

SECRET AND PERSONAL



10 DOWNING STREET
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THE PRIME MINISTER

2 November 1988

Dear Charlie,

I was so sorry to hear about your spell in hospital. I hope you are now fully recovered.

Thank you for your letter of 29 September about cross border security cooperation. I was pleased to learn what is happening over the provision of specialised training for the Garda and pre-emptive intelligence gathering; and I am most grateful for your continued personal interest in both these matters.

I note that you have referred the other issues mentioned in my letter to you of 26 August to the Minister of Justice and the Garda Commissioner. I agree that some of these are matters on which progress may perhaps be made most effectively by direct contacts between our two police forces; but I hope that we can both keep a close eye on progress.

In my letter to you of 26 August I said that I would be writing to you again about a number of other matters which we were then pursuing. You will have heard that we have been conducting a review of our security arrangements to see how we could make our response to terrorism more effective. This review has covered both operational issues and the law. We are deliberately not bringing all our decisions together in a major package, but will let our intentions become clear over time.

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The steps we have already taken include the announcement of our intention to introduce legislation that will help the authorities in Britain and in Northern Ireland to get at terrorist finances; the ban on the broadcasting of direct statements by representatives of proscribed organisations or statements by others which support or invite support for them; and the proposal to allow courts to draw inferences from a suspect's decision to refuse to answer questions. It is our intention to enact similar legislation in Britain on this last point as soon as the legislative programme permits. There will probably be one or two more announcements to come. We have tried to ensure that you receive advance notice of all these steps.

There are two other matters, affecting our cooperation which I hope you will look at further.

The first is the need for rapid and secure communications between the Garda and the RUC across the border. To some extent, we have this at Headquarters level. But I understand that communication is not yet on a secure basis at divisional and station level. Secure communication of this kind is essential if there is to be a rapid and effective response to terrorist action, particularly near the border. I understand that new and secure equipment is currently being tried out. I hope that we can agree that, if it proves to be effective, it should quickly be put into service.

There is also the question of communications in emergencies by the British Army with the Garda. I know this has been discussed in the Conference but so far without result. While obviously all normal contact should be between the Garda and the RUC, there are bound to be emergencies when the British Army will need to make immediate contact with the Garda for help in a particular incident. It is quite easy to construct a scenario in which this would be essential. If we had a case where this was necessary and it emerged that the Garda were not allowed to respond to a message from the Army,

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there would inevitably and understandably be a strong public reaction. We must find a way in which this emergency communciation can operate.

We have a joint interest in the control of home made explosives (HME) and therefore in the report of the economic/industrial survey on inert fertilisers. Unfortunately it looks as though changes here will be more difficult and much more expensive than we hoped. But I am sure that we must keep up the search for practical solutions. Preventing terrorists from having access to HME could save a lot of lives.

We will both have some difficult issues to face in the next few months. There is bound to be considerable public and media interest in the first of the Stalker/Sampson inquests, which will start on 14 November, and in some of our legislative proposals when they are considered in Parliament. We can expect similar interest in other developments arising from our security review, in extradition and in the review of Article 11 of the Agreement. If we are to avoid unnecessary problems arising between our two Governments, we will need to ensure that our Ministers and officials keep in close touch.

I look forward to seeing you in Rhodes.

Warm regards,

Yours sincerely

Raymond

Mr. Charles Haughey, T.D.