



QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

21 April 1989

Dear Tom,

PROSCRIPTION OF IRISH PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ORGANISATION (IPLO)

Thank you for your letter of 6 April about the proscription of IPLO.

I support the action which you propose. It emerges clearly from your letter that IPLO is primarily and actively a terrorist organisation. While its membership is relatively small, it appears to have an experienced and dedicated leadership capable of mounting a co-ordinated campaign of terrorist attacks. The organisation has already claimed responsibility for a number of serious incidents in the Province. There are now ample grounds for its proscription in Northern Ireland.

The position on Sinn Fein and the UDA is, as you say, different. I agree with your conclusion that the proscription of these organisations would be considerably harder to justify than in the case of IPLO and could be seriously counter-productive.

I have considered whether equivalent action should be taken under Section 1 of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1989 to proscribe IPLO in Great Britain. Subject to Malcolm Rifkind's views, I do not think this is necessary at the moment. IPLO have not so far carried out an attack on the mainland and from current intelligence it does not appear to have either the intention or capacity to operate outside Northern Ireland.

It would be unwise to rule out the possibility of a mainland attack in the future, especially in view of IPLO's maverick nature. But there seems little prospect of this at present. In defending the power of proscription during the recent passage of the Prevention of Terrorism Bill we emphasised that it was an exceptional measure for use only when justified by a clear operational need. It would be difficult to demonstrate that such a need existed in Great Britain at the moment. I therefore propose that at least for the time being IPLO should not be proscribed in Great Britain, but that the matter is reviewed if and when there are clearer signs of their activities moving to the mainland.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

Yours,

Douglas

The Rt Hon Tom King, MP.

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