



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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cc: PSS / Mr. Nally
Mr. P. Murphy
Mr. Gallagher (on return)
Ambassador London
Mr. Brown, D.J.
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DND

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TO HQ FROM BELFAST
25 APRIL 1989

CONFIDENTIAL

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FOR D. O'DONOVAN FROM N RYAN

SOUTH AFRICAN INVOLVEMENT WITH LOYALIST PARAMILITARIES

IN THE COURSE OF A MEETING YESTERDAY AFTERNOON WITH AUSTIN WILSON, UNDER-SECRETARY, NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE, I RAISED THIS MATTER WITH HIM STRESSING OUR DEEP CONCERNS ABOUT THE MI SECURITY IMPLICATIONS, SPECIFICALLY THE EXTENT TO WHICH LOYALIST PARAMILITARIES HAD ALREADY MANAGED TO IMPORT LARGE QUANTITIES OF ARMS, THE BREACHES OF SECURITY AT SHORTS INSTALLATIONS AND AT A TERRITORIAL ARMY BASE AND THE QUESTION OF A POSSIBLE LINK BETWEEN MEMBERS OF LOYALIST TERRORIST ORGANISATIONS AND SERVING PERSONNEL IN THE T.A. IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND I ASKED FOR OFFICIAL BACKGROUND BRIEFING.

MR. WILSON ASKED ME TO COME TO HIS OFFICE LATER YESTERDAY EVENING TO RESPOND TO MY EARLIER REPRESENTATIONS. HE SAID THAT, SINCE THE THEFT FROM THE SHORTS FACTORY AT CROSSGAR, BALLYNAHINCH AT THE END OF OCTOBER 1983, A THOROUGH REVIEW OF SECURITY HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE. THIS HAD RESULTED IN A NUMBER OF IMPROVEMENTS TO SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS, BOTH IN RELATION TO THE SECURITY OF THE PREMISES AND TO THE SECURITY SCREENING OF STAFF EMPLOYED AT THE FACTORY. WILSON WOULD NOT BE DRAWN ON THE DETAILS OF THE CHANGES THAT HAD BEEN MADE BUT SAID THAT THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND HAD EXPRESSED THEMSELVES TO BE SATISFIED WITH THE NEW SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS AT THE FACTORY.

SIMILARLY, SINCE THE THEFT A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO FROM THE T.A. BASE

AT NEWTOWNARDS, A FULL SECURITY REVIEW WAS BEING CARRIED OUT INTO SECURITY AT THE BASE AND AT OTHER SUCH BASES IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

WILSON CONFIRMED THAT ONE OF THE THREE ARRESTED IN PARIS, QUINN, WAS A MEMBER OF THE T.A. SERVING AT NEWTOWNARDS AND THE SECURITY REVIEW WOULD BE CONCERNED WITH POSSIBLE INVOLVEMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE T.A. WITH LOYALIST PARAMILITARY ORGANISATIONS.

WILSON SAID THAT THE ITEMS STOLEN FROM SHORTS WERE PARTS OF THE 'BLOWPIPE' SYSTEM AND A BLOWPIPE TRAINING SIMULATOR AND ALSO PARTS OF THE 'JAVELIN' SYSTEM. NONE OF THE ITEMS WERE CAPABLE OF OPERATIONAL USE. THE EQUIPMENT STOLEN FROM THE T.A. BASE WAS A TRAINING MODEL IN SECTIONS AND THIS WAS ALSO NOT CAPABLE OF BEING USED OPERATIONALLY.

WILSON WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO TELL ME VERY MUCH ABOUT THE BACKGROUND DETAIL TO THE STORY BUT SAID THAT DAVID MCKITTRICK'S REPORT ON PAGE 3 OF YESTERDAY'S LONDON INDEPENDENT WAS GENERALLY ACCURATE. HE WOULD NEITHER CONFIRM NOR DENY THAT THERE WAS EVIDENCE THAT THE S.A. GOVERNMENT HAD ALREADY ASSISTED THE LOYALISTS FINANCIALLY AND WITH CONTACTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL ARMS MARKET TO OBTAIN WEAPONS WHICH HAD BEEN PURCHASED IN LEBANON.

THE PARIS TRIO HAVE ALREADY BEEN CHARGED AND ARE NOW UNDER INTERROGATION BY THE EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. WILSON HAD NO INFORMATION ABOUT WHETHER THEY HAD MADE ANY STATEMENTS IN THE COURSE OF QUESTIONING.

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