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Security, Loyalist violence and the British Army.

1. There has been a general improvement in the security situation in Northern Ireland over the past six months and, in particular, since the early summer of this year. This improvement is reflected in a lower number of incidents of violence and improved statistics in relation to the apprehension of wanted persons, finds of arms, ammunition and explosives, etc. In this improvement, the active co-operation of the Irish authorities is a significant factor and the British have acknowledged this co-operation on many occasions recently, particularly in respect of activities on or close to the border.
2. In spite of this improvement, there are a number of aspects of the general security situation in Northern Ireland which continue to give rise to grave concern. The biggest single factor in this regard, and one whose importance cannot be overrated in terms of the wellbeing and welfare of all persons in Northern Ireland, is the continued pattern of sectarian assassinations. In the period between 1st April 1972 and 31st July 1973 there were 186 such assassinations of civilians; 62 of these murders were committed in the first seven months of this year. Of the 186 who were murdered, few if any were acknowledged members of extremist groups. 133 of those killed were Catholics and 53 Protestants. Of the 186 assassinations 155 took place in the greater Belfast area, of which 110 were Catholics. Thus, in an area where Catholics form approximately 25% of the overall population, they number about 70% of those assassinated. The conclusion must be that the vast majority of these civilian assassinations are done by Loyalist extremists as acts of naked sectarianism. Large numbers of people are being murdered because they are Catholics (or Protestants) and not because of suspected political involvement.
3. Despite the relatively high number of Catholics assassinated, the bulk of the activities of the security forces continues to be directed against the Nationalist community. While it is understandable that the main thrust of military pressure must be concentrated in minority areas, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the assassination situation is sufficiently serious for it to warrant more security activity than is taking place at present. We welcome the steps already taken by the British authorities to combat assassinations (e.g. the setting up of the anti-assassination squad early this year); however, we feel that these measures must be increased significantly with, perhaps, extra personnel being assigned to the assassination investigations and additional patrols near assassination black-spots, especially at night. The effects of such measures would be greatly increased by a widespread publicity campaign.
4. The Irish authorities also view gravely the continued existence and activities of extremist Loyalist Organisations - such as the U.D.A., U.F.F., etc., which openly advocate and carry out acts of terrorism, intimidation and violence.

The leaders of these organisations have repeatedly claimed and demonstrated that they possess and are prepared to use large quantities of arms, ammunition and explosives. Members of such organisations have been repeatedly involved in the most extreme forms of violence against members of the minority community; such violence is obviously closely connected, both actually and psychologically with the assassination patterns mentioned above.

5. We believe that the attitude of the security forces to extremist Loyalist violence is conditioned principally by two considerations:-
- (a) a military consideration that the army cannot afford to find itself operating on two fronts at once and
  - (b) a political fear of facing directly the full implications of Loyalist rebellion.

The British authorities have also consistently refused to accept the clear and consistent evidence linking such extremist organisations with direct involvement in violence. This reluctance is also manifest in their toleration of the inflammatory and intimidatory statements of Mr. William Craig, who is now an acknowledged leader of the various groups which co-ordinate the political activities of such extremist organisations.

6. The Irish authorities are also deeply concerned at the unchecked growth of terrorist type intimidation in Northern Ireland, especially in Belfast. It is clear that, to a large degree, such intimidation has been caused by members of extremist Loyalist organisations. These acts of intimidation generally relate to housing and the minority community have borne more than their proportionate share of injury in this regard. Northern Ireland statistics show that approximately 83% of the reported cases of intimidation refer to intimidation of members of the minority community. The detection and conviction rates for such crimes are very low and there are documented cases of inactivity or downright toleration of intimidation on the part of the security forces.
7. The Irish Government is disturbed by the clear evidence of a one-sided approach by the British authorities to the question of arms searches and finds. We have reason to believe that between November 1972 and June 1973 the security forces searched 436 houses of the Loyalist community and 3,708 houses of the minority community. Over that seven month period greater supplies of ammunition and explosives were consistently found in the Loyalist houses. Despite the high yield from searches of Loyalist-owned or occupied properties, the British authorities appear to have made little effort to increase the number of these searches or to bring them into line with the high level of

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searches of minority-owned or occupied properties.

8. Our information indicates that there has been some reduction in the level of harassment by the British army of minority areas and in the occurrences of acts of brutality by the security forces towards apprehended persons. At the same time, we are aware of at least 10 grave brutality cases in the period February to July 1973. Information on harassment is necessarily vaguer and less subject to check; we have had recent reports of an increased level of army activities in recent weeks in relation to the Andersonstown area of West Belfast and the Creggan area in Derry. This increased activity involves saturation screening of youths and young adults, detention up to a period of 72 hrs., the checking of all types of personal information and, occasionally, casual violence. These processes have been described to us as showing a return by the army to a search for a military victory or, at least, an effort to make the R.U.C. more acceptable by contrast.
  
9. It is suggested that, in the context of this paper, the Taoiseach may wish to emphasise especially the connected issues of sectarian assassinations and toleration of Loyalist extremist organisations. The British are vulnerable on both these issues as the ascertainable facts of the matter are clearly against them. In connection with these twin themes, the Taoiseach may also wish to utilise the paper on internment which shows that from the introduction of internment to date about 2,000 members of the minority community have been interned and detained without trial while the number of members of extremist Loyalist organisations interned comes <sup>to</sup> substantially less than 70.

(The information and arguments used above are based on material submitted to the European Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg on the 8th September, 1973)