

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



Reference Code:	2007/116/760
Creation Date(s):	8 June 1977
Extent and medium:	10 pages
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
Access Conditions:	Open
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10/6/1977

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8 June 1977

NTD/611

THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF A SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND, RT HON ROY MASON MP, AT A LUNCHEON FOR JOURNALISTS IN STORMONT HOUSE, BELFAST, TODAY (WEDNESDAY 8 JUNE 1977).

I like from time to time to get together socially with representatives of the Press, but at the same time to outline what my thinking is in important areas of Government activity. I thought that today I would deal in some detail with security which is a matter first of all of concern to everyone in this Province and, secondly, is the subject of much ill-informed comment and a considerable degree of misunderstanding.

The aim of our security policy is to free Northern Ireland from terrorism in all its forms and to do so in such a way as to ensure as far as is possible that it will not break out again in future years. In short to eradicate terrorism so that it will have no chance of revival.

There are those who say that the way to do this is to take drastic measures. No explanation is offered of what this means and no account is taken of the fact that I and the security forces must, like the ordinary citizen, act within the law.

Because the Provisional IRA and other paramilitary organisations see their way forward as shooting and bombing the community into submission, it does not mean that Government should respond with random and violent action. Those who use the weapons of violence and subversion are criminals, whatever their motives, and they must be treated as criminals; they must be made to see that they will be traced and arrested; and that when they are arrested it will be for breach of the accepted rule of law and they will be dealt with through the Courts under the accepted rule of law.

If we are to bring terrorists to justice and to be seen to be doing so within the law, the primary task must be one of detection and prosecution and not the imposition of draconian law backed up by the heavy hand of armed force.

There is no point in trying to deal with terrorists by means which set community against community or which bring the process of law into disrepute. If terrorists are to be seen to be convicted of crimes against the community it means that they must be dealt with by the Courts like any other criminals. If that is to happen and if the Courts are to maintain their very high reputation for impartiality and independence that can only be done by the painstaking presentation of evidence leading to conviction and sentencing.

Against this background, although the power to detain without charge remains, it must be clear that those who urge the return of detention upon us are urging us to step backwards into recent history; to invite disillusion and disappointment both at home and abroad; and to undermine the confidence of the community in our determination to defeat the terrorist by accepted and acceptable means. Detention without charge would provide the rallying call which the Provisional IRA seek to rally their flagging fortunes.

The nature of violence in Northern Ireland today is very different from that which existed a few years ago. In those days the prevalence of street violence involving large numbers of people meant that heavy concentrations of troops and police were needed to contain situations from which violence could have spread like wildfire.

Today the situation has changed. The Provisional IRA now have to "go it alone", isolated as they are from the great mass of the community. There are now far fewer safe havens for these men who exercise a particular and vicious violence against the community in different forms. The Provisional IRA carry out attacks on commercial premises to disrupt community services; on ordinary individuals for sectarian, inter-factional or other motives; but mostly on the security forces to prevent the proper operation of measures to protect society.

It is nonsense for them to claim that they are acting in pursuit of the

achievement of any ideal. The killing of children, the destruction of vital services or the murder of ordinary working people cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called an ideal.

Ideals which have no general support among the community and have no democratic following are not achieved by resorting to criminal violence of this kind. Their blind course of death and destruction of innocents has no following whether here in Northern Ireland or elsewhere and it is about time they realised it.

It is therefore my task and the task of the security forces to continue to improve and intensify the planning and actions which will bring to justice those responsible for the commission of terrorist crime. I am in no doubt, and I am supported in this view by the Chief Constable of the RUC and the General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland, that the task of detecting and arresting these criminals is primarily one for the police.

It requires a high level of professional skill and only the police have the necessary training and experience to carry it out successfully. Our principal aim therefore has been to move as quickly as is possible to the position where the police take the lead in the enforcement of law and order.

The impartial and courageous way in which they are carrying out their task is deserving of the highest praise from all sections of the community. In a society torn apart by many years of violence the restoration of peace is not an easy matter. There is a genuine and deeply felt longing to see an end to violence which I fully understand and to which I am anxious to respond.

The charge that I am complacent about the security situation angers me more than any other criticism which is made. It angers me firstly because it is not true, secondly because those who make it offer no positive proposals as to how it might be improved, and finally because such irresponsible comment can offer succour only to the Provisional IRA.

You have my solemn pledge that for me there is no acceptable level of violence; there is no lack of the will to bring this Province back to peace and normality; and I am determined to prove to the Provisional IRA, who are the principal enemies of society, that our will to defeat them is unshakable. Let that be absolutely understood.

I believe that the policy which was devised last Autumn following Ministerial discussions is the right one. But I also recognise that we must find ways of making it bite more quickly.

I would stress again that the brutal killing of innocent people will not be tolerated and we must intensify our efforts against the terrorists.

Much has already been achieved but I must frankly face the fact that to the people of Northern Ireland it does not seem that the battle is being won fast enough.

X The statistics of violence show quite clearly that the murder rate has been cut by half in the first part of this year as compared with last; that the incidence of woundings, explosions and shootings has been dramatically cut; but when particular incidents of brutality occur which horrify all sections of the community there is a understandable wave of revulsion. The message comes through loud and clear that more must be done.

That has been put to me democratically and in a proper constitutional way by the leaders of a number of the political parties in Northern Ireland. In a series of recent discussions they have made it clear that they seek to see measures within the law which will intensify the pressure upon the men of violence.

The key word is intensify and let me therefore tell you of some of the measures which we are taking to step up our efforts.

I have already referred to the prime importance of the role of the RUC. We have already announced that the ceiling for recruitment to the Force has been raised to 6,500, an increase of 1,200 men, but I can now say that we will have no inhibitions about recruiting beyond that establishment should this be necessary.

Since last year the Chief Constable has completely reorganised the Criminal Investigation Department to make it the highly efficient machine that it now is. The three new Regional Crime Squads are closely meshed with the reorganised and reconstituted headquarters crime squad. These squads are able to concentrate on serious terrorist crime and to focus on the leading members of terrorist organisations.

The crime squads and the divisional CID are now backed up by a complete new criminal intelligence system. This started with a criminal intelligence section at Headquarters and a criminal intelligence unit in each region; now there is also a unit at every divisional and sub-divisional headquarters. The technical services of the CID have also been reorganised and strengthened as have the resources of the forensic science laboratory.

All of these measures between them have involved an increase of about 150 in the number of detectives and other experts who are able to concentrate on studying the styles and methods of the leading terrorists. Already this comprehensive reorganisation is producing important results.

There has been an increase of 121% in the number of charges against members of the Provisional IRA (708 in 1976 as against 320 in 1975). This rate has continued to rise in the first five months of this year. In particular charges for the use or possession of explosives have gone up by as much as 115% and charges for offences such as hi-jacking, arson and intimidation have gone up by no less than 187%.

The Chief Constable is determined to maintain this progress and I am determined to do everything possible to assist him.

The collation of information from many sources is a vital part of police work and new arrangements have been introduced to ensure the improved co-ordination with the CID of information collected by the Army which may have criminal significance and I will be saying more about the Army's role in this later.

A further 200 civilian staff will be employed at RUC Headquarters and stations in order to release uniformed men for operational duties in the war on crime. A Chief Administrative Officer for the RUC will be appointed and the implementation of this will be among his first tasks.

The RUC have now formed ten Divisional Mobile Support Units and these will soon be fully operational. They comprise 300 men and 60 vehicles and will be used as anti-terrorist squads throughout the Province.

The RUC Reserve is already playing a very valuable role in the fight against terrorism and the Chief Constable intends to involve them more directly in operations in the future. In particular the RUC Reserve having been given a new more interesting and operational role will be taking their place alongside Regular policemen in the Mobile Support Units.

In addition the Special Patrol Group, which now numbers more than 300 men, has been overhauled to direct it more effectively against terrorist activity, that is the detection of bombers, travelling gunmen, sectarian murderers, and so forth. Its work is co-ordinated with that of the Regional Crime Squads and the criminal intelligence system.

The growing strength of the RUC, in terms of numbers and capability, calls for an increased establishment of vehicles which now stands at over 1,200. This includes a considerable number of LandRovers which are heavily protected against high velocity weapons. These are being tried out as an experiment and the first vehicles were available for RUC use last month.

We are giving similar close attention to other items of equipment for the police. The RUC must have the means adequately to protect themselves in dangerous situations. New and more appropriate weapons are being provided.

I have said quite a lot today about the police, and deliberately so because their's is the central role. But of course while the threat of terrorism goes on they will continue to be buttressed by the Army, which will remain deployed in whatever strength is needed. It is not the fact of Army operations but the aim of them which has changed. The Army is, as I have already indicated, concentrating more on the collection of intelligence. This is a job calling for great skill on the part of the Army just as much as on the part of the police: which is why we are concentrating more and more on special operations.

More is being done in the field of SAS-type activities than the public realise and we now intend to intensify these activities. Among the measures which will be taken are:-

Firstly, additional troops will be coming to Northern Ireland in the immediate future expressly earmarked for special duties in this field.

Secondly, more use will be made of our current resources in Northern Ireland in specialist operations.

Thirdly, greater emphasis will be placed on the training for these operations, and their overall co-ordination.

These measures should substantially increase the ability of the security forces to collect information about terrorists which should in turn enable the RUC to arrest and prosecute more of them.

Specialisation is the key to successful Army operations nowadays, rather than just numbers. It remains the GOC's responsibility to decide how many troops he needs to meet the requirements raised by the Chief Constable, and clearly he will deploy neither less nor more troops than are necessary. In the light of the measures I have outlined, with the emphasis on greater specialisation and increased specialist forces for this role he has decided that the Spearhead Battalion which came over a few weeks ago, in case of any extra problems created by the so-called strike, is no longer needed and it will return to Great Britain at the end of this week. It will of course remain on standby in Great Britain, ready to be deployed at short notice.

There is a developing role for the permanent garrison on security duties and of course the Army's strength does not end with the regular units. It also includes the Ulster Defence Regiment. As you know, there are two elements in the Regiment.

First and foremost there are the part-time members who month after month, year after year, continue to sacrifice their spare time in the cause of improved security for Northern Ireland. Quite often they are called out for duty on a full-time basis, as every single battalion was for two weeks at the beginning of last month.

They respond to these calls without complaint, and often at some loss. Their contribution, both in the tasks they undertake and in releasing the regular Army units for other duties, is a critical one. This experience adds to the growing

professionalism of the Regiment. The Province also owes a debt of gratitude to those employers who make provision for the release from work of members of the Regiment.

There is also the full-time element of the UDR which originally existed only to provide full-time staff for the battalions and companies, but has increasingly acquired an operational role as well. The full-time establishment stands at about 1,800 and six of the eleven battalions now have full-time operational platoons. The move towards greater involvement in operations has been acknowledged in the recent revision of the rates of pay for the full-timers, to bring them more closely into line with those of the regular Army.

We see great value in the continuity and local knowledge which the UDR can bring to bear and we have therefore looked again at the size of the full-time establishment. I am very glad to be able to tell you that the establishment will therefore be raised immediately by a further 700, making a total of 2,500 professional UDR.

All of these developments are of great importance in the intensification of the drive against terrorism. But having said that, we have to recognise that charging people and bringing them before the Courts is not an end in itself. We must see that those who engage in crime against the community pay a penalty which is seen by the community to fit the crime. For that reason I am proposing a number of measures to strengthen anti-terrorist legislation.

Firstly, I propose that there should be an increase in the statutory penalty for conspiracy to murder from 10 years to life imprisonment.

Secondly, I propose to increase the maximum penalty under Section 3 of the Explosive Substances Act of 1883 from 20 years to life imprisonment.

Thirdly, I intend to create two new offences carrying a maximum penalty of 5 years' imprisonment to deal with hoax bombers. I hope that these proposals will become law early in 1978.

Fourthly, I propose to introduce immediately legislation to increase maximum penalties for membership of proscribed organisations from 5 years to 10 years. By all of these means it is my intention that the net shall be drawn more quickly and more tightly around those who seek to hold this community to ransom.

I am sure that the timing and nature of the measures which I have outlined will greatly increase the pressure upon the evil men who have so disrupted life here for so many years. In terms of will, in terms of heavy investment of resources to defeat terrorism, there can be no doubt of the Government's resolve.

I have outlined a number of measures in which the keynote is the intensification of security within our established strategy. But it will not stop there. If further intensification is seen to be needed, I will not hesitate to consider how best it can be achieved.

We shall now see an increase in the strength of the RUC by a minimum of 1,200 and beyond that if necessary; a wider, more interesting operational role for the RUC Reserve; a build-up in the anti-terrorist squads within the RUC with Regional Crime Squads, the Intelligence teams, down to sub-Divisional level and the Divisional Mobile Support Units and enlargement of the Special Patrol Group; better equipment and armament for the RUC. Backing up all this there will be five additional measures to strengthen the law against terrorists.

The Army will be concentrating on increased SAS-type activity and more specialist troops trained in anti-terrorist activity will be coming to Northern Ireland in the immediate future. They will be specially trained in covert activity.

There will be a build-up in the full-time strength of the UDR to 2,500.

The commitment, the courage and the determination of the security forces to bring the lawbreakers to justice which we have seen over the past few months demands a response from all of us.

I appeal to the people of Northern Ireland and their leaders to give them full support in every way. The RUC in their difficult task deserve and are entitled to expect the full co-operation of the community.

I have been greatly encouraged by the stand the community has taken against intimidation during the recent attempted stoppage and by the strong and continuing condemnation of the Provisional IRA from all quarters.

It is clear therefore that the community is ready to play its part and I assure you that I am also determined to shoulder my responsibility to do everything in my power to bring peace back to this land.