

FROM: J M LEGGE
16 July 1996

ASSISTANT SECRETARY
SECURITY POLICY & OPERATIONS

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cc PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B
PS/Sir John Wheeler (B&L) - B
PS/Michael Ancram (B&L) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Sir David Fell - B
Mr Steele - B
Mr Thomas (B&L) - B
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Leach - (B&L) - B
Mr Perry - B
Mr Hill (B&L) - B
Mr Lavery - B
Mr Stephens - B
Mr Maccabe - B
Mr Myles - B

PS/SIR J WHEELER

RELAYING INFORMATION ON PUNISHMENT BEATINGS TO SENATOR MITCHELL

On my return to the office I have been catching up with the most recent exchanges of minutes on this subject. I understand that the latest position is that the Secretary of State is intending to call a meeting to discuss the advisability of providing information on punishment beatings to the Independent Chairmen.

2. It seems to me, however, that, even if one leaves aside the concerns expressed by Michael Ancram and Mr Thomas, the events of the last ten days have made a significant difference to the timing of providing this information. After a period during which we have seen widespread violence throughout Northern Ireland, involving numerous injuries to both the Security Forces and civilians (including two deaths), arson attacks on property and vehicles, intimidation etc, culminating in the Killyhevlin Hotel bomb, it would look rather odd to provide the Independent Chairmen with a list of punishment beatings up to the end of June; these will inevitably appear rather "small beer" when compared with recent events.

3. It seems likely that the Talks will be adjourned in the not too distant future and will not restart until September. I would therefore suggest that we should put this issue on hold until the Talks resume, when it might be appropriate to provide the Chairmen with a round-up of security incidents over the past few months as a prelude to regular monthly reporting on the lines originally proposed in my minute of 2 July. Would the Minister be content to proceed on this basis? If so, I will put forward further advice when the Talks resume, reflecting the current status of both the security and political situations. This approach would, of course, remove any need for a Ministerial discussion at this stage.

Signed JML

J M LEGGE

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