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NORTHERN IRELAND Information Service

15 November 1991

ISSUED AT 2.30 PM 15 NOVEMBER 1991

The following statement has been issued by AIS, HQNI.

In response to a request from the RUC and following consultation with the Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Peter Brooke MP, and his security advisers, the GOC, Lt-Gen Sir John Wilsey, has this afternoon called on part-time soldiers of 1/9, 7/10 and 2/11 UDR to perform full-time duties in support of the RUC.

This is in addition to the measures taken by the RUC and the Army last night to provide the enhanced security force presence in areas thought to be most at risk and to which the Secretary of State referred in the House of Commons yesterday.

SECRET

Calls-out

54. Under the terms of the UDR Act the Regiment may be called out on emergency service in NI. The authority for calls-out has been delegated to the GOC NI. A call-out can apply to the Regiment as a whole or to a particular battalion. A call-out may be used to cover a pre-planned event such as an election, a Royal visit or at short notice in reaction to a particular incident.

55. It is possible to have all personnel of a UDR battalion reporting at the same time, however, due to "shortages of transport and admin resources this is normally only possible for short periods. A battalion therefore if called out, will provide about 50% of its part-time strength at any one time backed up by the PC who are NOT affected by calls-out as they are permanently on call. By providing only a proportion of the PT strength, it is possible to minimise the effect to local agriculture and industry.

56. The use of calls-out has its problems. Although, it has been used infrequently, some employers have difficulty in releasing soldiers. PT soldiers can lose money. Experience has shown that calls-out are best limited to 5 - 6 days unless there are clear reasons for a longer period. In 1977 all battalions were called out for 2 weeks during the UWC strike, and for a further week during the Queen's visit. In 1978, 1 and 5 UDR were called out following a spate of killings in S/Derry and in 1979 the Regiment was called out for both the UK General and European elections.

Equipment, Transport, Communications and Dress

57. The UDR is established and equipped to suit its operational role.

58. Equipment Each battalion has its own establishment and equipment are generally comparable to a regular BA air-portable battalion. Weaponry allocated to the UDR for the years 1984 and 1985 is shown in Annex M.

59. Transport Because of its PT element and purely IS role, scales of transport are light. Battalions hold enough vehicles to lift approximately 33% of their establishment at any one time. Holdings include the normal range of landrovers and 4 ton cargo vehicles. A number of civilian cars, coaches and vans to suit the IS role are also provided. Each platoon should be equipped with sufficient transport to be self-contained.

60. Communications Operational nets cover both Regular Army and the RUC. UDR battalions are equipped with a mix of commercial radio and clansmen.

61. Dress UDR operational dress is NO different from BA units. On patrol, since the introduction of the use of helmets, it is difficult to distinguish between UDR and Regular troops. The use of the Royal Irish Rangers (RIR) has complicated matters further as accents may NOT differentiate. The Regt. has its own distinctive head dress badge which is the Harp of Hibernia crowned by the St. Edward Crown. See Annex N.

Call from Secretariat

We received the following account from the Secretariat, over the secure phone line, of a briefing given by Austin Wilson to the Irish Side in Stormont this afternoon, 15 November 1991:

- The following statement was to be issued by the GOC at 2.30 p. m. :

"In response to a request from the RUC and following consultation with the Secretary of State and his security advisors, the GOC has this afternoon called on part-time soldiers of 1/9, 7/10, and 2/11 UDR to perform full-time duties in support of the RUC.

This is in addition to the measures taken by the RUC and the Army last night to provide the enhanced security force presence in areas thought to be most at risk, to which the Secretary of State referred in the House of Commons yesterday".

Wilson made the following points:

- This decision has been taken following a review of the security situation this morning. The British side wished to brief us prior to its announcement to the media.
- The decision is a response to threats to both sides of the community.
- There will be 600 to 650 extra men in uniform in the province. These men will materialise from the activation of the part-timers. Wilson emphasised that the numbers involved was for our own ears only and not to be quoted.
- The part-timers from the UDR units referred to in the statement are from North and South Belfast, and the Lurgan

and Portadown areas. They will principally be located in those areas. They will also free men to operate in other areas.

- The decision to call up the part-timers was taken after it had been established that the RUC would be in a position to accompany them.
- As is the norm no UDR soldiers will operate in West Belfast.
- Part of the increased security presence has been brought about by RUC officers in certain areas being put on a twelve hour shift, as distinct from the normal 8 hour shift.
- All of this is being done within the existing forces under the control of the GOC. As regards reports of troops being flown in to Northern Ireland, Wilson said that a small number of extra men on the Northern Ireland complement have been on other duties in England. These men are being brought back sooner than planned.
- The Secretary of State, if questioned about the extra numbers of active troops will reserve his position of the question of extra forces being brought to Northern Ireland. He will not amplify, or confirm anything as regards extra forces being brought in, in either this specific case or generally.
- The press release may be carried as a newsflash in the course of the afternoon. The GOC hopes that the newsflash will be picked up by the part-timers and hopes that they will report for duty this evening and over the weekend.
- It is intended that the GOC deal with the press. It may be necessary, however, for other individuals to go on air and the possibility of door stepping existed. In any dealings with the media four points would be emphasised:

- 1) An appeal would be made for calm and no retaliation.
- 2) The decisions are a response to the need for an extra security force presence.
- 3) The actions taken will provide extra protection.
- 4) The situation will be kept under continuing review.

Declan Kelleher

15 November 1991