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 AG Secretariat,
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 Main Building,
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Your reference
 EO
 Our reference
 UDR: Original
 Date
 Chief Clerk
 31st July 1972

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MO 19/3A

29th November 1972

Dear Gen.

UDR - MEMBERSHIP OF UDA

120

Thank you for your letter of 17th July about UDR involvement in the UDA.

It is inevitable that a part of the Protestant element of a part-time Regiment in Ulster will sympathise with the aims of the UDA; and it is suspected that there are cases where this sympathy is carried to the extent of active membership. There are however no proven facts as yet on which to base an estimate of the scale of the problem. The following are the firmer reports that have been received, and they are being investigated:

- a. In a television interview in Belfast on 15th July, a masked man wearing a beret claimed that he was a UDR officer.
- b. A UDR part-timer from a City battalion has furnished a list of nine other UDR men, including one officer, whom he says are active members of the UDA.
- c. Two series of weapons losses are thought to be almost certainly in part the work of Protestant organisations. These are the losses of 9 SLRs since the beginning of the year in 8 UDR (East Tyrone), and 12 SLRs in the last few weeks in the Portadown area (2 UDR).

The losses of two pieces of radio equipment in West Tyrone in March are not necessarily attributable to Protestant organisations.

The areas where HQ UDR believe that this involvement is most likely to exist are Portadown and Lurgan (2 UDR), the Bann Valley (5 UDR), Ardboe and Aghnacloy (8 UDR), Carrickfergus (9 UDR), and West Belfast (10 UDR).

The UDR has to draw a line somewhere between hard-line Protestants who can safely be contained in the UDR, and those who cannot. The UDA is not an illegal organisation, and membership of the UDA is not an offence under the military laws; it is also a large organisation not all of whose members can be regarded as dangerous extremists. One important (but unspoken) function of the UDR is to channel into a constructive and disciplined direction Protestant energies which might otherwise become disruptive. For these reasons it is felt that it would be counter-productive to encourage a UDR member solely on the grounds that he was a member of the UDA.



STAFF-IN-CONFIDENCE
 CONFIDENTIAL

/Similarly..

Dear Christopher,
 RWA

At the GEN 79(72)33rd meeting on 11th September the Prime Minister said that "the question of members of the UDR who were also associated with the UDA required further consideration. The Secretary of State (for Northern Ireland) should circulate a note indicating what he proposed".

The policy in force at that time was established in July 1972 in the light of three major factors. First, the UDA is not an illegal organisation and membership of it is not an offence under military law. Secondly, an important function of the UDA is to channel into a constructive and disciplined direction Protestant energies which might otherwise become disruptive. Thirdly, although an application to join the UDR would not be automatically rejected because of UDA membership, due weight would be given in the vetting process to extreme Protestant sympathies and a person known to be a member of the UDA would be most unlikely to be admitted.

Against this background, the policy established in July was that an officer should be asked to resign if he took an active part in UDA activities. A soldier would be warned if suspected of sufficient sympathy for UDA aims to affect his military duties or call in question his loyalty; if his conduct arising from UDA membership constituted a military offence or unsatisfactory conduct, he would be dismissed.

This policy was kept under review, but only recently has it been considered necessary to make changes. Following discussions with the GOC, and consultation with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Defence Secretary has decided to apply this policy more strictly. He has therefore approved a new Regimental Routine Order which was issued on 27th November. I attach the text of this at Annex. It was

C W Roberts, Esq.

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