

From: Major General C R L Guthrie LVO OBE



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Personal For:

Lieutenant General Sir John Waters KCB CBE
General Officer Commanding
Headquarters Northern Ireland
British Forces Post Office 825

22 August 1989

My Dear John,

I have already written to you about my visit last week and since coming back have been brooding and re-reading your "Tiger Shoot" letter.

For once we disagreed over the wording of the letter and concept paper you have sent to your COs. The more I think about it the more I do feel that the references in the letter to tiger hunting and to killing are ill-advised, not least because the excellence of the rest of those documents is not enhanced by phrases of that kind. I think your message could be got across as well if not better in another way. My main worry is that, whatever caveats are attached to the documents, their contents will leak out in a way which will cause embarrassment to you, the Army Department and Ministers. Bitter experience suggests that such quotable phrases become so widely discussed that they are almost bound to reach unauthorised ears sooner or later.

You made plain to me that you do not feel able to withdraw these documents and re-issue them in revised terms - to start again. I still think it would be best to do so. But, if you cannot agree to this, I do ask you to incorporate in any future issue a small number of amendments designed to minimise the risk of misinterpretation but not to alter the thrust of what you need to say. I suggest that this might be achieved as follows -

Letter

a. page 2, second para, lines 4-6. delete "only infrequently able to achieve a terrorist kill. Each kill and each arrest" and substitute "required to use the minimum force in support of the efforts of the RUC to arrest and prosecute terrorists. Each successful action against terrorists, each arrest...".

Concept Paper

b. para 7, line 5. delete "get a shot". and substitute "bring the quarry to bay" or "trap the quarry".

c. para 7, line 7. delete "on to the guns". and substitute "in to the hands of the hunters".

d. para 7, line 12. delete ",who also carry guns, to get" and substitute "to capture".

e. para 8, lines 2-3. delete "it is either.....by the law." and substitute "it is our primary objectives to capture the terrorist, though is own actions may make it necessary and justifiable within the law to open fire".

f. para 17, line 5. delete "kill or capture...we possibly can." and substitute "capable whenever possible but be ready to open fire within the law when necessary."

I have only a few days left as ACGS and I rather suspect you will think I have been ground down by Whitehall but I am convinced you are running an unnecessary risk and you would achieve youfaim - which I well understand and applaud - just as well in another way.

For me,

Charles