

NOTE OF HOME SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH MR. FAULKNER
AT THE HOME OFFICE ON MONDAY, 6TH DECEMBER

Present: Home Secretary
Mr. Woodfield
Mr. Angel
Mr. Faulkner
Mr. Ramsay

Mr. Faulkner said that he would be very surprised if the I.R.A. were able

to keep up their terrorist campaign in Belfast beyond February. On the political front, Mr. Faulkner found unanimous support within his own Party from both left and right. He would be confident of the outcome of an election if one were held now. Paisley was losing support all over the Province. It was important that ideas such as the proposal that a united Ireland should come about within 15 years should not gain currency. They would only encourage the I.R.A. to carry on. Public opinion in Great Britain needed to accept that Northern Ireland would remain a part of the United Kingdom. Mr. Faulkner believed that he still had substantial Catholic support though this could not be vocal because of intimidation. He stressed that the political initiatives which had been taken had not yet had an opportunity to work.

Mr. Faulkner said that Mr. McGurk, the proprietor of the pub which was blown up at the week-end, had been interviewed by the police in hospital and had said that there were no strangers in the bar on the night of the explosion. The army also discovered that the bomb went off on the ground floor. Both point strongly to the likelihood that the bomb was carried by the I.R.A. rather than Protestant extremists. Mr. Faulkner had asked the R.U.C. to find out whether anything was known about the associations of the people who were killed or injured.

CONFIDENTIAL

21 Dec 1968

*APPENDIX
Ca.
Mr. Faulkner
Mr. Ramsay
Mr. Angel
Mr. Woodfield
Home Secretary*

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Mr. Faulkner thanked the Home Secretary for his co-operation in securing Sir Charles Cunningham's enquiry into security at Crumlin Road. The Governor of the prison had told him that he was convinced that there had been no collusion, but there had been carelessness. Internment was producing information so rapidly that accommodation was becoming crowded. The army were thinking of using McGilligan Camp for internees. Assistance in providing staff might be needed. Perhaps the new camp could be staffed from Britain. It was pointed out that senior officials from the Home Office Prison Department were to visit Northern Ireland to discuss more precisely what assistance the Northern Ireland Government sought.

The Home Secretary told Mr. Faulkner that the United Kingdom Government had decided to keep Sydenham operating beyond 1975. It would operate on a reduced basis so far as military personnel were concerned, but there would not be redundancies affecting civil employment. Mr. Faulkner welcomed this decision and expressed his appreciation for the understanding shown by the Ministers concerned.

The Home Secretary told Mr. Faulkner that he proposed that Sir Edmund Compton be asked to carry on dealing with complaints from persons arrested with a view to internment. This, together with the arrangements which were being made for a Board of Visitors to hear complaints of people once they were received into prison, should fill the gap which had been criticised. Sir Edmund Compton would be asked to consider complaints made by the person concerned, but not required to deal with complaints made at second-hand. He would enquire into the action of the army or the R.U.C. Mr. Faulkner agreed with this proposal. There was some discussion on whether the Board of Visitors could consider complaints by detainees as well as internees.

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The Home Secretary said that he had agreed that the R.U.C. should be provided with automatic weapons to guard police stations where the army were unable to provide protection. He was not disposed to agree to the use of automatic weapons by police officers on the streets. Mr. Faulkner said that he supported the Chief Constable's proposal that mobile patrols should have machine-gun support if necessary. Unless the police had this protection they might not respond to emergency calls in difficult areas. It was not proposed that automatic weapons should be used other than on mobile patrols. Mr. Faulkner said that the G.O.C. supported this proposal. The Home Secretary referred to arrangements which had been made at local initiative whereby a soldier with an automatic weapon sometimes accompanied an R.U.C. patrol. The Ministry of Defence has now made arrangements so that this practice would be encouraged, though it would be wrong to suggest that all cases would be covered. The army was also providing protection for vehicles.

The Home Secretary said that much of the criticism in the recent debate had centred on procedures for internment. If these could be modified it would be easier to retain support for the principle of internment itself. Mr. Faulkner said that this was under active consideration. He had it in mind that an internee might be told in writing of the allegation against him: the statement would be on the lines that he was a member of an unlawful association, or actively involved in the recent campaign of violence. The Home Secretary asked whether the statement would give such detail as the type of illegal organisation - Brady or Goulding - to which it was alleged that the individual belonged. Mr. Faulkner said that he was disinclined to go into such detail. Mr. Faulkner said that Judge Brown's Committee might consider cases in two stages, with lawyers admitted to one but not to the other. The Home Secretary suggested that Judge Brown's Committee might be expanded in view of the large amount of work for them to do. A Commonwealth Judge might be included: it might even be necessary for panels to be formed. Mr. Faulkner said that he would speedily put forward a package of proposals for revamping the internment procedures for the Home Secretary to consider.

The Home Secretary said that he had it in mind to visit Northern Ireland on Monday and Tuesday, 13th/14th December. Mr. Faulkner said that he had already arranged to come to London as host at an Ulster Office function on the Monday and, while he was prepared to cancel if necessary, it would be helpful if Monday could be avoided. The Home Secretary said that he would see whether different arrangements could be made. Mr. Faulkner asked the Home Secretary to see his Cabinet and, if possible, his back-benchers. The Home Secretary told him that he had it in mind to invite the S.D.L.P. and the Nationalists to see him so that if they refused it would be clear to all where the responsibility for any lack of political progress lay. He also had it in mind to see the Cardinal, Bishop Philbin and Father Murphy. Mr. Faulkner asked whether it might be necessary to see the Protestant Church Leaders as well if one saw the Cardinal.

7th December 1971

c.c. Miss Sermon
Mr. Woodfield
Mr. Howard-Drake
Mr. Lindley
Mr. Trevelyan
Mr. McDowall

Private Secretary to
Secretary of State for Defence