

Prime Minister



Irish support for devolution is in the A-1 square. We do not need to sound them further. We have to put on with words with which do Prime Minister know if the wider letters are possible are

Mr. Brooke's account of proposals to take forward his proposals for devolved government.

You may like to advise him to make haste slowly, particularly with the Irish Government. I suspect the Irish are going to be very difficult: & their Unionist suspicions. Mr. Brooke

NORTHERN IRELAND: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

We agreed before Christmas (my minute of 18 December) that there might now be an opportunity to achieve some political progress in Northern Ireland and that I should try to nudge the parties towards talking together and with the Government about the transfer of power to local politicians. We now need to follow up my speech in Bangor on 9 January (copy attached). Although events over the weekend may appear to cast a shadow, I do not believe they should interfere with our current efforts.

might be better advised to wait until after he has met all the main Northern Ireland parties before involving

2. Initial reactions within Northern Ireland have been broadly helpful. No party has closed off the possibility of inter-party talks. There is considerable strain within the UUP: several MPs and party officers are unhappy with Mr Molyneaux's immobility and the speech has added to this tension. Mr Molyneaux has so far been non-committal but will be discussing the party's reaction with his officers. In Dr Paisley's absence, Mr Robinson gave the speech a guarded welcome: he has clearly interpreted it, correctly, as being designed to help him bring the DUP into inter-party talks. The SDLP have been, to some extent, put on the spot by the speech. They have made clear that they are committed to devolution but Mr Hume would have preferred me not to draw attention to this fact. I shall be seeing him and his Parliamentary colleagues on 19 January and pressing them to think through how they can most constructively contribute to bringing about the talks they want to see. The smaller political parties have generally made supportive statements about the speech (though the four local Conservative Associations, who were less enthusiastic, have kept a tactful silence).

Govt. C.D. 15/1



3. Within Northern Ireland, partly through our own efforts, we now have a situation in which it appears that it may be possible to move forward to constructive inter-party talks. I shall be maintaining existing contacts with the SDLP, DUP and Alliance Party and seeking to promote agreement on an agenda for talks, and I am exploring all the possibilities for involving the UUP. A good deal of work will need to be done in bilateral meetings with the parties, possibly even in preliminary multi-lateral discussions, before any substantive talks could start. However, the determining factor for involving the UUP and indeed the DUP, in this process, is likely to be the attitude which they take towards the pre-conditions which they have set for themselves for entering inter-party talks.

4. Thus far, we have said little of substance to the Irish about the prospects for devolution, although we have been keeping them in touch in general terms. I have briefly touched on the matter with Mr Collins, as have you with Mr Haughey. Not unhelpfully, there has been almost no public - or private - reaction to my speech from the Irish Government, although a number of Irish Opposition politicians have made helpful comments. We shall, however, need Irish support - which might largely mean the absence of any unhelpful public statements - if we are now to get talks going. Mr Haughey himself may take some convincing that renewed efforts to make progress towards devolution in the North are in his Government's interest as well as ours, and he may have to be persuaded that a failure would not be to his advantage. We shall therefore need to take the Irish through the various steps which are likely to be needed to bring about talks, and to achieve a joint understanding with them. In practice, we are likely to be looking for suitable forms of words to explain the two Governments' willingness to see advantage taken of natural gaps between Intergovernmental Conference meetings, to enable political progress to be made.

*There is
in the
A-I agreement*



5. The Unionists' pre-conditions have been scaled down to the point where they now comprise effectively a call for the two Governments to express a willingness to consider any agreed proposals for an alternative to the Anglo-Irish Agreement which emerge from inter-party talks; and a temporary "suspension of the operation" of the Inter-Governmental Conference. Both Unionist leaders seem to have redefined their first pre-condition so that it is already largely met by the "no pre-conditions" formula which Tom King earlier advanced to them, and which I have reaffirmed, and by a statement by the two Governments in last year's review (which I repeated in my speech). I have also pointed out the self-evident truth that the achievement of devolution would have substantial implications for the Agreement which both Governments would be bound to consider seriously and sympathetically. (We shall of course need to continue to make clear, lest there should be any misunderstanding, that we remain committed to the Agreement because of the principles it embodies. You have already stressed this yourself, as I did in my speech.) As regards the second Unionist pre-condition, attention is now focused on the possibility of arranging a "gap" between Conference meetings to enable inter-party talks to start. Mr Robinson seems keenly interested. Mr Hume has told me that he would not countenance the 'creation' of a gap in order to start talks, but he could see a 'natural gap' being used for that purpose. Mr Collins indicated in public before Christmas that his Government hoped that good use could be made of a 'natural gap'. It should be possible to devise a suitable form of words acceptable to all, if there is the will to get talks started.

6. We and the Irish are now in the process of agreeing dates for Conference meetings over the next 6 months, in an attempt to cope with the diary pressures on Irish Ministers caused by their European Presidency. It is quite possible that one or more longish "gaps" will emerge which, with good will all round, could be used to start inter-party talks. The fixing of a sequence of dates will make it plain that we are talking only about a gap and not about anything more.



7. I shall clearly need to discuss the next steps with Mr Collins at our next Conference meeting, planned for 31 January, if not before. We shall need to decide on the public line which the two Governments might take and on ways of handling on-going business or even crises during any 'gap' which is used to get talks started. (We should bear in mind that the imminent conclusion of the Stevens enquiry will refocus Irish interest in the UDR; and a House of Lords decision on the compellability of witnesses at inquests in Northern Ireland is due in February.) It seems unlikely that I shall be able to see Mr Collins earlier than the end of this month. I do not want to tackle him on these issues when he is unsighted and I therefore propose to arrange an early (and confidential) exchange between senior officials, which would follow soon after my meeting with the SDLP planned for 19 January - since it seems desirable to see Mr Hume first.

8. We cannot be certain that we shall easily reach agreed conclusions with the Irish, but they should see the desirability of capitalising on the political momentum which now exists. I shall report further once our discussions have taken place and we have a clearer picture of the prospects for getting talks between the parties started in the spring - that will of course depend largely on the further responses of the Northern Ireland parties themselves, and we shall not want to raise public expectations too high.

9. I am sending copies of this letter and its enclosure to Geoffrey Howe, Douglas Hurd, Tom King, David Waddington, and Patrick Mayhew, and to Sir Robin Butler.

Simon Sparrow.

PP PB

(Approved by the Secretary of State
and signed in his absence)

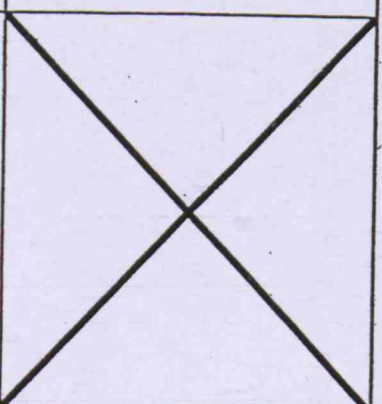
C O N F I D E N T I A L

15 January 1990

CP/PRO/24282

16LAND : Situation PT27



DEPARTMENT/SERIES <i>PREM. 19</i> PIECE/ITEM <i>3408</i> (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
Extract details: <i>Patterson to Powell dated 14 January 1990</i>	
CLOSED UNDER FOI EXEMPTION	
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958	
TEMPORARILY RETAINED	<i>1/12/2017</i> <i>G. Gray</i>
MISSING AT TRANSFER	
NUMBER NOT USED	
MISSING (TNA USE ONLY)	
DOCUMENT PUT IN PLACE (TNA USE ONLY)	

Instructions for completion of Dummy Card

Use black or blue pen to complete form.

Use the card for one piece or for each extract removed from a different place within a piece.

Enter the department and series,
eg. HO 405, J 82.

Enter the piece and item references, .
eg. 28, 1079, 84/1, 107/3

Enter extract details if it is an extract rather than a whole piece.
This should be an indication of what the extract is,
eg. Folio 28, Indictment 840079, E107, Letter dated 22/11/1995.
Do not enter details of why the extract is sensitive.

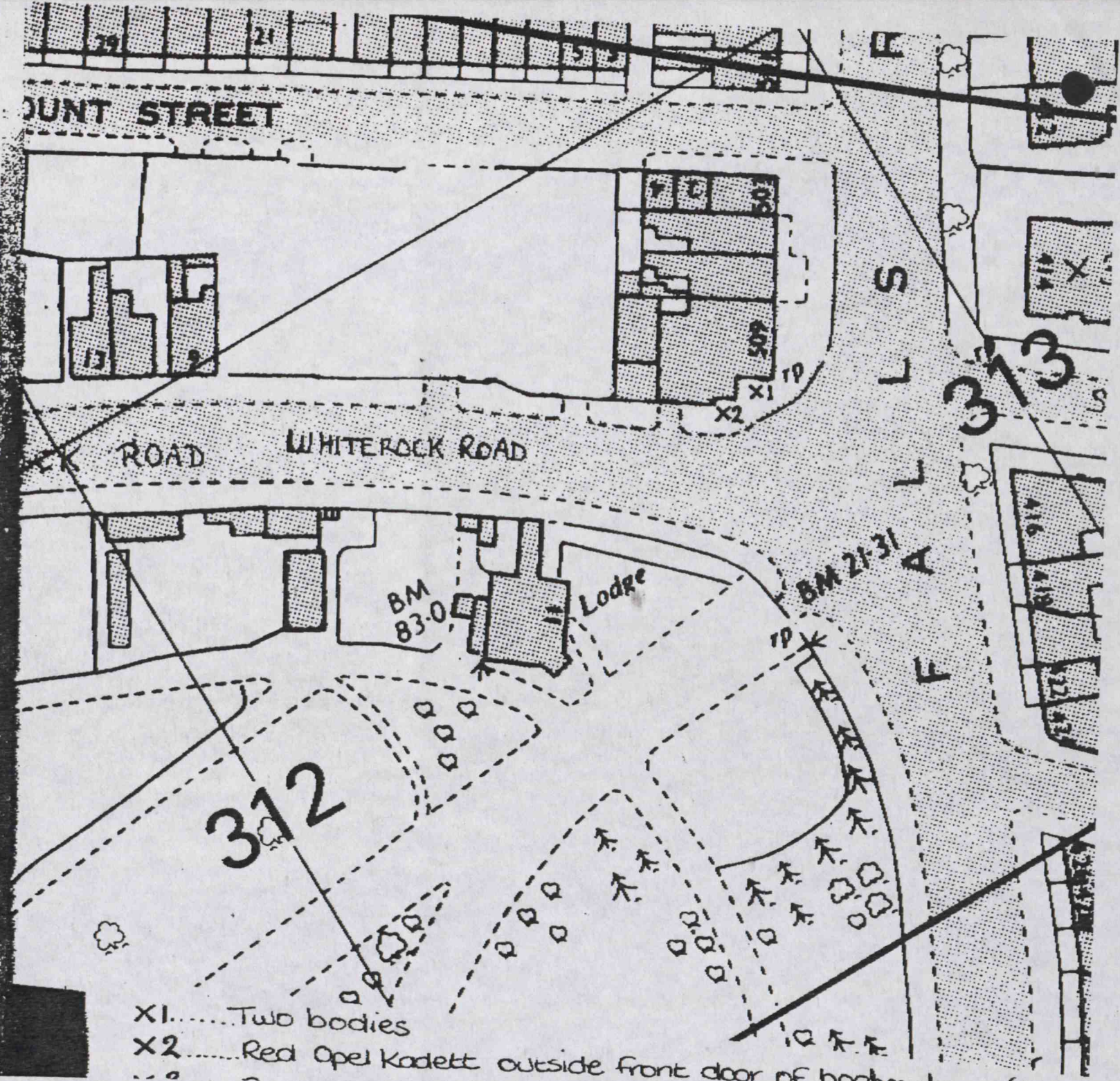
If closed under the FOI Act, enter the FOI exemption numbers applying to the closure, eg. 27(1), 40(2).

Sign and date next to the reason why the record is not available to the public ie. Closed under FOI exemption; Retained under section 3(4) of the Public Records Act 1958; Temporarily retained; Missing at transfer or Number not used.



STATEMENT BY DR BRIAN MAWHINNEY, PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE, 13 JANUARY 1990

This morning's deaths in West Belfast will of course be the subject of a thorough investigation by the RUC. That investigation is now underway and so it would be quite wrong for anyone to anticipate its findings. It would also be quite wrong to compare today's deaths with any previous incidents involving the security forces. Nevertheless it should be remembered that the RUC have made it clear that highly realistic replica weapons were used in today's robbery. Does anyone really believe that the would be robbers told either their intended victims or the security forces that the guns they were carrying were, in fact, only imitations?



X1.....Two bodies

X2.....Red Opel Kadett outside front door of bookmakers (c...)

P

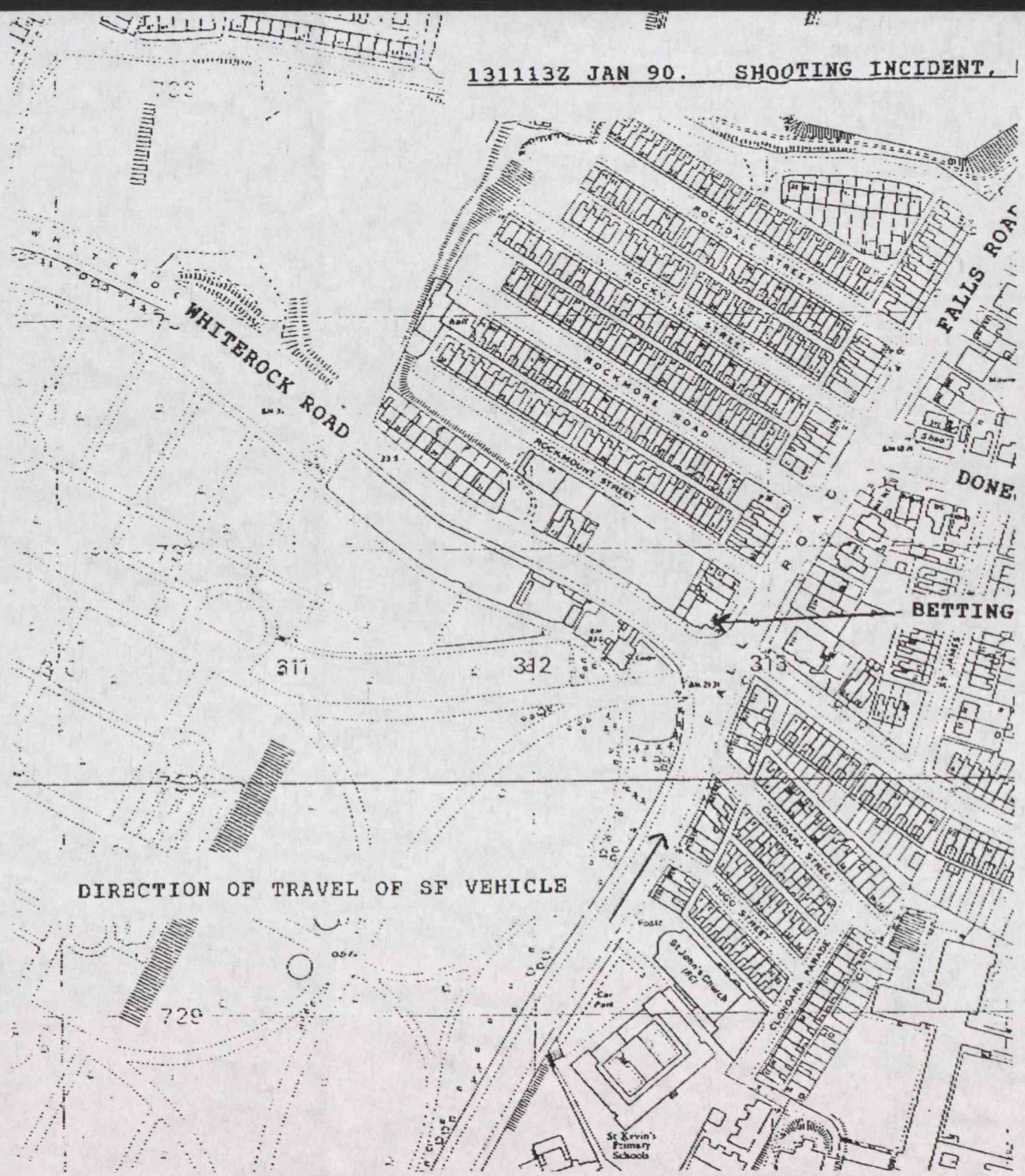
PAGE 01

'90 1-14 13:49

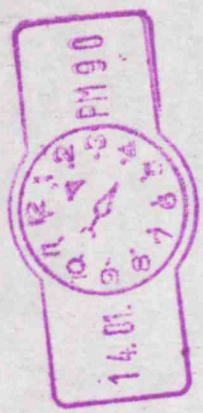
EIGHT.

REDFERN

000



DIRECTION OF TRAVEL OF SF VEHICLE



h
14 January 1990SHOOTINGS IN WEST BELFAST

STATEMENT BY DR BRIAN MAWHINNEY MP, PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE AT THE NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

As the RUC has already made clear an inquiry has been launched into the incident yesterday in West Belfast and we have to await the outcome of that inquiry. In the meantime due process of law is being followed and the RUC are taking formal statements from all concerned. They have also asked for those with eye-witness evidence to come forward and I want to endorse that request because that evidence is an important part of due process.

You will not expect me to comment on the details of yesterday's incident until all the facts are known but I do want to come back to one point which I made last night. If highly realistic imitation guns are used then people may believe that they are real and act accordingly. That poses an additional, unwelcome, and indeed dangerous, problem for all law-abiding people in Northern Ireland. So I will be raising with my Ministerial colleagues, as a matter of urgency, this problem to see if there is any way in which we can helpfully address it.

Finally, I note that there is speculation again about some sort of so-called shoot-to-kill policy in Northern Ireland. Can I say again what I and my colleagues have said many times before - that there is no shoot-to-kill policy for the security forces in Northern Ireland. The only people who are conducting a shoot-to-kill policy in the Province are terrorists.

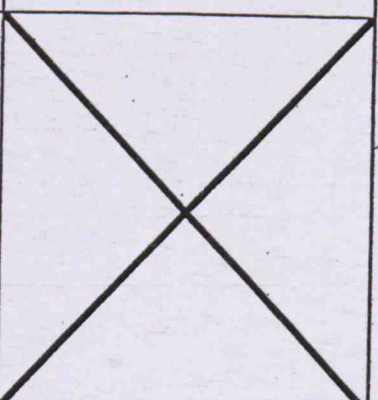
PA
PRIME MINISTER

You will no doubt have heard that three people were shot dead in Belfast today while robbing a bookmakers' shop. The shooting was apparently done by two members of the army in plain clothes. I have said that you will need to have a report on the incident and am promised a first version at least by lunch time tomorrow.

CHARLES POWELL

13 January 1990

A The National Archives

DEPARTMENT/SERIES PREM 19 PIECE/ITEM 3408 (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
Extract details: Letter from Douglas Hurd to the Secretary of State for Defence dated 12 January 1990	
CLOSED UNDER FOI EXEMPTION	
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958	
TEMPORARILY RETAINED	28/11/17 Mr. [Signature]
MISSING AT TRANSFER	
NUMBER NOT USED	
MISSING (TNA USE ONLY)	
DOCUMENT PUT IN PLACE (TNA USE ONLY)	

Instructions for completion of Dummy Card

Use black or blue pen to complete form.

Use the card for one piece or for each extract removed from a different place within a piece.

Enter the department and series,
eg. HO 405, J 82.

Enter the piece and item references, .
eg. 28, 1079, 84/1, 107/3

Enter extract details if it is an extract rather than a whole piece.
This should be an indication of what the extract is,
eg. Folio 28, Indictment 840079, E107, Letter dated 22/11/1995.
Do not enter details of why the extract is sensitive.

If closed under the FOI Act, enter the FOI exemption numbers applying to the closure, eg. 27(1), 40(2).

Sign and date next to the reason why the record is not available to the public ie. Closed under FOI exemption; Retained under section 3(4) of the Public Records Act 1958; Temporarily retained; Missing at transfer or Number not used.