

SEC/1
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PS/Secretary of State (B)

cc: PS/Secretary of State (L)
PS/Mr Scott (B&L) - M
PS/PUS (B&L) - M
PS/Sir Ewart Bell ✓
Mr Brennan - M
Mr Bourn
Mr Buxton
Mr Burns - M
Mr Merifield
Mr Gilliland
Mr Lyon - M
Mr Bickham

RECLOSURE OF CROSS-BORDER ROADS

The RUC have requested authority under Section 19(2)(d) of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 to reclose a cross-border road, designated L53, in the Gortoral area of Kinawley which has been re-opened illegally. Authority for the closure was originally given under the Special Powers Act. Although closures under the old Act are still technically valid, it has been our policy for some time to obtain a new authorisation for closure under the Emergency Provisions Act when a crossing closed under the old Act has been illegally re-opened or by-passed.

2. The police have also recommended that 2 nearby cross-border roads, designated L51 and L52, at Caldragh and Creaghnafine should also be reclosed; and that the obstructions of another - L74A at Belleek - should be modified. In these cases orders under the Emergency Provisions Act are already in existence, and the police are not therefore obliged to come to us with their proposals for reclosure or modification. Nevertheless, it is customary for them to do so.

3. The locations of all four crossings are indicated on the attached maps (Flags A, B and C).

4. Due to their proximity to one another it is helpful to

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consider the crossings of L51, L52 and L53 together. A sketch of each is attached (Flags D, E and F).

- (a) L51 has been closed on 5 previous occasions by cratering. The most recent was in July 1981. The craters have since been filled in and the police propose to re-excavate the area and are confident that the on-set of winter conditions will ensure that it remains impassable.
- (b) L52 has been closed on 3 previous occasions. It was originally blocked by craters in 1974, but the latest closures, in June 1983, was by the placing of a Braithwaite tank which has now been by-passed. The police propose to add Braithwaite tanks, in a zig zag formation, and to excavate the adjacent river bank to create a deep pool.
- (c) L53 was originally closed in 1974 by the removal of a ford and the erection of a concrete barrier. The ford has since been reinstated and the barrier pushed aside. The police propose to re-block the crossing in a similar fashion to L52.

5. L74A is a crossing used on a daily basis by local people requiring access to the nearby Belleek pottery. The purpose of the original order, which was signed in October 1982, was to restrict the road width rather than to close it completely. This restriction is effected by the positioning of 3 Braithwaite tanks in a chicane formation, but they are now being by-passed by vehicles, including lorries. It is this latter type of vehicle, which can be used to launch mortar attacks on Belleek RUC Station, which the chicane is intended to impede. It will be necessary to add 5 Braithwaite tanks to the obstruction to make it effective once more. (A sketch is at Flag G).

6. I believe the security forces have made a careful and realistic study of these crossing points, and of the threats which they

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pose in their present conditions. As the Secretary of State will be aware, only last week the RUC Station at Kinawley was attacked with mortars, and there is a threat of further mortar attacks against vulnerable police stations such as Kinawley and Belleek. Although it can never be absolutely guaranteed that the blockages will not be interfered with again, the police intend to maintain a covert security force presence at each location in the period immediately after the reclosure. Experience shows that this is when they are at most risk. If the Secretary of State is content with the proposed arrangements I recommend that he should approve them and sign the necessary ... order in respect of L53 which is attached opposite.

7. In accordance with the usual practice in such cases the Garda have been informed that the RUC wished to reclose these crossings. If the Secretary of State is content then we will arrange for the DFA to be informed of the decision to re-close these crossings.



P COULSON
Law and Order Division

25 September 1984