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BORDER SECURITY

INTRODUCTION

1. Whilst the level of violence elsewhere in the Province has been significantly reduced since July 1972, the number of incidents attributable to terrorists operating from the Republic has increased.
2. This trend has made the problem of Border security, which has always been important, a key issue on both the political and military fronts. It also reflects the anxiety felt by the Provisional IRA over their waning influence in Belfast in that they have sought to divert SF efforts from Belfast to the Border areas.

EXTENT OF CROSS BORDER TERRORIST ACTIVITY

3. The Republic has been a traditionally safe haven from which terrorists launch attacks into the Province and then return, or to which Northerners flee when they are on the run.
4. There is increasing evidence to show that terrorists based in the Republic have been responsible for at least 497 incidents in 1973, 50 per cent of which have been in the last 4 months of the year. The monthly average has increased from 30 over the first 6 months to 52 over the last 6 months; a most disquieting trend.
5. Whilst some of these incidents were of little importance others have resulted in loss of life and extensive damage to property and have created a situation in which whole communities in border areas live in fear of terrorist raids. 21 members of the SF have been murdered by the Provisionals within 10 miles of the Border since 1 January 1973. In the last 4 weeks alone there have been over 61 border incidents including 21 shootings, and 16 bombing attacks. The majority of these are attributed to terrorists based in the Republic.
6. Although reprisal raids by Northern based Protestant terrorists into the Republic have been minimal, the continuation of Provisional IRA cross-border raids is likely to increase local support within Protestant communities for such activities.

IRA OPERATIONS

7. Border incidents can be broadly divided into 4 categories:

- a. Cross border raids. These are raids by groups of terrorists varying in number from 5 to 20, armed with RPG 7 rocket launchers, mortars and small arms. Past experience has shown that such groups have attacked police stations and customs posts near the Border (Forkill, Keady, Middletown, Crossmaglen and Newtownhamilton) and well inside the Province (Pomeroy). These attacks have been planned and mounted from the Republic and it is known that the terrorists have returned to the Republic after the attack. Frequently terrorists wounded in these attacks are openly treated in hospitals in the Republic without fear of arrest by the Irish SF. Examples of terrorists casualties resulting from cross border raids are at Annex A.
- b. Cross border shooting incidents. SF patrols operating on the Border and RUC stations on the Border are frequently attacked from across the Border. Terrorists will exploit the existence of the Border to site firing points for rocket launchers, small arms and large culvert or booby-trap mine devices, knowing that they will be able to withdraw safely, immune from follow-up operations by the British SF. Since 1 January 1974 there have been 6 such attacks.
- c. Assassinations of members of the SF. Although the Provisional IRA have recently announced an end to their campaign of assassinating off-duty members of the UDR it is worth noting that since January 1973 five members of the UDR have been murdered by terrorists based in the Republic. The UDR are not the only targets for these callous crimes; members of the RUC are also known to be top priority targets for assassination. The murder of Constable Doherty and a retired police constable Mr Johnson provide evidence of such a policy.
- d. Mining of Border roads. The Provisional IRA have recently announced their intention to increase attacks on the SF by mining Border roads. These mines are laid by terrorists based in the Republic using explosive materials obtained from the Republic. Such attacks have resulted in the deaths of 8 members of the SF since January 1973 but they are not always discriminating. On 5 September 1973 a tractor driver was killed when his tractor was blown up by a mine near Belcoo.
8. It is known that the IRA resupply their units in the North with weapons and explosives from the Republic. Indeed the Provisionals are dependent on the resupply of munitions from the Republic for the continuance of their campaign of violence. Statistics for 1973 show that the SF recovered 1,351 detonators and 32,000 lbs of crystallized ammonium nitrate which had come from the Republic. Two recent incidents have highlighted this illegal traffic. In both cases cars, carrying explosives totalling 320 lbs and 1 weapon, were stopped by VCPs on the Newry - Dublin road. We understand that the Irish SF have also made substantial finds of detonators and explosives.
9. It is not possible to put a precise figure on the number of active Provisional IRA terrorists who operate from the South but it is believed that there are some 200 to 300 Northerners "on the run" in the Republic. Although about half of these participate in the ASUs which are based in the Republic there is evidence that citizens of the Republic are playing an increasing part in cross-border terrorist operations.
10. The Republic is known to hold the view that cross-border activity is a result of the ineffectiveness of the British SF. This is not so for the following reasons:

a. Time spent in the North. Although some cross-border raids penetrate deep into the Province, most are on or close to the Border (over 20 since 1 December 1973 for example). Thus the whole attack can be over in a matter of minutes.

b. Time spent in the Republic. Except for their short forays into the Province, these terrorists spend the rest of their time, 95% or more, in the Republic. (Martin McGuinness and John 'Jack' Brogan are typical examples.)

c. Security. The terrorists maintain the security of their intentions by meeting to plan and coordinate their attacks in the South rather than in the North.

d. Judicial System. The failure to enforce an even-handed approach over extradition has enhanced the image of the Republic as a haven for murderers and criminals. It is worth noting that the recently convicted London bombers were arrested en route for Dublin. Furthermore anomalies in the legal system throw doubts on the determination of the Republic's law enforcement agencies. It is known that many of the sentences are lenient compared with those given in the North and their deterrent effect is correspondingly less. It is even more distressing to hear that known terrorists are arrested in the South only to be released on bail or not charged at all. Examples include:

(1) James Brown, who was arrested on 1 October 1973, charged with being a member of the Provisional IRA and then discharged unconditionally.

(2) Seamus Harvey, who was arrested on 5 July 1973 and charged with illegal possession of 4 weapons. He was released on bail and continued his terrorist activities until he was killed in a premature bomb explosion on 11 August 1973 near Castlefin.

(3) John 'Jack' Brogan, who was arrested by the Gardai on 30 October 1973 and charged with conspiracy to murder Constable Doherty and with membership of the IRA. He was acquitted on both charges and the resumption of car bombing, anticipated by the SF after his release on 15 January 1974, occurred on 29 January 1974 when a car bomb exploded in Castlederg.

(4) Hensie McKenna, who is wanted by the RUC in connection with the murder of a policeman, was arrested by the Gardai on 15 December 1973 and released without being charged the following day.

SF OPERATIONS

11. The current SF policy is to provide the maximum possible security for Border communities with the limited force levels available. The Provisional IRA have stepped up attacks in Border areas for the express purpose of forcing a redeployment of troops from areas such as Belfast, Londonderry, Portadown and Armagh where they are under constant pressure. It is not intended to respond to this increased activity by redeploying significant numbers of troops but rather by increasing the mobility and effectiveness of those troops already engaged on Border operations.

12. Closure of Border Roads. In September 1973, following a series of cross border raids on Border villages, it was decided to close selected Border roads in the Pettigoe area. This met with the approval of the local communities and the policy was therefore extended to cover the other threatened Border areas (Caledon, West Monaghan, Mullan and Castlederg). This has enabled the SF on both sides of the Border to concentrate their limited resources on a reduced

number of routes. Insofar as this has reduced cross-border raids in the local areas of these groups of blocks the policy has been a success to date. However, the Provisional IRA have organised several demonstrations at Border blocks in recent weeks with a view to dismantling them. The SF have deliberately avoided confrontations with the demonstrators, who are citizens of the Republic, preferring to rely on the Gardai to prevent explosives and engineer plant being brought up from the South to demolish the blocks. In two recent incidents, near Mullan (L54) and near Mullaghfad (M9) explosives were brought into the area of the blocks and attempts were made to demolish the M9 block itself. Following the demonstration at M9 a booby trap planted near the crossing exploded injuring a search dog and his handler.

13. Regular Forces. The SF have units of Regular troops within 15 miles radius of the Belcoo/Blacklion area. These troops operate from RUC stations, UDR centres and Army bases from which they carry out overt patrol and VCP operations using vehicles and helicopters. Furthermore the SF have the ability to counter major IRA incursions using troops carried by support helicopters from other bases in Border areas such as Enniskillen, Omagh, Armagh and Bessbrook. It is principally the use of air mobility rather than military vehicles and foot patrols alone which gives local communities the false impression that there is an inadequate military presence.

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND IRISH SECURITY FORCES

14. It is clear that terrorism cannot be defeated in Border areas in the absence of close overt cooperation between both SF at all levels. Until this becomes politically acceptable the Provisional IRA will continue to exploit the existence of the Border to ensure their safety from hot pursuit in the Republic and they will continue to terrorise border communities and murder members of the SF. Such attacks increase the likelihood of Protestant reprisal raids on the Republic. It is therefore in the interests of both communities, North and South, that a joint approach should be made and be seen to be made against terrorists in Border areas.

15. It is acknowledged that the Irish SF, like their British counterparts, have only limited manpower in Border areas. However the effectiveness of the Gardai varies and their reluctance to follow up terrorist attacks casts doubt on their impartiality and determination. A short summary of recent incidents in the Clady and Strabane area, at Annex B, shows the inadequacy of the Gardai activity in an area which has been notable for Provisional IRA activity for many months.

16. Despite the shortcomings of the Gardai cooperation in the Cloghfin/Lifford areas (adjacent to Clady and Strabane), there has been increasing evidence in most other areas of the Border, with the exception of Clones, of readiness of the Gardai to respond to RUC requests for follow up action to terrorist raids. This however is no substitute for advance warning of such raids which should be readily forthcoming and until the Gardai are officially authorised to pass such information on a regular basis to their RUC counterparts these terrorists will retain their present initiative.

17. Clones has for many months been the home of a number of ruthless terrorists who carry out raids on Northern Ireland unhindered by the Gardai. The apparent inactivity of the Gardai brings discredit on the professional integrity of the Irish police force as a whole and the Border areas adjacent to Clones will suffer terrorist attacks as long as these terrorists remain at large.

CONCLUSIONS

18. It is concluded that:

- a. The recent increase in cross-border terrorist activity generates even more violence elsewhere in the Province.
- b. The Irish authorities are largely to blame for allowing the Republic to be a haven from which terrorists, some of whom are Northerners "on the run", operate into the Province.
- c. Force levels in Border areas are considered to be satisfactory in view of requirements elsewhere within the Province.
- d. The Irish authorities should adopt a more resolute line in dealing with terrorists. Examples where improvements could be made include their arrest policy, court sentences and the question of extradition.
- e. In the absence of concerted action by the Irish SF against the Provisional IRA there is likely to be an increase in cross border raids by Protestant terrorists.
- f. Terrorism in Border areas cannot be defeated in the absence of close overt cooperation between both SFs at all levels. Cooperation between North and South should be improved. Suggestions include establishing liaison between the two Armies; a freer flow of information and intelligence on terrorist activity; the coordination of joint resources; joint operations; and giving each other practical assistance with it is requested. This should include an exchange of photographs and fingerprints of known terrorists.



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