

no



Agree - but we may have to revise our view depending on what happens or how the election goes.

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Prime Minister

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There is no need for you to read Sir Brooks Richards' report.

Adm' from Sir Robert Armstrong is

Agree with Mr NSH's and Mr Atkins' proposals for Sir Brooks Richards' future, subject, a

Sir R. Armstrong suggests, to a firm understanding that the arrangement is reviewed in a year's time with a view to ending it then?

PRIME MINISTER

NORTHERN IRELAND

SECURITY CO-ORDINATOR

You will recall that, when the late Sir Maurice Oldfield retired from the post of Security Co-ordinator in Northern Ireland last year, we debated whether a replacement was then really necessary but concluded that Sir Brooks Richards should be appointed for a limited period to consolidate and complete the progress which Maurice Oldfield had achieved. Sir Brooks Richards, as agreed with him at the time, wishes to end his assignment this month. As his final task he has carried out a review of all aspects of the security operation in Northern Ireland, building on the work done in the Area Reviews, of which you are aware, and in his report (copy attached) has concluded that the work of the Security Co-ordinator and Planning Staff is now done. He sees no need for a full-time resident successor, or for the continuation of the Planning Staff function in its present form. John Nott and I agree with this conclusion.

AMH
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2. Sir Maurice Oldfield, and Sir Brooks Richards were appointed "to assist the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in improving the co-ordination and effectiveness of the fight against terrorism in accordance with the Government's security objectives". They have progressively supplemented their own efforts to this end by using multi-disciplinary groups of senior staff, meeting regularly, as the main instruments of security co-ordination. The Army, Royal Ulster Constabulary, Northern Ireland Office (with NI Departments as necessary) and the (Intelligence) Liaison Staff are all represented on these groups. The top security policy group with Security Co-ordinator, Chief Constable, GOC, and Director and Co-ordinator of Intelligence (DCI) meets under the chairmanship of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and is supplemented by official meetings at this level; the operational policy group (concerned with operational matters) meets under the chairmanship of the Deputy Chief Constable; the intelligence policy group meets under the chairmanship of the * ~ * and the public relations co-ordinating group under the chairmanship of the NIO Under Secretary responsible (Mr Wyatt). They meet frequently and regularly, and their existence has encouraged informal co-operation. The representatives of the different disciplines have not only effectively worked together, but their team approach to the job has been mirrored all the way down the line to the level of the local Police Division and Army unit. The Security Co-ordinator has in consequence been able increasingly to allow the Army, the RUC, the Liaison Staff and the NIO to sort out problems as they arise within this system, to the point where Sir Brooks Richards thinks his role and that of the Planning Staff (which is already reduced in size) can virtually disappear.

* ~ * Name deleted and retained under Section 3(4)

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Wayland
2 October 2012

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3. We share this view, which is also supported by the Chief Constable and the GOC, and by the Chief of the General Staff. But we are concerned that there should be no reversion to the far less satisfactory state of affairs that prevailed in 1979, and that a ready means of dealing with such a problem should be available if it arose again. We believe that the best defence against this lies in full and regular use of the co-ordinating groups described above, firmly based on the clarity of policy we now have and to which we all subscribe. This view has the full support of the Chief Constable, GOC, the Liaison Staff and the NIO.

4. Nevertheless, given the uncertainties and hazards of the community relationships in Northern Ireland and the undoubted potential of PIRA, INLA and protestant terrorist organisations to arouse new anxieties, we believe it is essential to retain our capability for monitoring the co-ordination of security policy and operations in the Province as between the RUC, the Army and the Civil Administration, and for intervening urgently if circumstances so require. We propose, therefore:

i) that the Security Co-ordinator post should be retained on a stand-by basis in London until Spring 1982 for the purposes at (iii) and (iv) below;

ii) that he should be supported by appropriate staff from the Army, RUC, NIO, MOD and Liaison Staff similarly designated on a stand-by basis;

iii) that the Security Co-ordinator, supported as at (ii), should in any event submit short follow-up reports on the co-ordination of security in the Province in October 1981, and April 1982; and

iv) that the Security Co-ordinator and his supporting staff should be available to report urgently in the interim if we judge that circumstances require it.

Important since the bye-election result. not

The Chief Constable and the GOC support this proposal.

5. Sir Brooks Richards has indicated that he would be willing to continue to make his services available for these purposes, and in particular to produce the further reports required in October 1981 and April 1982. Supporting staff can be designated in Northern Ireland.

6. On this basis, it would be unnecessary to announce formally either that Sir Brooks Richards has left or that he has not been replaced, and in any case undesirable because such an announcement would be bound to be criticised as evidence of complacency about the current security situation. Sir Brooks' departure will become public knowledge in due course, when we would let it be known that,

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as announced at the time, he had gone to Northern Ireland full-time only for a limited period to complete Sir Maurice Oldfield's work, but was continuing to assist the Government as necessary to ensure that the progress made is sustained.

7. This minute is being copied to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Home Secretary and Sir Robert Armstrong.

JN

JN
Ministry of Defence

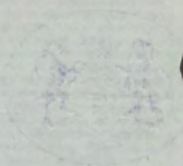
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8 April 1981

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Copy No 1 of 40

CO-ORDINATION OF THE
SECURITY EFFORT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

THE WAY FORWARD

REPORT BY THE SECURITY CO-ORDINATOR TO
THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Stormont Castle
Belfast

March 1981

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CO-ORDINATION OF THE SECURITY EFFORT IN
NORTHERN IRELAND: THE WAY FORWARD

Report by the Security Co-ordinator to the Secretary of
State for Northern Ireland

Introduction

1. My predecessor, the late Sir Maurice Oldfield, was appointed Security Co-ordinator on 3 October 1979, soon after the murder of 18 soldiers by PIRA at Warrenpoint, "to assist the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in improving the co-ordination and effectiveness of the fight against terrorism in Northern Ireland". He started work in the Province on 8 October 1979 and shortly afterwards established the Planning Staff (a joint staff drawn from the RUC, the Army and the Civil Service) to assist him in his task. Regrettably, ill-health compelled Sir Maurice to relinquish his appointment prematurely on 12 June 1980, at which date I succeeded him in the post. It was made clear at the time that my task would be to finish off work begun by my predecessor and to consolidate what had already been achieved. My appointment was to be "for a limited period".

2. The Warrenpoint ambush, mounted and controlled from the other side of the border, was the work of a PIRA Active Service Unit whose members killed Lord Mountbatten off the West coast of the Republic on the same day. This spectacular double achievement by a group whose increasingly sophisticated operational techniques had long been a thorn in the flesh of British Army units deployed near the border, raised to a level requiring urgent political decision by the new Conservative Cabinet two distinct issues, which the then GOC had already put formally to you in a letter dated 12 July 1979. These issues were, firstly, the use being made by PIRA and INLA of the territory of the Republic as a relatively safe base for training, planning, developing and supplying

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weapons, mounting operations and resting between them; secondly, the question whether the "primacy of the police" policy introduced in January 1977 was being implemented properly to deal with the continuing threat to security within Northern Ireland itself. Though personality factors played some part in bringing matters to a head, the demand for the joint command and control of security resources through the appointment of a Director of Operations on the Malayan model reflected a well-defined strand of Army thinking about earlier internal security commitments. The Cabinet decided to maintain the existing policy, but appointed a Security Co-ordinator to help implement it. They also made a fresh attempt to enlist the co-operation of the Dublin Government in tackling the situation on, and south of, the Border.

3. Eighteen months after Sir Maurice's appointment, I have no hesitation in saying that there has been considerable progress. The co-ordination and effectiveness of the RUC, the Army, the Security and Intelligence agencies, the Northern Ireland Office and civil government have greatly improved; and there have also been welcome changes of attitude and approach on behalf of those responsible. I now feel confident that, provided certain safeguards are maintained, all concerned are well set to carry out their respective tasks effectively and harmoniously without the oversight of a full-time resident Co-ordinator and Joint Staff. My reasons for this belief are set out in the paragraphs below, which summarise the salient features of the current security situation in the Province as I see it and put down a few markers on points to be watched carefully in the future.

Violence in Northern Ireland - a Historical Perspective

4. Ireland's history, that "register of crime, folly and misfortune", has bequeathed her a tradition of violence as a means to political ends. It is a legacy that lies heavily

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on Northern Ireland today. The roots of present troubles stretch back into the folk-lore of both communities: on the Republican side, through the civil war of 1922 to the fore-doomed blood-sacrifice of Easter, 1916, and thence back into the secret revolutionary nationalism of nineteenth century Ireland; on the Unionist side, to Carson's defiance of Westminster in 1912, and to the Ulster Presbyterians who, under the impact of the American and French Revolutions, rebelled against British rule in 1798 and were deemed too subversive for service in the Royal Navy at an hour of need when the sweepings from other British gaoles were readily accepted in the fleet.

5. Outsiders can find Ulstermen of both traditions moral but cruel. W. B. Yeats' 'Meditations in Time of Civil War' apply well enough today to the attitudes of many people in the North:-

'We had fed the heart on fantasies,
The heart's grown brutal from the fare;
More substance in our enmities
Than in our love;
O honey-bees,
Come build in the empty house of our stare'

6. Irish violence has always had a sociological as well as a political dimension. In rural areas, it has historical roots dating back to the seventeenth century plantations and the re-distribution of farming land. In the urban ghettos, endemic unemployment, twice as high among Catholics as in Protestant working-class districts, is a good recruiting-sergeant for paramilitary causes and one that binds its adepts to violence as a way of life.

7. The 1916 Rising and Partition in 1921 were the prelude to fifty uneasy years in relations between Belfast, Dublin and London. The civil war of 1922 in the Free State was fought around the issue of whether any Dublin government that

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accepted Partition could be considered legitimate and this quarrel has continued to smoulder on across the Border. The 1930s saw isolated acts of violence, both in Northern Ireland and on the mainland. In 1935, the Belfast IRA caused riots in which 5 died and were narrowly foiled in an attempt to raid an armoury at Campbell College. In 1936, the IRA obtained 400 sub-machine guns from the United States. In 1939, they dispatched letter bombs to English addresses, let off tear gas bombs in cinemas, set fire to hotels, pillar boxes and mail vans; and blew up station cloakrooms. An explosion in Coventry killed 4 and injured 60. The IRA Northern Command ran a "Freedom Radio" in the Second World War and there were some bombing attacks, mostly in Belfast.

8. The post-war decade was relatively quiet, but in December 1956 the Army Council of the IRA announced the advent of a "decisive stage" against "British rule in occupied Ireland"; and, over the following six years, the IRA waged a low-intensity campaign, mostly concentrated on targets near the Border. In the course of this, 6 members of the RUC were killed and 32 members of the Security Forces were wounded. This sporadic violence was dealt with by the RUC, which, though less than 3000 strong, had a paramilitary capability and the backing of a force of 1000 full-time, and 11,600 part-time, armed 'B' Specials. Only very limited Army support was necessary. The selective internment of IRA suspects both in Northern Ireland and in the Republic eventually brought operations to a halt. In February, 1962 the "Campaign of Resistance to British Occupation" was called off and arms and material were dumped, amid popular indifference.

The Present Troubles

9. The scale and nature of the disturbances since 1969 have been of an order and type not previously experienced in the Province. In 1968, the Civil Rights Movement, with echoes of the wave of militant protest which in that year swept continental universities, led to demonstrations and

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the building of street barricades by members of the minority community. These manifestations provoked violent reactions by Protestant extremists. The British Army had to be deployed to contain public disorder which had proved to be beyond the capacity of the numerically small RUC, which was perceived by the minority as associated with partisan Protestantism. Although the Army was initially welcomed by the Catholic community, the IRA soon exploited the 'occupation' of Catholic areas by the Army, stoked the dormant fires of militant Republicanism - and a terrorist campaign began.

10. In 1971 violence reached such a level that the Northern Ireland Government introduced internment, with HMG's approval. Internment was, however, not particularly selective, as intelligence was not as good as it now is; and the internment process itself had the effect of providing the IRA with an immediate propaganda advantage and of broadening support for the IRA within the Catholic community. The prorogation of Stormont in March 1972 and the imposition of direct rule fuelled resentment in the Protestant community and led to the formation of the UDA and UVF. Though the Official IRA at this point declared a ceasefire and committed themselves to seeking a political solution, the Provisional wing of the movement (PIRA) extended and intensified their campaign of violence. Terrorism on both sides of the community reached its peak during 1972, with 450 deaths in the Province. During the first half of the year, Republican 'No-Go' areas were established in the cities. Operation 'Motorman' reimposed Security Force control of these areas and provided a starting-point for the long process of restoring normal policing throughout the Province - a process still continuing today. But, at the time, it was the Army which provided the effective Security Force presence on the ground in most Republican areas and combatted PIRA on a basis of intelligence-derived detention.

11. Detention was ended in December 1975; the attack on terrorism has, since then, been based solely on convictions obtained through due process of law. However, terrorist intimidation made it nearly impossible to obtain witnesses willing to give evidence (as indeed is still the case today in the Republic as well as in Northern Ireland); the RUC were therefore forced to place great emphasis on the use of interrogation to obtain incriminatory statements from terrorists. This approach proved very effective and, combined with increases in RUC strength and changes in community attitudes to PIRA, led to progressive reductions in terrorism in subsequent years. The successful use of interrogation allowed police confidence to develop to the extent that the policy of "police primacy" could be formulated and introduced, but it did also lay the police open to charges of violation of human rights; and the Republican movement capitalised on this. Public concern led to the production of the Bennett report, which temporarily reduced police confidence. On the operational side, PIRA's response was to regroup into a more secure cellular system, which is less prone to intelligence penetration (though it has had the incidental effect of weakening their links with wide sections of the Republican community). They also trained their members in resistance to interrogation. These two factors, among others, led to a slowing of the attrition of PIRA by the Security Forces.

12. Though it took time to perfect, the RUC's reaction to this changing situation was to develop, in collaboration with the Army, a sophisticated method of operation based on good intelligence and surveillance leading to the 'red-handed' capture of active terrorists. This is backed by the extremely professional use of forensic evidence. Interrogation still plays an important, but less central, role. Attrition of the terrorist organisation on this basis continues today and seems likely to remain the key-stone of 'offensive' counter-terrorist operations. It is proving an

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extremely effective way of disrupting, one after another, the tight-knit terrorist groups within the Province; there is, however, an important category of 'godfather' figures who are difficult to bring to book on this basis, since they are normally careful to avoid handling weapons and to distance themselves from actual operations.

13. By the summer of 1979, when the present Government assumed office, the Army had been continuously involved in operations in Northern Ireland for almost a decade. During that period violence had claimed almost 2000 victims, including 570 from the Security Forces themselves. At the time of 'Operation Motorman' in 1972, no less than 30,000 (22,000 regulars plus 8,000 UDR) troops had been operationally deployed. Already in 1977, the overall level of incidents had fallen to about a fifth of its 1972 peak, but it had then remained obstinately at about the same level for a further two years. PIRA seemed to HQNI in 1979 to be a more effective, more secure and more controlled force than it had been two years previously, with increasing operational and technical sophistication. An assessment made at that time judged that PIRA had the resources, organisation and motivation to maintain operations for the foreseeable future at a fluctuating level. The Army saw itself as engaged in a low-intensity war, which it was not winning and could conceivably lose. It was against this background of gloom and professional frustration that 18 soldiers were killed at Warrenpoint. The coincidence of this attack with the murder of Lord Mountbatten brought to a head feelings that security policy was either wrong or was at least being pursued in too doctrinaire a manner. The Army, in particular, believed that more effective co-ordination was required.

14. In fact, by mid-1979, despite differences in approach between the RUC and the Army, the foundations had been laid both for major intelligence-based inroads into PIRA's and INLA's structure and also for re-establishing acceptable policing throughout the minority community. However, the

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Army's force levels were, in some areas, too high. A large number of soldiers had been deployed in the Province during the 1970s to hold the ring while the RUC re-organised and expanded. In 1979 this process was largely complete, but reductions in Army strengths lagged behind the increase in RUC capability. In parts of the Province, a uniformed Army presence was not now contributing significantly to the defeat of terrorism and was, at the same time, providing a focus for community animosity. Reductions were required to ensure that force levels were the minimum necessary to support the re-introduction of normal policing. Above all, what was needed was to pull together into a new relationship the resources of the police, the Army and the civil power.

The Situation Today

15. Statistically there was less terrorist violence in 1980 than at any time for a decade. Despite this, at the beginning of 1981 the attitudes of the two communities appear in some respects in greater danger of polarisation than for several years. The hunger strikes, the Dublin meetings, the localized increase of cross-border attacks, the 'failure' of the political initiative and the heavy incidence of economic recession have all in turn been exploited by the more extreme politicians. Dr Paisley, in particular, seems to have calculated that Unionist opinion, divided but suspicious of Westminster policies, is ripe for an appeal to traditional and extreme reflexes; and that he can on this basis best hope to maintain at the May District Council elections the leading position he secured when he was elected to the European Parliament.

16. Potential for Public Disorder. Demonstrations, by supporters of Dr Paisley on the Loyalist side and by supporters of the renewed hunger strike on the Republican side, are taking place in parallel, but have so far been non-violent and well disciplined. As long as both sides confine their marches to their own traditional areas this is likely to continue, although there may be some stone-throwing by

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hooligan elements in the aftermath of peaceful demonstrations. Republican marchers, however, always have the option of seeking violent confrontation with the Security Forces as a means of advancing their cause. This is easily done by selecting march routes which are not acceptable to the Loyalist community, thus forcing the Security Forces to block the route to prevent an inter-sectarian riot. Dr Paisley's rabble-rousing electoral tactics make a Loyalist counter-demonstration all too likely in such circumstances. The number of marchers on both sides is currently not large by Ulster standards, but the crowds could rapidly swell, once an element of confrontation of the 'opposing' community entered the motivation for demonstrations. Assassinations construed by either side as sectarian would, against such a background, heighten emotions and increase the likelihood of violence.

17. PIRA. Encouragingly, despite this political background, PIRA lost ground in 1980. There was continued Security Force success on both sides of the border and there are now few parts of the Province where PIRA can operate with ease. This is reflected in a general movement of the incidence of terrorism towards the border areas and adjacent towns and away from Belfast in particular. With the ending of the pre-Christmas hunger strikes, PIRA have resumed their terrorist campaign, at something like the intensity which obtained during the latter half of 1980. The Security Forces are already breaking up the groups responsible for this revival, but internal terrorist violence is likely to continue - though with peaks and troughs, probably of diminishing intensity as terrorist groups are dispersed or weakened by the action of the Security Forces and smaller and less experienced groups re-emerge; and the process is repeated. Cross-border terrorism of the traditional type has proved more intractable, as the terrorist structure south of the Border remains largely intact, despite considerable Garda seizures of weapons and explosives.

18. The tactics used by PIRA have now been refined by years

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of experience and are likely to remain basically unchanged. These require relatively few terrorists, arms or explosives; and the PIRA organisation can logistically sustain a fluctuating level of violence, at least in the short term. Two possible changes of emphasis, rather than tactics, are the renewal of attacks on the mainland or in Europe and a switch from low-level members of the Security Forces to VIPs as targets for assassination.

19. PIRA future strategy is unclear. The Provisional movement has so far failed to re-enlist broad-based public support on the hunger-strike issue. There are elements within PIRA who are considering a ceasefire and a switch to a political campaign and there are undoubtedly war-weary and disillusioned Republicans who would support such a move. However, it would be difficult for the Provisionals to tread the road taken earlier by the Official IRA and to abandon their commitment to violence, particularly in the current extreme economic situation. The urban terrorists live within socially deprived communities and many of them would find it difficult to turn from a well-established way of life and the attractions of lawlessness. A ceasefire if it came might well be preceded by an increase in terrorism, as PIRA would wish to demonstrate that they quit in strength and not in weakness. The Provisionals' eventual decision will depend on a variety of factors, including the outcome of the present hunger strike and political developments in both the Republic and the Province. If a ceasefire is declared in the future, it is likely that a few active PIRA terrorists, unable to accept the decision of their leadership, would switch their allegiance to INLA.

20. INLA. INLA is a numerically small organisation unable to maintain a high level of activity. It has, however, been responsible for sporadic outbreaks of terrorist crime, in Belfast in particular, concentrating its attacks on individual members of the Security Forces. It continues to pose a threat, both to the Security Forces and to VIPs. INLA's success in killing

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Mr Airey Neave still colours their planning. The political aspirations of INLA centre around the establishment of a 32 counties Socialist Workers' Republic and this, taken with their connections with various international terrorist organisations, means that they tend to be viewed by the Garda and the Irish Government as a more sinister long-term threat than PIRA.

21. Loyalists. The Loyalist terrorist groups - Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF), the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and Red Hand Commandos (RHC) - all see themselves as reactive terrorists, fighting Republican terrorism with counter-terror. The UVF and RHC are currently small and ineffective and concentrate on poorly-targetted random attacks on 'Republicans'. The UVF leadership, however, is still intact and there are indications that they are attempting to rebuild their organisation, aided by the present polarised climate. The RHC have no such leadership and are largely criminally motivated, but they continue to pose a sporadic threat to RUC and prison officers. The UFF is a better organised and more political group, which has mounted well-planned and successful attacks on various prominent Republicans. Terrorists from all three organisations have been arrested and charged in the last year, but the assessment is that attacks on the same patterns will continue. Any future expansion of Loyalist paramilitary activity will draw heavily on criminal elements in the community.

22. These types of attack can affect the overall situation in two ways. Firstly, they are likely to provoke direct Republican terrorist retaliation. Secondly, they result in more moderate Republicans feeling at risk; and this in turn provides PIRA with the opportunity of presenting itself once again as the defenders of "beleaguered" Catholic communities against Loyalist "aggression and repression". It is to be hoped that recent RUC successes against Loyalist terrorists, coupled with the extension of conventional policing, will minimise Catholic reaction to any such future assassinations.

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23. In summary, in spite of much heartening progress against terrorism within the Province in recent years, the sectarian attitudes that gave rise to the 'Troubles' of the past decade are still present. It is true that PIRA today lacks the capability to raise the level of terrorist violence and sustain it. Despite this, however, I believe that in the long-term the risk of a resurgence of more widespread violence remains high, starting from some as yet unforeseen flashpoint. It is, therefore, essential that the Security Forces remain balanced and organised to meet such a threat.

Roles of the RUC and the Army

24. The prime aims of Government in the security field continue to be the elimination of terrorism, the establishment of law and order and the extension of policing throughout the Province on a basis acceptable to the community, the Government and to Parliament. The Army in Northern Ireland operates in support of these aims; and this support is provided in three main fields - (a) anti-terrorist operations; (b) the containment of public disorder when the situation is beyond the capacity of the RUC; and (c) the provision of specialist support such as helicopters and bomb disposal teams.

RUC

25. The RUC continues to make progress, with great courage and dedication, in extending acceptable policing throughout Northern Ireland - though the rate of progress understandably varies considerably from area to area. Particularly heartening progress is being made in the Republican areas of Belfast and Londonderry, and in many other towns and districts throughout the Province. Border areas do, however, pose a special problem. 'Normal policing,' although hampered by the terrorist threat, is carried out along those sections of the Border where there is a mixed population; but in the almost totally Republican South Armagh, there is little prospect of the RUC making much headway in the near future without a major improvement in Garda effectiveness in Co Louth.

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26. The RUC is now coming close to achieving its target strength of 7500 full-time regulars (supported by 2200 full-time and 3000 part-time reservists) and is the second largest police force in the UK. These extra resources are already playing an important part and will provide scope for greater flexibility both in the temporary local concentration of police strength to deal with specific events and, on a more permanent basis, to increase police manpower in those parts of the Province where it is most needed. A major inhibiting factor in this latter process is the lack of police stations (or accommodation that can serve the purpose until permanent stations can be built) in several key locations in the Province. At the present time, the construction of new police stations (from conception to occupation) is geared to a normal "peacetime" situation and takes many years. In several crucial areas this is now seriously delaying the operational progress of the Security Forces. A much more flexible system is needed, which produces practical (if not perfect) results on the ground fast. The issue is being tackled by the Chief Constable; it is now for Government to lend its active support. Accommodation is the most crucial aspect of a wider problem which in my view merits further attention - viz the matching of a civilian-based support infrastructure to the RUC's operationally intensive role. Improvements of this kind will, I recognise, involve difficult decisions over priorities, since the RUC is no longer able to operate within the relatively generous and flexible financial limits of recent years.

27. The future size, shape and capability of the RUC need at all times to be carefully matched to the policing needs of the Province. Ensuring this is, firstly, the responsibility of the Chief Constable and, secondly, of the NIO. The Chief Constable is at present reviewing the Force's structure and manpower requirements. In the longer term, these must reflect the changing pattern of violence and criminality and must also keep pace with changing attitudes in the community. The temptation for the RUC to become independent of Army support and to develop paramilitary capabilities too far must continue to be resisted. On the other hand, the RUC will for the

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foreseeable future continue to need some specialist resources beyond those of any other UK Constabulary. There is a careful balance to be struck.

28. The problems of policing the Province are in some ways untypical of those which confront other UK Constabularies. There have, I am sure, been valid reasons in the past for the appointment of a Chief Constable from outside Northern Ireland, but the last year has demonstrated the many advantages of an Ulsterman filling the post. The Chief Constable and his Chief Officers will play key roles in the coming years, and it is essential that close attention is paid to the career development of senior members of the Force, including the broadening of their experience in a UK context. In most cases this will probably best be achieved by sending selected RUC officers to serve at some stage in their career in some other force, but I believe that some measure of two-way exchange is also a desirable objective.

The Army

29. Within urban areas, the major role of the Army in Northern Ireland today is to make possible the extension of normal policing in Republican districts, against the background of a reducing terrorist threat. In rural areas and along the Border, the Army still plays a prominent role in anti-terrorist operations; the level of Army support provided in many of these areas is, however, often dictated as much by the need to reassure Protestants in these communities as by the strict operational requirement. Province-wide the uniformed overt units of the Army play an essentially defensive role, allowing specialist units, in conjunction with the RUC, to attack the terrorist structure on the basis of intelligence.

30. Anti-terrorist operations demand a continuing level of military support. In addition, the Army is from time to time required to assist the RUC in controlling public disorder;

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and this means that a rapid reinforcement capability also has to be available from within the Province. These different types of military support are provided by a mix of roulement and resident battalions (from April 1981 three roulement and six resident units). The roulement units are deployed in the anti-terrorist role in West Belfast and on the southern Border; while the resident units play a less intensive part in anti-terrorist operations, but also provide in an unobtrusive and flexible form the reinforcement capability to meet public order demands. Army force levels have been progressively reduced in recent years; the force level now envisaged is, I understand, sustainable without incurring serious operational penalty elsewhere.

31. Any future reductions in Army force levels will be in response to further improvements in the security situation. Hitherto, reductions in force levels have reflected both reductions in the terrorist threat and increases in RUC strengths. No further increases in RUC strengths are, however, planned; and it will accordingly be important to ensure that any future force level adjustments do not impose an unacceptable burden on the RUC.

32. The Army's role in Ulster is now finely tuned, but there is still a considerable military presence in the Province. For good reasons the Army increasingly operates out of the public eye; but it must not be forgotten that, day by day, large numbers of soldiers in the Province are carrying out dangerous, demanding, though at times very tedious, tasks in an exemplary fashion. Their contribution is invaluable. Further, the Army is a large and complex machine, which, although highly flexible in its reaction to operational problems, requires time to adjust to major policy changes.

UDR

33. An important element of the Army in Northern Ireland is the Ulster Defence Regiment. The Regiment was formed in 1970, following the disbandment of the Ulster Special Constabulary,

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to provide Ulster men and women with the opportunity to contribute personally to the security of their own Province. The Regiment is now more than 95% Protestant and this has the effect of making the UDR the least acceptable arm of the Security Forces to the Catholic community; this in turn imposes major limitations on the Regiment's use. Conversely, the continuing existence and strength of the UDR is a matter of great concern to Unionists.

34. The UDR consists of 11 battalions (some 7000 men and women), recruited Province-wide. The areas of strongest recruitment do not, however, match the areas of greatest operational need. From its original part-time concept, the Regiment has developed into a force made up of approximately one third full-time (permanent cadre) and two thirds part-time. There are opportunities for very limited redeployment within the Province of the full-time element, but the UDR battalions are still essentially local defence units, operating primarily in their areas of recruitment.

35. In certain parts of the Province, UDR units have their own areas of responsibility and provide first-line military support to the RUC. Both in these and other areas, the UDR releases Regular Army units from commitments such as static guards - and also provides a valuable level of deterrence and reassurance. However, in a few areas, the security situation is now such that there is no obvious role for the Regiment and UDR soldiers are deployed on quasi-deterrent operations solely because the units exist and must be employed.

36. The future role, size and shape of the UDR is a matter of great importance and sensitivity. There is a clear case for making changes in the future; but it has recently been decided, rightly in my view, that political considerations make such changes inadvisable at the present time. I believe, however, that the strength of the Regiment must be kept under continuous review, with a view to making changes once the political situation permits. In the meantime, I am sure

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it is right that the GOC should continue to make detailed adjustments as and when circumstances allow.

Intelligence Operations

37. Intelligence operations are the key element in the attack on the terrorist organisations. It is, however, an area which involves not only the Army and RUC but also other agencies, and therefore requires the most detailed integration and rationalisation. As in other fields, in 1979 there was dissension as to the best line of advance in intelligence matters. These policy issues have now been largely resolved. There is now full recognition of the need for co-ordination and all Army intelligence effort is committed in support of the Special Branch - on the one hand to supplement the RUC effort where necessary and, on the other, to provide specialist skills and forms of support not available within the police force. Local commanders must, however, continue to ensure that the agreed policy is put into practice.

38. Co-ordination is required at all levels. The more reduced and refined the terrorist organisation becomes, the more considered, precise and co-ordinated must be the response from the intelligence agencies. At Province-level the key post is the Director and Co-ordinator of Intelligence (DCI). Although an appointment within the Northern Ireland Office, DCI has responsibilities extending to all the intelligence agencies, including the Army and the RUC. At a Regional level the introduction of Tasking and Co-ordination Groups (TCGs) has been a major advance and has ensured that all useable intelligence is better exploited. The greatest success has been achieved in Belfast and I think it is important that the experience gained there is now effectively applied elsewhere in the Province.

39. Although a much strengthened Special Branch are now firmly in the lead, there will for the foreseeable future be a continuing requirement for military specialist agencies and other UK-based agencies to provide support. I believe

that it is essential to maintain these elements through any short cessation of violence; and that any proposals to reduce the level of such support must be carefully considered, in order to ensure that we continue to provide a better intelligence base than was available in 1969. As 'normality' returns, it is right that Army involvement in intelligence acquisition should reduce. I believe, however, that it is essential that the Army remain fully briefed on available intelligence and involved in the assessment process. This should ensure that any Army redeployment will be done in a sensitive and informed manner.

40. Though there is no doubt still room for improvement, the intelligence effort in Northern Ireland is now relatively well co-ordinated. Indeed, on the basis of what I saw of these matters when serving as Intelligence Co-ordinator in the Cabinet Office prior to my appointment to Northern Ireland, and what I have observed since my arrival at Stormont, I would compare the degree of co-ordination achieved here favourably with that in Great Britain.

The Cross-Border Dimension

41. As the Security Forces continue to make progress against terrorists within the Province, so the continuing and intractable nature of the cross-border terrorist threat assumes greater operational significance and is thrown into higher political profile.

42. Co-operation between the RUC and the Garda is now good and has come a very long way since the mid-1970s. Further, during the last 2 years, there has undoubtedly been a significant increase in the effectiveness of the Garda themselves against terrorism in border areas. They do, however, have a long way still to go. They have made some useful finds of arms and explosives, but there have been very



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few convictions in the Republic of terrorists from border areas.

43. Garda shortcomings are sometimes attributed to a combination of a lack of willingness to proceed against PIRA and sometimes to a lack of professional capability. However, there appears to be little recent justification for criticisms of lack of will. The most significant deficiencies in this technically unsophisticated and basically unarmed force include a lack of resources to acquire and process intelligence, an inadequate surveillance capability and general shortages of manpower and material. Improvements in these fields are being made, but cannot be achieved quickly; the British experience in Northern Ireland during the last decade illustrates very clearly that it will take the Garda several years to reach our own current level of skill - even assuming that the resources and will to do so are both there. It must not be forgotten that Irish politics play a large part in senior Garda appointments and that the force as a whole is sensitive to changes in political leadership and policy. The Garda wisely, therefore, prefer to deal with terrorism as part of a general campaign against organised and armed crime and to present their co-operation with the RUC as part of this overall drive. They are extremely sensitive to any comment which could be interpreted as external criticism. I am sure that the best way to maintain the present level of RUC/Garda co-operation and to achieve the desired improvement in Garda performance is to continue with the professional liaison between the two police forces, with minimum political intrusion and publicity.

44. We shall, of course, continue to need co-operation with Dublin in the security field as long as we share a common border; and this is a factor to be constantly borne in mind in other wider dealings with the Dublin government. However, the security co-operation we seek from the South goes beyond RUC/Garda liaison alone; it also has a political dimension. It extends to such areas as the attitudes of the Irish judiciary, the impediment of the Irish constitution,

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extradition, the working of the extra-territorial legislation and the incompatibility of North/South laws and procedures. I believe there is merit in maintaining pressure on the Republic in these areas, but this will have to be done with discretion and finesse if it is not to prove counter-productive, given Irish hyper-sensitivity about the London-Dublin relationship.

Co-ordination

45. Close and continuous co-ordination is essential to success in formulating security policy in Northern Ireland. As in Great Britain, the Chief Constable is, constitutionally, answerable solely to the law in operational law enforcement matters. There are, however, special circumstances affecting the maintenance of law and order in the Province - in particular, the close involvement of the Army and the political implications of Security Force activity - which require full co-ordination and an integrated approach. I would emphasise that I am talking about co-ordination, not command; the Chief Constable and GOC do, of course, retain autonomous command of their own forces.

46. Co-ordination of security policy must involve not only both elements of the Security Forces, but also the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and appropriate Northern Ireland Government Departments and agencies. So far as co-ordination with the NIO is concerned, what is required is a team effort, involving the three complementary partners (RUC, Army and NIO) working closely together on all security issues.

47. Further, to be wholly effective, this co-ordination in the formulation of policy at Headquarters level must be, and is, supported by close co-ordination of operations between the Security Forces, down to Police divisional level and below. At the present time, the situation is healthy and there is obvious goodwill on all sides. But I feel strongly that it is essential to maintain a basic formal co-ordination

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machinery, both to ensure that contact is maintained at periods of reduced terrorist activity and to surmount changes in personalities and relationships.

48. The centre-piece of this machinery must continue to be the monthly Security Policy Meetings (SPM) chaired by the Secretary of State; and, at executive level, it is important that the Operational Policy Committee and the Intelligence Policy Committee continue to meet regularly and to be used productively. The equivalent committees at regional and divisional level should also be actively maintained. Regular contacts are necessary to complement this formal committee structure. Specific arrangements are being made to ensure future regular contacts at a policy level in response to a general recognition of the need to replace the Security Co-ordinator's Informal Meetings. It is important in this and other ways to ensure that, as the intensity of Army operations reduced, the flow of intelligence and political information from Stormont to the Security Forces continues. Unless this is done there is a risk that they (in particular, the Army) will become isolated from the wider scene and inadequately briefed. This will remain necessary for the foreseeable future, irrespective of the Army's future level of involvement.

49. Another important aspect of co-ordination concerns the involvement of civil government (particularly the Northern Ireland Departments). In the more difficult areas of the Province, improvement in the security situation and progress in the work of civil government are interdependent and react on each other. Further, as normality returns to the Province, there is an increasing responsibility on civil government to ensure that it supports the Security Forces in every way it can and provides a sympathetic Government presence to balance the imposition of normal standards of law and order. In particular, as the tide of terrorist violence recedes, it leaves behind on the beach a great deal of ordinary criminal and anti-social activity, with which it is the permanent task

of the RUC to deal. The extent and nature of this problem is such, however, as to place it beyond the capacity of the RUC to tackle effectively without the active co-operation of the whole range of Government agencies. Conversely, some of these agencies have problems that can only be resolved with the co-operation of the RUC.

50. Provision of adequate resources is an essential ingredient in this process (and this poses a particularly acute problem in the current recession and with the present public expenditure reductions). But attitudes and perceptions are also important. Civil government must, in my view, have a fuller understanding both of security policy and of the law and order implications of the policies for which it is responsible. In recent months, I have been encouraged by an increasing awareness on all sides that the problems of the Province must not be compartmentalised and viewed in isolation - and that security factors must be fully taken into account. I consider it important that this cross-fertilisation process continues; the NIO has a big role to play here, both in furthering this development and in setting its own example.

51. Continuity in NIO posts is important in dealing both with a police force indigenous to the Province and an army in which most key personnel have served several times in Ulster during the present emergency. The NIO, as a small department created to deal with what was envisaged as a short-term emergency, has a considerable problem in providing comparable continuity. Responsibility for contact with the Security Forces rests within the NIO on the holders of a very small number of posts: unless these are filled by individuals of suitable quality and experience, there is a danger that the level of mutual confidence which has been built up recently will decline. Northern Ireland is a small stage on which individuals loom large. This is an area in which the NIO needs active and sympathetic support from other Whitehall Departments, particularly the MOD, the FCO and the Home Office.

Conclusion - The Way Ahead

52. Predictions about the likely development of the security situation in Northern Ireland must, inevitably, be as speculative and uncertain as forecasts of the Province's political future. There is no doubt that the Security Forces now "sit more lightly" on the Province than at any time in the past decade and that they continue to make good progress in the erosion of terrorism and the extension of normal policing to all parts of the six counties. It is, however, a process in which there will be both successes and setbacks. The recent capture in Fermanagh of an armed PIRA ASU led by two seasoned cross-border terrorists typifies recent intelligence-based successes by the Security Forces. However, on the following day, ten soldiers of the Scots Guards travelling in an unmarked commercial vehicle on a Fermanagh road they had not previously used had the narrowest possible escape when a home-made PIRA detonator failed to explode a large wire-controlled culvert mine. Had the mine functioned, we might have had the biggest Army loss of life in a single incident since Warrenpoint. But it would have occurred against a background of a very different relationship between the component elements of the Security Forces. Luck may not be with us next time; and, if the Security Forces do suffer heavy casualties in a sensational incident, Ulster politicians will certainly over-react, exploit the situation for their own purposes and demand changes in the Government's security policy. In such circumstances, it is vital that we keep our nerve; isolated incidents must not divert us from a policy which we believe to be right.

53. If present progress is sustained, there is clearly a chance that, sooner or later, PIRA will settle for some form of ceasefire. There is good intelligence of a growing feeling in the movement that the time has come to call a halt - at any rate for a time; and support for PIRA within the Catholic community is as unenthusiastic now as it has been at any time during the last 10 years. Further, much of Ulster is undoubtedly war-weary; to many people, unemployment, housing

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and electricity prices are of greater concern than Republicanism.

54. But I do not think we should be over-optimistic. The events of the last decade have stirred up community hatred and bitterness in an appalling way and have confirmed many traditional fears and resentments; and it is a lesson of Irish history that the passage of time can entrench, rather than erase, extreme political stances. Thus I think it is true that, for the foreseeable future, so long as "the British remain in Ireland" and there is no satisfactory arrangement with the Republic (or indeed even if there is), Republicanism will prosper and violent dissent will continue - although efforts at community reconciliation are, of course, much to be welcomed. This might be so even if the PIRA leadership could bring themselves to take a considered view to call a halt to military operations. For it is by no means certain that all local PIRA groups would immediately follow such a lead; and INLA are, of course, already a law unto themselves.

55. Further, one cannot avoid the fact that hardened terrorists will be returning to the community from their prison sentences in increasing numbers in the years ahead; even inside prison, they can provide an awkward challenge and a threat to community peace, as the dirty protest and hunger-strikes have demonstrated.

56. The potential for the return of widespread violence will remain and we must therefore be prepared for a fairly long haul. The way ahead for the Province must surely lie in continuing to try and develop political structures on the London-Belfast-Dublin axis which will allow the two communities in Northern Ireland (and Ireland as a whole) to live together in comparative peace; but the last few years have shown that this process is unlikely to be a quick or easy one. And the economic prospect is daunting. In the interim, the role of the Security Forces must be to create a stable environment for the promotion of law and order, to

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contain terrorism and violence to a minimum and to control any public disorder professionally and dispassionately. The Security Forces alone cannot achieve "victory"; the problem demands a far wider solution.

57. The task of the Security Forces is, in such circumstances, a demanding one. But we are fortunate in having in Ulster a police force and an army that, tempered in the fire of the last 10 years, are now well-prepared to meet the challenge. The balance between the various arms and agencies of the Security Forces must remain fluid and adapt to a changing situation. I am happy to say, however, that the approach is now highly professional, experienced and well-balanced; the present Chief Constable and GOC, if I may say so, set a most admirable example and morale is high.

58. Finally, I am satisfied that all concerned with security in the Province are now well seized both of the rightness of the policy they are implementing and of the need for close, effective and continuing co-ordination. I believe that the creation of a Security Co-ordinator and a Joint RUC/Army/Civilian Staff has had a beneficial catalytic effect; but I also believe that both I and they have now accomplished all that we can usefully do, at least on a resident, whole-time basis. The agreed cycle of work is complete: to add to it artificially at this stage would forfeit essential goodwill by impinging unwarrantably on the operational and functional responsibilities of others; nor can one keep staff of the requisite quality merely to monitor the situation on a contingency basis. The situation in the summer of 1979 called for a cramp and some glue of a rather special kind to prevent the RUC/Army/NIO tripod falling apart; but the joints are now firmly sealed and the cramp can, in my view, now be removed. A tripod must always have three sound, mutually supportive legs if it is to remain upright, particularly on uneven ground; it is then a most useful structure. I believe that this particular carpentry lesson has now been well learnt.

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59. I therefore conclude that there is no longer a requirement for a full-time, resident Security Co-ordinator and Joint Planning Staff. I do, however, feel that special attention must continue to be given to the following subjects in particular:-

- (a) The maintenance of the existing formal machinery to provide both:-
 - (i) the necessary RUC/Army/NIO co-ordination of security policy, and
 - (ii) RUC/Army co-ordination of operations. (Paras 45-48)
- (b) The maintenance of regular contacts to supplement the formal committee structure both at the highest policy level and at lower levels to co-ordinate operations. (Para 48)
- (c) The maintenance of a regular flow of intelligence and political information to the Security Forces - in particular, the Army. (Paras 39 and 48)
- (d) The extension of civil government's understanding of security policy and of the law and order implications of civil policies. (Paras 49-50)
- (e) The future size, shape and capability of the RUC; the provision of suitable civilian support to the RUC; and the career development of senior members of the force. (Paras 26-28)
- (f) The future level of support provided by the Army to the RUC, including the future strength, organisation and role of the UDR. (Para 31 and Paras 33-36)
- (g) The need for continuity in key NIO posts. (Para 51)

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- (h) The integration and rationalisation of the overall intelligence effort, including application of the TCG concept. (Paras 37-38)
- (i) The continuing need for military specialist agencies and other UK-based agencies to provide support in the intelligence field. (Para 39)
- (j) Security co-operation with the Republic, based on the professional relationship between the RUC and the Garda. (Para 43)
- (k) The need to maintain carefully-judged pressure on the Republic in various security-related fields. (Para 44)

Brooks Richards.

20 March 1981

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