

E.R.

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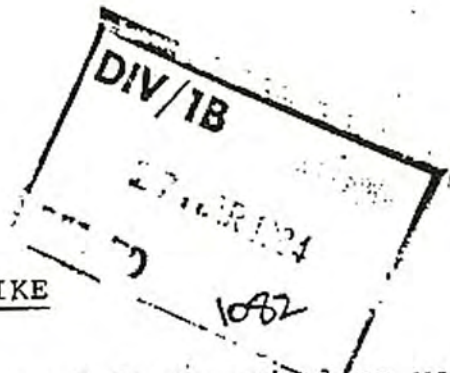
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Mr Buxton

cc: PS/S of S (L&B)
PS/Mr Scott (L&B)
PS/PUS (L&B)
PS/Sir E Bell
Mr Brennan
Mr Doyne Ditmas
Mr Gilliland
Mr Merifield
Mr Coulson

cc Mr Macale.



A POLITICAL STRIKE

1. The Secretary of State asked me yesterday for an appreciation of the possibility and extent of a "UWC" type strike this summer. As he put it;

"The Prime Minister may say to me 'You say there may be trouble. What sort of trouble and what are you going to do about it?'"

2. Such an appreciation must obviously cover:

Essential Services; including

- Electricity
- Gas (including Calor Gas and Kosangas)
- Petrol, Oil, Lubricants
- Water and Sewage
- Food
- Animal Feeding Stuffs
- Hospital and Health Services

and showing the likelihood of supplies being interrupted, and the Government's scope for maintaining them, and for how long. This should cover the scope for drawing on staff from the forces and from GB, eg staff from electricity undertakings in GB.

Movements; including

- Major roads between major centres of population and work
- Minor roads in Belfast and other cities, especially those used by people going to work

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- Roads round Stormont; and to Hillsborough, Aldergrove and Belfast Harbour Airport
- Air Services
- Ferries

and showing the likelihood of routes being blocked by paramilitaries, and the ability of the RUC and Army to clear them and keep them open.

The RUC, the Courts and the Prisons, including the likelihood of these institutions operating normally.

Parades and Demonstrations; including the likelihood of such events, where they may be held, and the ability of the RUC and Army to control them.

The "Third Force"; will there be one; what will it do?

PIRA and INLA; what role would they play?

The Media; including

- Would strikers seek to "take over" and/or "blackout" the news media in the province?
- How HMG would ensure that its policies were properly promulgated and explained, in Ulster, in GB and internationally.

Machinery; the machinery by and through which intelligence on the strike would be collected, assessed and presented to Ministers for decisions; and those decisions implemented.

3. There may well be other important topics.

4. Please consider this urgently with colleagues concerned, and let me have a draft report which we can consider together. In compiling this report, we can obviously draw upon existing contingency plans.

5. I think that, in this first instance, we could reasonably aim at a general report, compiled within a fortnight. This should pave the way to any more detailed work that the Secretary of State may wish to have undertaken.

27 March 1984

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J. B. Bourn
J B BOURN

10 April