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IMMEDIATE

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FOR DEFENCE SECRETARY FROM MAYNE.

Subject Hunt Report.

1. Following Tuesday's Cabinet, Home Secretary is negotiating with Northern Ireland Ministers the terms on which the USC should be abolished and a new defence force established. The latest news is that these negotiations are going well from our point of view, and that an agreement within the limits set by the Cabinet will be reached tomorrow morning. The Home Secretary plans a joint announcement of the results of these discussions at 1230 p.m. tomorrow.

you

2. I will try to obtain a copy of what Home Secretary plans to say, and consult during the course of tomorrow morning on any difficult aspects.

3. Meanwhile we have been considering guidance to the Press Office for dealing with press enquiries after the Home Secretary's press conference. It is felt that answers to press enquiries should be sufficiently forthcoming to give confidence without either pre-empting your speech on Monday or destroying our flexibility in working out the detailed proposals.

4. The Questions and Answers in MIFT have been agreed by the Staff. I should be grateful for your approval. Particularly important Questions are Nos. 5, 7, and 10. Answer No. 5 is I think neat. Answer No. 7 fudges the issue, but rightly. And Answer No. 10 could be firmed up to indicate that the force will be under military discipline. The thinking here is that the Army Act will have to be applied. But you may not want to go that far.

5. Emphasis is not going to be placed on the "Local Defence Volunteer, Home Guard" aspect to prevent misunderstanding in Northern Ireland. Cabinet Minutes refer to a "Defence Force"; alternatively we could refer to a "Local Reserve Force".

MESSAGE ENDS.

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File on the new force

5

D/DS6/7/153/44/8

CPRHUNT COMMITTEE

1. I attach the final version of the background briefing material on the new local part-time force recommended by the Hunt committee, as guidance in dealing with press enquiries after the Home Secretary's press conference tomorrow. No doubt you will concert with the Home Office P.R. people and with the PRO at HQ Northern Ireland.

2. There are two points in particular in the handling of this question on which I suggest some care is required. I have spoken to the Home Office about them, and I understand that you have also had a word with their press office. The first is that emphasis should not be placed on the "local defence volunteer" (i.e. Home Guard) aspect, for obvious reasons, and the general description to be used with the press - which does not in any way imply that the official title finally chosen for the force will be the same - will be the Northern Ireland "local reserve force".

3. The second point is whether members of the new force will keep their arms at home. As you will see from A 7, it is most important not to be explicit on this at this stage.

Q.1 What duties will the new local reserve force perform?

A.1 The details will be worked out by General Freeland and his staff in close consultation with HMG and with the Government of Northern Ireland, but they might well cover, for example, such duties previously carried out by the U.S.C. as the guarding of VPs and dealing with threats to the security of Northern Ireland from armed guerilla-type attacks.

Will it be paid?

Q.2 What will the conditions of service be? Will it get travelling and out-of-pocket expenses?

A.2 Yes, it will be remunerated during training or when called out. It will wear uniform, and will be a part-time force recruited locally on a voluntary basis. Its members need have no former military or police experience. It is too early to say yet as regards other points.

/Q.3

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- Q.3 How long will it take to work out the detailed conditions of service, etc?
- A.3 Impossible to say at this stage. We shall get on with this as a matter of urgency.
- Q.4 How will training be carried out? How much training will it do?
- A.4 This again must be subject to detailed consideration.
- Q.5 How will they be equipped? Will they have CS smoke?
- A.5 They will be equipped appropriately to their role. Since this will not include riot or crowd control, they will not need CS smoke.
- Q.6 How big will it be?
- A.6 Lord Hunt suggests about 4,000. The exact figure will of course depend on the detailed requirement.
- Q.7 Will its members continue to keep their arms at home?
- A.7 These are matters which will be decided by the GOC. It is too early yet to give specific answers on points of this sort.
- Q.8 What sort of legislation will be required?
- A.8 In general terms, legislation will have to cover the establishment and status of the force, the enrolment, discipline and terms of service of its members, and the conditions under which they can be called out for training or service.
- Q.9 How will it be organised? What will be the command arrangements under the GOC?
- A.9 We have some first ideas on this, but I should prefer not to be definite at the present stage.
- Q.10 Will it be under military discipline?
- A.10 Either under military discipline or something akin to it.
- Q.11 What sort of uniforms will be worn? Will they be khaki?
- A.11 This has not yet been decided.

/Q.12

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Q.12 Will it be open to members of the U.S.C.?

A.12 It will be open to all suitable applicants, within the numbers required.

*A. A. Ministry*

AUS (GS)  
October 1969.

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Home Office (Mr. Faulkner) ←

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D/DS6/7/153/44/8

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CPRHUNT COMMITTEE

1. I mentioned to you that the Private Office had been in touch with the Secretary of State about the background briefing material which I sent to you yesterday evening and that they had some further comments to add. This is just to put these additional points on record.

1. The Secretary of State would like to avoid the use of the word "reserve" in the definition of the new force if possible, although this will be difficult since there are virtually no other descriptive words which are acceptable either. The important thing however is that in response to any inquiries you should make to clear that this does not mean that the force is part of, or connected with, the army reserve.

2. In answering Q.1, you can say, in addition to the answer already suggested, that S of S will be dealing with this question in his winding up speech in the debate on Monday.

3. Delete the second sentence of A.7 and add ", and will of course depend on the specific role of the units concerned."

4. Add:

Q.13 Will the force be the responsibility of the Home Office or the Ministry of Defence?

A.13 The Ministry of Defence.

*A. Hawley*

AUS (GS)  
10 October 1969.

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