

C O N F I D E N T I A L

P. 97/88

APW/194/BN

FROM: Austin Wilson
US (Law and Order)
21 February 1989



PS/Minister of State (L&B)

cc: PS/SofS (L&B)
PS/PUS (L&B)
Mr Stephens
Mr Bell
Mr Shannon
Mr Hannigan

ENHANCED TRAINED TEAMS

I think that the Minister of State would wish to be aware of a recent development within the RUC, namely a decision to extend the use of what are known as 'Enhanced Trained Teams' (ETTs) to undertake surveillance and covert protection duties. We first heard about this development following a request made by the RUC to the Police Authority for the supply of items of equipment to fit out the teams. The long term covert observations to be carried out by the teams require equipment and clothing of a high standard to ensure that personnel are properly camouflaged and weatherproofed. We decided to make some enquiries of the RUC on our own account before signifying our approval for the Authority to meet the Force's request.

2. The background is that the Chief Constable decided some time ago to form these teams to enhance the capacity of mobile support units to respond to terrorist threat and provide support for covert operations. The personnel involved are selected from existing mobile support units. It is now intended that there should be 27 ETTs, each with a strength of 15, ie one inspector, 2 sergeants and 12 constables. The establishment of the ETTs will not replace E4A/Military Units, rather it will complement them by

- 1 -

C O N F I D E N T I A L

16

C O N F I D E N T I A L

providing covert observation and soft target protection with a built-in self defence capability. The teams will be deployed in the more difficult inland areas.

3. I felt some unease about the intention to increase the number of RUC personnel involved in covert operations, especially as it seemed that they might be wearing or using equipment similar to that used by the military and took the matter up with Senior Assistant Chief Constable Cushley. His reply explained that

- (a) there had always been a need to provide surveillance teams that acted either on low grade intelligence or simply provided covert protection on a random basis (there was therefore nothing new about the concept of an enhanced trained team);
- (b) ETTs were formed within difficult Divisions while other Divisions used local police to form soft target protection teams;
- (c) local personnel were used and given extra training by D Department;
- (d) the number of such units was limited and their equipment basic;
- (e) the duties of the ETTs were already being carried out; the need was now to improve the effectiveness of these operations. Up to now local divisional personnel had been carrying out the tasks without the appropriate equipment and clothing;
- (f) ETTs were not performing 'SAS' type duties and they would not be provided with either the training or equipment used by such specialist units (in fact, all the training of these teams is carried out 'in house').

- 2 -

C O N F I D E N T I A L

17

C O N F I D E N T I A L

4. In short, I am satisfied that the new arrangements are no more than a limited extension of what has been going on before, but our experience in relation to this development is perhaps indicative of how easily potentially sensitive police operations can be introduced as modified without Ministers or officials being aware of what is going on. The fact that we asked the RUC to justify what they were doing in this instance will, I am sure, not be lost on them. We may therefore hope that they will be more forthcoming in future about proposals for changes in operational practice which may impinge, however slightly, on overall security policy.

(signed)

A P WILSON
SH218

9691

- 3 -

C O N F I D E N T I A L

E. R.

COVERING CONFIDENTIAL

B/F 15/2
Hold for 15/2

APW/171/BN

FROM: Austin Wilson
US (Law and Order)
9 February 1989

Brent
12 Hannigan
dug - draft under
in this 12/11/89
New

Mr A W Stephens

cc: Mr Bell*
Mr Shannon+
Mr Hannigan+
* with copies of all
previous papers

+with copy of letter of
19/1 from ACC (Ops)

ENHANCED TRAINED TEAMS

I apologise for burdening you with the attached copies of my correspondence with the SACC (Ops) RUC. I hope that it is reasonably self-explanatory.

2. I still feel some slight unease about the intention to extend the number of RUC personnel involved in covert operations of a kind rightly or wrongly more associated in the public mind with military special units; but on consideration, I feel that I am now persuaded that what is being proposed is no more than an extension of activity which already has whatever policy clearance was necessary for it. Unless, therefore, you take a different view, I propose to thank Mr Cushley for his further information and ask POB to confirm to PANI that we are content for the requested additional equipment to be provided.

(signed)

A P WILSON
SH218
9483

COVERING CONFIDENTIAL

Telephone
BELFAST 650222



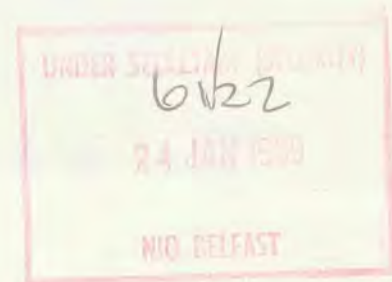
BROOKLYN
KNOCK ROAD
BELFAST
NORTHERN IRELAND BT5 6LE

Your ref: APW/108/BN

Mr A P Wilson
Northern Ireland Office
Stormont House
BELFAST BT4 3ST

19 January 1989

Sean Austin



ENHANCED TRAINED TEAMS (ETTs) FOR THE RUC

I can appreciate the difficulty you feel over this application. However, most of the problems arise from its wording.

There has always existed a need to provide surveillance teams that acted either on low-grade intelligence or simply provided covert protection on a random basis. Enhanced trained teams were formed inside certain divisions. Other divisions used local police to form "Soft Target Protection Teams". In both cases the manpower was local personnel given some extra training by the Operational Training Unit of 'D' Department. The number of such units was very limited and their equipment quite basic. This application is based on the need to increase their number and improve their equipment.

It is important to realise that police have not ignored such duties because of the lack of equipment. What in reality is happening is that divisional personnel are carrying out duties without the necessary equipment. The original request represents equipment issued as standard to the military and indeed used by their ordinary soldiers on lurk operations in the Border Zone.

In conclusion, this is not an application to create any type of RUC Unit performing "SAS" type duties. The members are not trained to carry out such operations. No application has been made for either the type of firearms or radio equipment that such specialist units use. The equipment requested serves only 1 of 4 possible functions:-

1. Improving night vision and camouflage
2. Feeding the patrol
3. Improving heat retention
4. Giving more adaptable body armour.

This is not a policy decision that would need to go before SPM. If you need any further information I would be glad to meet and discuss the matter.

*Sincerely
David J*

D CUSHLEY
Senior Assistant Chief Constable



Northern Ireland Office
Stormont House
Belfast BT4 3ST
Telephone Belfast (0232) 63255

APW/108/BN

D Cushley Esq
Assistant Chief Constable
Royal Ulster Constabulary
Headquarters
Brooklyn
Knock Road
Belfast BT5 6LE

10 January 1989

Dear Dand,

ENHANCED TRAINED TEAMS (ETTs) FOR THE RUC

I have been thinking further about information which you kindly provided for me in your letter of 15 December. As I have done so, I am afraid that I have become the more convinced that the proposal to establish enhanced trained teams is the kind of major policy development that should be considered by Ministers (probably most appropriately at the Secretary of State's Security Policy Meeting) before a final decision is taken to put it into effect.

2. As I now understand the situation, the proposal is to establish as many as 27 new 'teams', each containing 15 officers. Their task will be to work covertly in a range of protection and surveillance modes; and they are to have also a capacity to act as a 'response' team (when intelligence is not sufficient to justify the deployment of more specialist units). They are to engage in this covert activity in all parts of the Province. I am most certainly not seeking to suggest that there is anything wrong with that. Nor, of course, would I wish to query the RUC's professional judgement that, in the words of your letter to me, there is 'a gap in the range of responses that can be made to the terrorist threat'. But it does seem to me that this is a gap that should only be filled in the way now proposed after Ministerial endorsement and not simply because the Police Authority agree to supply the necessary equipment.

3. In short, I am suggesting (with apologies for not having done so before now) that the proper course, which should now be pursued, is for the Chief Constable to describe his proposals for enhanced trained teams in a paper (or letter) addressed to the Secretary of State. It would then be for

- 1 -

C O N F I D E N T I A L

C O N F I D E N T I A L



the Secretary of State to decide how to handle it, but I would imagine that he might well consider that the most appropriate course would be to have a discussion at SPM.

3. If you think that I have misunderstood (ie over-rated) the significance of the proposal, I am sure that you will let me know.

Yours sincerely

Austin

A P WILSON

*cc. Mr Hewitt
Mr Shannan*

- 2 -

C O N F I D E N T I A L