



## An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

*An interesting and  
encouraging report.*

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etc.*

CONFIDENTIAL - BY SPECIAL COURIER

13 March 1989

Dear Assistant Secretary

As you are aware, I invited Assistant Commissioner Hugh Annesley to lunch last Friday, largely to congratulate him on his appointment as Chief Constable of the RUC and to make his acquaintance before he takes up his new appointment.

Mr Annesley has a very pleasant, relaxed personality. He was friendly and open and ready to talk about matters other than the purely social and, indeed, he gave me every encouragement to convey any views I had on the RUC. I had therefore the opportunity to make, in the course of our conversation, most of the points in the material supplied in telex C64 of 9 March, on the need for policies to bring about better relations between the security forces and the minority community. I made it clear that detailed and expert discussions on these matters are on-going in the Secretariat and Conference and are likely to figure prominently in the Review at present under way.

Mr Annesley is still full-time with the Metropolitan Police and said he is not seeing Northern Ireland papers. He is, however, meeting a lot of people with views on Northern Ireland policing and, in a general comment, he said that much of what he had heard from me on the need for better relations with the minority, and, in particular, on the problems of harassment, complaint procedures and on

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the need for greater liaison with local communities he had also heard from others. He said he was very open to these ideas. He is particularly interested in police liaison with local communities and spoke at some length and with enthusiasm of experiments in this field he had introduced in areas of London with ethnic minority problems. He believes that carefully selected and broadly based local committees with which the police liaise, to the extent sometimes of explaining in advance (but not in detail) proposed major operations, have been effective in avoiding tension and perhaps serious outbreaks of rioting. He was aware, he said, that in Northern Ireland it would be "easiest to introduce measures of this sort in areas where they are least needed" and that in some areas they might be out of the question but it seemed clear that he intends to look carefully at the possibilities in this field. He took the point that in the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland informal liaison with community leaders may be more appropriate than through formally established committees. In response to my remarks on this point he said he would always insist that his divisional officers have good local contacts.

Annesley has long and expert experience in complaint procedures and has lectured and drawn up rules on the subject. He said his basic view is that procedures for dealing with accusations against the police will never be fully acceptable to the public unless they are, in fact, fully independent. However, he sees all the problems in setting up generally acceptable and effective independent machinery: who would select and train the investigators?: who would pay them?: what powers would they have?: would policemen talk to them if they were outsiders? In the course of our conversation on this subject, I referred to the many complaints in Northern Ireland of harassment and the

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need for informal and rapid investigation and response. Again, Annesley seemed very receptive, speaking of experienced and sensible police inspectors he had known who were able to deal informally and satisfactorily with such cases.

I mentioned the question of primacy - Annesley was very quick to respond that in a democracy, the civilian police must have primacy in law enforcement. He added that he understood that the debate with the army in Northern Ireland is on-going - he described it as a tightrope situation. I did not press further.

Mr Annesley spoke warmly of his friends in the Gardai - he knows all of the senior officers and was aware of recent promotions and postings. He is looking forward to working with the Garda Commissioner in the Conference framework.

Mr Annesley accepts that there may be some disgruntlement in senior ranks in the RUC at the appointment of an outsider but believes his appointment is generally welcomed. He knows there is a big organisational job to be done - it does not worry him. The Met has 46,000 personnel; he said it will be easier to make an impression on a force of 11,000. He will approach the job carefully. He qualified all his remarks to me by saying that it is early days - he intends to listen to the views of a lot of people - in the RUC and outside. He will not take what is put to him in the official brief as the last word and will make up his mind after careful reflection.

Yours sincerely



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Ambassador

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