to discuss the draft and that he should simply be ready to go there if Major Chichester-Clark had points which he wished to discuss. You might like to discuss this with Mr. Healey, but it does not affect the paper.

In yesterday's minute I said I would let you have an accurate statement of the extent to which it can be said that the recommendations of the recommendations of the Working Party referred to by Mr. Chichester-Clark in his letter of the 24th October have been met. We have endeavoured to do this, and to answer your questions about how the terms of service proposed for the new force compare with the USC, in the attached table. There are different emphases on such matters as training liabilities, dress and age limits. We are sending the table to the Ministry of Defence to check in case we have missed anything and a revised version will be available to you in time for OPD.

28th October 1969

Copied to: Sir Philip Allen
Mr. Hopper
Mr. North
Mr. Hopkins ✓