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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
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 Telephone 01-930 7022

MO 19/3

January 1986

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Dear Andrew,

INFANTRY REINFORCEMENTS OF NORTHERN IRELAND

Thank you for your letter of 23rd December 1985.

Due to the fact that this deployment of additional troops is likely to last for a period of at least several weeks it would not have been possible to disguise the reinforcement in the way you suggest. Normal handover periods cover a matter of days and to the experienced eye of a Northern Ireland watcher a protracted handover would be noted and no doubt seized upon by those who wished to make an issue out of it.

The reinforcement has, of course, now been widely reported by the press and appears to have been accepted for what it is. That is, in order to give the Royal Ulster Constabulary the support they require without an unacceptable level of strain on those members of the Armed Forces already serving in Northern Ireland.

I am sending copies of this letter to Charles Powell, (No 10), Private Secretaries to other members of OD(I) and to Michael Stark (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

Dennis

(D BRENNAN)

Andrew Lansley Esq  
 Private Secretary  
 Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

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SITUATION

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