



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Speaking Note

Confidence Issues

Whiterock Road Killings

1. Perhaps I should start by saying a few brief words about the Whiterock Road killings. I was struck, as I am sure that you were too, by the strength of the statement by Bishop Daly when he said that the incident was a "cruel setback" to building community confidence in the security forces. I am sure that you have given serious consideration to Bishop Daly's view that this incident has been damaging and is the type of affair that could significantly set back efforts to improve confidence in the security forces. It also reinforces the view, which we have consistently taken here, of the crucial importance of the primacy of the police. I think it goes without saying that what is vital now, if public opinion is to be allayed and reassured, is that the investigation into the incident be thorough and transparent.
2. The Whiterock killings have, of course, added to the interest in the outcome of the McKerr case in the House of Lords. We know you intend, if you lose the appeal, to amend your legislation to ensure that members of the security forces should remain non-compellable to give evidence at inquests. If you do this, you will understand that we will probably have to say something publicly. Our legislation,

as you probably know, does not exempt anyone from being summoned as a witness at an inquest.

Accompaniment of UDR Patrols

3. I understand that our officials have made useful progress in this area and that, with effect from the 1st January, the RUC has instituted a comprehensive system for monitoring levels of accompaniment; this should enable progress to be assessed on a continuing basis and conclusions drawn about levels and trends. I welcome this development.
4. Officials have still to reach agreement on other aspects of accompaniment, including on defining sensitive areas. However, as we are already committed to reaching agreement on this latter point, I am sure that a satisfactory formula will be arrived at quickly.
5. It is important that we should be able together to look at the new monitoring figures on a regular basis. We must, of course, also remain clear-sighted about the objective of the whole exercise, which is to achieve progress towards the goal of full implementation of the principle in the Hillsborough Communique. I addressed this matter in some detail at the Conference Meeting in Belfast on 18 October. I need hardly reiterate that for us this is an issue of considerable importance, being as it was a central

commitment at the time of the Agreement and more recently in the Review document.

Stevens Enquiry

6. We have noted that Mr. Stevens has been quite active and that several persons have already been charged arising out of his investigation. We both recognise the importance that attaches to his work and the necessity that he deal fully and thoroughly with this very sensitive issue. I understand that the recent fire will delay the completion of the investigation by about four weeks and that Mr. Stevens now expects to report in early March. We hope that this timetable will be met. In the meantime, I would appreciate any indication you could let us have about the type of conclusions, especially as regards what might be called the structural aspects, which may be emerging from the enquiry.

Stalker Affair

7. We would be interested in having your views as to how you see the Stalker affair evolving.