

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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Profile of Border Security during 1975

I Incursions

- (i) A total of 72 incursions by British Security forces were reported to us in 1975. This compares with 140 for 1974. The lower figure is probably ascribable to a slackening off of British Army patrols during the IRA ceasefire which commenced in February 1975.
- (ii) Of these 72 incursions 41 were on land and 31 in the air. The British themselves notified us of and apologised for 12 of the former and 14 of the latter. They accepted as having taken place and apologised for a further 14 land incursions and 3 air incursions when these were brought to their attention. They denied reports that 6 land and 4 air incursions had taken place. The remaining incursions are still under investigation.
- (iii) Many of these incursions were not serious and were observed by few people - Gardaí, Army personnel, customs officers and (more rarely) private citizens. Some incursions, however, were of a sufficiently flagrant character to arouse considerable press comment and in some instances considerable local resentment. Such were the incursion by three armed British soldiers into Clones in July and more recently the incursion at Longfield, Co. Armagh, where local men opening a barricaded border crossing were chased into and within the State by a British Army patrol which commandeered two private vehicles.
- (iv) At all times in bringing incursions to the attention of the British authorities the point is made that, aside altogether from the violation of sovereignty involved, such incidents can only impede closer cooperation on border security. The task of our security forces is made more difficult especially when local residents are incensed by the seemingly casual attitude of British Army personnel to such incursions.

BORDER INCURSIONS 1975

TOTAL INCURSIONS 72

Incursions by aircraft 31

of which reported and regretted by
British 14

of which regretted by British after
D/Foreign Affairs representations 3

of which denied by British after
D/Foreign Affairs representations 4

of which British claimed they could
not investigate due to departure
of crew 1

of which British have not yet
commented upon 9

Incursions on ground 41

of which reported and regretted by
British 12

of which regretted by British after
D/Foreign Affairs representations 14

of which denied by British after
D/Foreign Affairs representations 6

of which British have not yet
commented upon 9

BORDER INCURSIONS 1976

Four incursions have so far been reported since 1/1/76

(2 March 1976)

2. Incidents

By this is meant shooting, hi-jackings, bombings, etc. occurring in or around the border in which Southern involvement is suspected. The British notify us on a regular basis of incidents reported by the British Army and in 1975 80 such incidents were brought to our attention. Of these the Gardaí accepted there had been Southern involvement in 10, denied this in the case of 11 more and are unable to confirm or deny the facts relating to the others from the information at their disposal. In 1975 also the RUC notified the Gardaí of a further 37 incidents. Again the Gardaí confirmed 2, denied 15 and cannot comment on the remainder. These incidents range in seriousness from the shooting of three soldiers stationed at a look-out post at Drumackavall, Co. Armagh, from firing positions of which one was located in Co. Louth to reports of cross border shooting which turned out to be the noise of a crow-scaring machine. Our attitude has been to reject, unless clear evidence is available, the conclusion that all such incidents originate in or have a direct connection with the South.

BORDER INCIDENTS 1975

Incidents reported by British Embassy 80

of which Gardai consider did not take place . . . 11

of which, according to British, had no
connection with Republic 2

of which were not "terrorist-type"
(e.g. road re-openings) 8

21

of which Gardai confirmed 10

of which Gardai did not comment upon or
could not confirm or deny 49

59

. . of which were "terrorist-type" incidents
which did, or may have, taken place 59

Incidents reported to Gardai by RUC 37

of which Gardai consider did not take place . . . 11

of which, according to Gardai, there was
no connection with Republic 4

of which were not "terrorist-type"
(e.g. unidentified helicopter) 2

17

of which Gardai confirmed 2

of which Gardai did not comment upon
or could not confirm or deny 20

22

. . of which were "terrorist-type" incidents
which did, or may have, taken place 22

Border Incidents 1976

The British Embassy has so far reported 5 incidents in 1976. The Gardai confirmed one of them and have not commented on the remainder.

The Gardai have so far reported on 6 incidents which they investigated following a message from the R.U.C. They denied two of them, found that two took place completely within Northern Ireland and were unable to confirm or deny the remainder.

(2/3/76)

BORDER SECURITY OVERFLIGHTS 1975/6

According to Department of Foreign Affairs records, 71 security overflights by British military aircraft took place along the border during 1975, 59 of them in the period 1 September to 30 November. This does not tally with information supplied by the British, who reported that 55 took place during the period 1 September to 30 November, of which only 32 took place on the date for which clearance was given.

In the current year, clearance has so far been granted for four security overflights.

(2/3/76)

ROAD CLOSURES

A total of 43 roads were closed or reclosed by the British Army in 1975 and two roads have been reclosed in 1976. There were two main programmes of closures in 1975, the first one (January-February) passing off more or less without incident but the second (September-November) provoking considerable local reaction. Closures in the current year have apparently provoked no comment and it is understood that no major closure programme is presently contemplated. Table I (attached) shows that in 1975 Monaghan and Louth were the counties most affected by closures.

Local reaction was more vigorous and concerted than heretofore, leading to some stone-throwing confrontations with the British Army. In October a committee of border residents from Cos Monaghan and Armagh launched a fund to purchase road-making materials and machinery for re-opening cratered roads.

The futility of blanket closures such as that carried out in September-November 1975 has now become apparent to the British authorities and they have informed us in confidence that they will now concentrate on keeping a minimum number of roads most frequently used by the I.R.A. completely closed.

A total of 138 roads have now been closed or reclosed by the British Army since 1969 (see Table II). As many of these roads have been re-opened by local residents and subsequently reclosed by the British it is difficult to be sure from day to day of the precise number of roads blocked at any particular moment. However, according to the latest available information (see Table III) 52.1% of all roads are closed.

TABLE I

BORDER ROAD CLOSURES

| | Roads closed or reclosed by British since 1/1/75 | Roads re-opened by locals since 1/1/75 |
|-------------------|--|--|
| OUTH/DOWN | - | - |
| LOUTH/ARMAGH | 12 | 9 |
| MONAGHAN/ARMAGH | 24 | 18 |
| ONAGHAN/TYRONE | 2 | 2 |
| ONAGHAN/FERMANAGH | 4 | 4 |
| CAVAN/FERMANAGH | - | - |
| LEITRIM/FERMANAGH | - | - |
| ONEGAL/FERMANAGH | 2 | 2 |
| ONEGAL/TYRONE | 1 | 1 |
| DONEGAL/DERRY | - | - |
| TOTAL | 45 | 36 |

(26 February 1976)

TABLE II

BORDER ROAD CLOSURES

| | Roads closed or reclosed by British since 1969 | Roads re-opened by locals since 1969 |
|------------------------|---|---|
| LOUTH/ DOWN | 1 | 1 |
| LOUTH/ ARMAGH | 10 | 9 |
| MONAGHAN/ ARMAGH | 35 | 19 |
| MONAGHAN/ TYRONE | 16 | 3 |
| MONAGHAN/ FERMANAGH | 11 | 5 |
| CAVAN/ FERMANAGH | 6 | - |
| LEITRIM/ FERMANAGH | 5 | 4 |
| DONEGAL/ FERMANAGH | 12 | 3 |
| DONEGAL/ TYRONE | 16 | 2 |
| DONEGAL/ DERRY | 26 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 138 | 47 |

(26 February 1976)

(2 March 1976)

TABLE III

[illegible]

DAMAGE TO PROPERTY

On the basis of incomplete figures available from the Department of Local Government, the cost of damage to property in the Republic as a result of road-cratering operations carried out by the British Army already amounts to over £327,000. A "guesstimate" of overall damage to date could push this figure up to £500,000.

The Department is seeking to obtain from the British authorities an acknowledgement of their responsibility for this damage. The present position is that the British Embassy has requested information regarding the manner in which Local Authorities satisfy themselves that the damage was caused by British operations and the arrangements under which they are reimbursed by the Department of Local Government. Following consultations with the Department of Local Government, this information has been conveyed to the Embassy in a Note of 3 March 1976.

Finds of explosives and detonators in Northern Ireland⁺

1. During 1975 100 finds of explosives material, marked for use in the Republic (and therefore illegally imported), were come upon in Northern Ireland.
2. 1,217 lbs. of undyed IIE manufactured gelignite and 159 detonators, of British manufacture and marked as being for use in the Republic only, were found.
3. It is not possible to say what percentage of the total finds in 1975 of explosives and detonators consisted of material from the South, However, for the first 9 months of 1975, 63% of total finds of explosives consisted of undyed IIE gelignite manufactured for use in the South and approximately 10% of total finds of detonators were marked for use in the South.
4. Figures available for January 1976 show that 94% of all commercial gelignite recovered that month was IIE plain dyed (approximately 333 lbs.). The 27 detonators recovered which were marked for use in the Republic comprised 69.2% of total finds.

⁺Based on reports furnished weekly by the British authorities commencing 15th January 1975.

Explosives and detonators found in Northern Ireland and
marked for use in the Republic as reported by
British Embassy in 1975

| | EXPLOSIVES | | DETONATORS | |
|-----------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| | No. of finds | Lbs. of Explosives | No. of finds | No. of Detonators |
| JANUARY | 15 | 249 | 1 | 1 |
| FEBRUARY | 12 | 442 | 7 | 11 |
| MARCH | 2 | 33 | 3 | 10 |
| APRIL | 4 | 38 | 1 | 1 |
| MAY | 3 | 66 | 1 | 1 |
| JUNE | 3 | 50 | 1 | 22 |
| JULY | 3 | 11 | 3 | 11 |
| AUGUST | 2 | 42 | 2 | 3 |
| SEPTEMBER | 4 | 56 | 5 | 16 |
| OCTOBER | 5 | 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ | 13 | 27 |
| NOVEMBER | 10 | 124 $\frac{1}{4}$ | 13 | 41 |
| DECEMBER | 7 | 92 $\frac{1}{4}$ | 13 | 15 |
| | 70 | 1,217 $\frac{1}{4}$ | 63 | 159 |

There was a total of 100 finds, 37 of which contained explosives only, 30 of which contained detonators only and 33 of which contained both explosives and detonators.

Explosives and detonators found in Great Britain 1975

There were 20 incidents of unexploded bombs, postal bombs and caches of unexploded materials reported.

1. Explosives

A total of 929 lbs. of explosives was recovered of which 872 lbs., or 94%, consisted of undyed material manufactured for use in the Irish Republic.

2. Detonators

The total number of detonators recovered from the 20 incidents was 624. Of these 340, or 54.6%, were manufactured exclusively for use in the Irish Republic.

FATAL CASUALTIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND

1969 - 29 February 1976

| | 1969 | 1970 | 1971 | 1972 | 1973 | 1974 | 1975 | 1976 | TOTAL |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| <u>Total Number of Civilians Killed</u> | 12 | 23 | 114 | 323 | 170 | 167 | 211 | 65 | 1,085 |
| <u>*of which Sectarian Assassinations</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| <u>Roman Catholic victims</u> | - | - | - | 90 | 51 | 78 | 92 | 21 | 332 |
| <u>Protestant victims</u> | - | - | - | 39 | 32 | 40 | 57 | 26 | 196 |
| <u>Total Number of assassination victims</u> | - | - | - | 129 | 83 | 118 | 149 | 48 | 526 |
| <u>Security Forces casualties</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| <u>Army</u> | - | - | 43 | 103 | 58 | 29 | 14 | 1 | 248 |
| <u>UDR</u> | - | - | 5 | 24 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 3 | 53 |
| <u>RUC</u> | 1 | 2 | 11 | 17 | 13 | 16 | 11 | 6 | 77 |
| <u>Total Number of Security Forces casualties</u> | 1 | 2 | 59 | 144 | 80 | 50 | 32 | 10 | 378 |
| TOTAL CASUALTIES | 13 | 25 | 173 | 467 | 250 | 217 | 243 | 75 | 1,463 |

* No records for 1969-1971.

PATTERN OF FATAL CASUALTIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND, FEBRUARY 1976

[illegible]