

From JAMES H. MOLYNEAUX, J.P., M.P. for Antrim, South.

House of Commons,
London S.W.1.

See record of
discussin.

14 May, 1981.

Dear Prime Minister

I thought you might like to consider, in advance of our meeting, some of my thoughts on the current dangerous situation in the province.

1. Like you, and I am sure the great majority of the British people, I find it monstrous and deeply offensive that the police and army should be seen daily on newscreens subject to an endless barrage of vicious weapons and seemingly unable to defend themselves adequately.

Given the hypocrisy of the H Block Committee in laying down conditions for the use of plastic bullets (whilst doubtless ensuring that their street savages are fully instructed in using acid and petrol bombs to full effect) I believe a review of riot equipment in use is long overdue.

Plastic bullets are clearly inadequate in current circumstances and I would suggest that riot guns should in future include intermediate deterrents of special types and that the security forces should be authorised to use them.

2. Recent attacks on the security forces at Newtownhamilton and Rosslea show that the IRA's mortar attack capability has been restored. The weapons used were sophisticated and accurate. Moreover, they were manufactured and tested and practice fired in the Irish Republic.

While it is to be hoped that the authorities in the Republic would take steps to put these IRA units out of action, I have always maintained that in the field of border security we should place no reliance on the Irish Government. The SAS are the answer to cross border terrorism and I would urge that greater use be made of them and other special units.

3. Recognising that assaults on democracy are by no means peculiar to Ulster, and given daily evidence of the growth of terrorism throughout the world, I wonder if you might think the time right for Britain to launch an initiative against terrorism at international level. There are, as you know, historic precedents for such a move. Moreover, you personally, by your consistent and courageous stand on these matters, are better placed than most to give such a lead.

Yours ever

Jim

The Right Honourable Mrs Margaret Thatcher, MP.,
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