

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES

### IRELAND



<b>Reference Code:</b>	2010/53/930
<b>Creation Date(s):</b>	[1980]
<b>Extent and medium:</b>	14 pages
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of the Taoiseach
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## North South Security Cooperation

### 1. Recent Developments

The most recent exchange of views concerning cross border security cooperation between Irish and British Ministers occurred at the meeting in London on 13 October 1980 between the Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Lenihan and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Mr. Atkins. Mr. Atkins said that the Irish Government's efforts in this area were much appreciated by the British Government. It had not gone unnoticed that the Irish Government was devoting more and more of its resources to border security. The British Government was well aware of what the Irish Government was doing through the close working relationship that existed between the RUC and the Garda Siochana.

However Mr. Atkins said that one aspect of the situation was causing some concern. While the terrorist problem in the North was lower than it had been, there was a feeling that a problem still existed in the areas straddling the border. The impression he had from talking to people in Northern Ireland was that it was too easy to go back and forth across the border. He was left in no doubt that "things were boiling up beneath the surface"

Minister Lenihan replied that the Garda Siochana kept in close touch with developments concerning border security and they had made significant arms finds recently. The type of crime now being committed in border areas was an extremely difficult one to arrest. The border terrain itself was difficult, as the British appreciated, and there was a considerable degree of sectarianism involved in such crimes.

### 2. Terrorism in Border Areas

Terrorist activity in the border region this year has been prominent in the Fermanagh and South Armagh areas. Eight members of the Northern security forces have been killed in Co. Fermanagh since 1 January. The British Army GOC in Northern Ireland General Lawson told Belfast City Council on 15 October that the British Army had greatly increased its coverage there with both overt and covert patrols.



Serious incidents in South Armagh included the murders of RUC Reservist Wallace Allen and Mr. Ross Hearst by the PIRA in late August and early September. Tension in the area reached its highest point for many months following these two killings, the abduction and subsequent release of an English tourist, Mr. Peter Viner, and the accidental killing on 29 August of Mr. Frank McGrory of Carnagh, Co. Armagh in a booby-trap explosion.

### 3. Positive Aspects

There have been positive developments arising from the efforts of the security forces on both sides of the border in the fight against terrorism. In Northern Ireland the death rate is at its lowest for four years. It has fallen from 297 in 1976 to a total of 71 for this year up to the end of November. Explosions and shootings have dropped from 766 and 1908 in 1976 to 250 and 502 respectively in the first nine months of 1980.

On this side of the border the Garda Siochana have made major arms and explosives finds this year, particularly in border areas. Up to the end of September the material located included approximately 113 guns, 25,000 rounds of ammunition, and 4750 kgs of explosive mixture. Many of the finds were in Counties Louth and Monaghan. On 30 November another major cache was discovered in an underground bunker at Moortown, Co. Louth including 23 rifles, assorted radio equipment, rocket launcher and pad, electrical detonators, two grenades, instruction manuals, approx. 5000 rounds of ammunition etc.

The Garda Siochana have also been very successful in recent times with regard to bank robberies and armed robberies. Since 2 May 1980 there has been only one armed bank robbery in Dublin and that was unsuccessful.

However three members of the Garda Siochana were fatally wounded in shooting incidents in recent months. Following the murders of Gardai Morley and Byrne in Roscommon last July (Garda Quaid was killed in Wexford in October) the Garda Commissioner was requested by the Taoiseach on behalf of the



Developments in Security Cooperation Since 1974

Government to put together a plan of action to deal with criminals, subversives and others. The plans of the Commissioner have been accepted in toto by the Government and are being implemented.

4. A note on developments in North/South security cooperation since 1974 is attached.

2. In addition to the Baldonnell papers there are other specific areas of cooperation:

- periodic meetings of officials on questions relating to the control of commercial explosives
- provision of escorts for movement of explosives
- the granting of specific permission to specific requests to overfly the border for either photographic reconnaissance purposes or in connection with the monitoring from the air of suspect explosive devices. The depth of these overflights is normally 500 metres. Overflight requests for these purposes and within these depths are granted in most cases
- the granting of permission for helicopter overflights arising from serious incidents provided certain conditions are strictly observed (a memo agreed between Irish and British Ministers on 5 October 1979)
- co-ordinated security cover with the Northern security forces on overflight activities
- courtesy meetings between the Heads of Garda and RUC
- day-to-day communication between Garda and RUC in border areas

The last major development in security cooperation between Irish and British Ministers took place in London on 5 October 1979. Ministers reviewed progress in the development of proposals discussed on 1 September between the Secretary of State and the British Minister. Specific points outlined agreed to at the meeting.



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## Developments in Security Cooperation Since 1974

1. For all practical purposes developments in the area of North/South security cooperation date from a meeting in September 1974 between Mr. Merlyn Rees and the then Minister for Justice. It was at this meeting that it was decided to establish the so-called panels of Garda and RUC (Baldonnell panels). There have been frequent expressions of satisfaction at the state of Garda/RUC cooperation in this context and while this Department is not made aware of the matters discussed it is generally agreed that cooperation is on a firm footing and operating satisfactorily.

2. In addition to the Baldonnell panels there are other specific areas of cooperation:

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- the granting of permission for helicopter overflights arising from serious incidents provided certain conditions are strictly observed (a measure agreed between Irish and British Ministers on 5 October 1979)
- co-ordinated security cover with the Northern security forces of overflight activities
- courtesy meetings between the Heads of Garda and RUC
- day-to-day communication between Garda and RUC in border areas

3. The last major discussion on security matters between Irish and British Ministers took place in London on 5 October 1979. Ministers reviewed progress in the development of proposals discussed on 5 September between the Taoiseach and the British Prime Minister. Specific points outlined/agreed were:



- (1) The M/Justice outlined increases in the Garda Special Task Force and the Investigation Unit in the Garda Technical Bureau
- (2) The M/Justice indicated that some increases in the Garda strength in selected border areas would be made as more Garda recruits become available for service
- (3) The Garda Commissioner and the Chief Constable undertook to examine the operation of the police panels to see how they might be made more effective
- (4) Ministers agreed that specific officers would be nominated in each Police HQ for liaison purposes
- (5) The Minister for Justice outlined what the Government was prepared to offer in relation to incident related over-flights and the conditions attached thereto
- (6) The Minister for Justice indicated that the Irish Army would do more aerial surveillance on our side of the border and that it had been decided to base a helicopter at or near Dundalk
- (7) The M/Justice outlined that direct contact could be made between the B. Army and Garda in certain emergency cases with technical details in relation to communications to be worked out in the police panels
- (8) Ministers agreed that the Commissioner and the Chief Constable would examine means of improving the present arrangement that exists between the two Forces in relation to the questioning of suspects
- (9) The Secretary of State indicated that the strength of the RUC was being increased
- (10) The Secretary of State indicated that as the operations of the security forces were not as effective as they might be Sir Maurice Oldfield had been appointed to co-ordinate operations
- (11) The Secretary of State said that several working parties had been set up in Northern Ireland to find ways and means of improving the overall performance on security

4. In regard to (5) above the British were given permission for their helicopters to overfly the border to maintain surveillance of suspected terrorists in certain strictly limited conditions. The flights must be kept to an absolute minimum and range into our territory only to the extent that it is absolutely necessary to track suspects until the Gardai can apprehend them. They should never come beyond a depth of 5 km. The flying height must normally



be not less than 1500 feet, no firing may take place from helicopters and helicopters may not land in the State. Overflights of this kind must be confined to daylight hours and to serious incidents. The risk of a terrorist attack on a helicopter must be accepted by the British authorities and there would need to be an understanding that there will be no recriminations in the event of such an attack occurring. Of course we on our side would do everything we can to prevent such an attack. Overflights must be reported by radio to the Gardai before or at the time of crossing the border. In addition, a detailed written record of every overflight must be given to the Gardai through the RUC within 24 hours. No overflights may take place over towns or villages or close to military installations. The State must be indemnified against any loss or damage to persons, livestock or property arising from overflights. Since the object of the overflights is to make known the whereabouts of terrorists to the Garda Síochána we would permit direct communication to be made by the helicopter to the Gardai either before or at the time of crossing the border and for any follow-up that may be required. Progress of the operation would be reviewed regularly on a monthly basis.

This permission has not yet been availed of. During the period October/November last year the British had pursued with us the question of permitting direct communication between their overflying helicopters and our Army helicopters in the interests of air safety i.e. in order to avoid collisions. This request was in addition to what had been agreed on 5 October (communication between an overflying helicopter and the Garda) but was, in a sense, a technical extension of that permission.

5. However in February the British authorities informed us that they had decided to implement the agreement on 5 October without waiting for the additional permission referred to above. In effect they considered that the risk of collision is fairly remote. Accordingly they were issuing instructions to their forces advising them of the arrangements resulting from the agreement of 5 October and it is therefore possible that an overflight of the kind then agreed to might take place in the immediate future.



6. At the direction of the Taoiseach, the Minister raised the subject of incident-related overflights with the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, on 4 March 1980. He emphasised that, while we were imposing no numerical limit on incident-related overflights, the matter was politically sensitive for us and we therefore had to ask that the facility be used as seldom as possible. We were not proposing any changes in the arrangements and conditions agreed on 5 October 1979.

7. This was repeated during the meeting between the Minister and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mr. Atkins on 15 April 1980 when the latter expressed himself as being fully satisfied with security co-operation. Reporting to the House of Commons on the 15th April meeting Mr. Atkins confirmed on 8 May that he was happy with the way in which existing arrangements for security co-operation were operating. He drew the attention of the House to the continuing successes of the Irish security forces in discovering arms and explosives caches. "Co-operation between the security forces North and South of the border is I am credibly informed by people who have longer experience of the province than I, better than it has ever been." he said.

8. At their meeting in London on 21 May 1980 the Taoiseach and British Prime Minister noted with satisfaction the efforts being made by the two Governments both separately and in co-operation, in the field of security.

9. On 12 June 1980 Mr. Atkins in the House of Commons said "I am happy that cooperation between the security forces in Northern Ireland and those in the Republic has become more effective during the past year with significant results"



10. On 10 July 1980 Mr. Atkins in the House of Commons said " Relations between the RUC and the Gardai are good and there is close cooperation between them".

11. In the House of Commons on 22 July 1980 Mr. Atkins said "I have been reassured in recent meetings that Irish Ministers recognise our joint interest in cooperating to frustrate the activities of those determined to destroy the State, both north and South of the border. The cooperation of the RUC and Garda is paying increasing dividends as for example in the latter's recent discoveries of arms and explosives."

12. At the meeting between Irish and British officials on 11 September 1980 in London the Head of the Irish Desk at the Foreign Office tendered congratulations to the Garda Siochana for recent finds by them of arms and explosives.

Department of Foreign Affairs

(Mr. Atkins), House of Commons, 3 April 1980

Department of Foreign Affairs



Recent Statements by official British Spokesmen on the State  
of Cross-Border Security

1. "...noted with satisfaction the efforts being made by the two Governments, both separately and in cooperation, in the field of security" (Mrs. Thatcher in joint communique with Taoiseach 21 May 1980)
2. "The cooperation between the security forces North and South of the border is, I am credibly informed by people who have longer experience of the province than I, better than it has ever been". (Mr. Atkins, House of Commons, 8 May 1980)
3. Mr. Atkins expressed satisfaction at the manner in which the agreed arrangements for security cooperation were operating (meeting with Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dublin, 15 April 1980)
4. "We attach great importance to cooperation with the Republic of Ireland in efforts to neutralise the terrorists' use of the border. I am equally clear that the authorities in the Republic recognise this need and I am glad to say that there has been considerable progress on this front. I am confident that this will continue to improve and that it will play no small part in the eventual suppression of crime in Northern Ireland" (Mr. Atkins, House of Commons, 3 April 1980).

Department of Foreign Affairs



# Security costs to the UK and Irish Governments

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## (1) United Kingdom

### Total cost of security in Northern Ireland (3)

	Law, order and protective services (1)	Army (2)	Total
1974/5 (2)	103	33	136
1975/6	152	60	212
1976/7	170	65	235
1977/8	202	69	271
1978/9	232	81	313
1979/80	258	101	359
1980/1 (estimated)	315	107	422

### Security costs in the Republic and Northern Ireland for

#### selected years, isolating NI-related costs to the Republic

(2): Responsibility for security in Northern Ireland was taken over by the UK Government in January 1974.

(3): While the total

cost of law, order and protective services (excluding British Army) in Northern Ireland is estimated at about £249m in 1979/80, no figure is available as to how much this is attributed to the extraordinary situation there. The only reasonably firm figures available are

- the cost of the British Army's operations in Northern Ireland - £97m in 1979/80 (House of Lords PQ, 13 May 1980)
- the cost of compensation for criminal injuries in Northern Ireland - £49m in 1979/80 (UK Supply Estimates 1980-81, Class XV). No doubt the major portion of this amount was due to the trouble there, however, this is not separately distinguished in the estimates.



# Security costs to the UK and Irish Governments

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## (i) United Kingdom

### Total cost of security in Northern Ireland (3)

	<u>Law, order and protective services (1)</u>	<u>(£ m)</u>	<u>Army</u>	<u>Total</u>
1974/5 (2)	103		33	136
1975/6	152		60	212
1976/7	170		65	235
1977/8	202		69	271
1978/9	232		81	313
1979/80	258		101	359
1980/1 (estimated)	315		107	422

#### Notes:

- (1): Including expenditure on the Northern Ireland Office and on NI courts
- (2): Responsibility for financing all law, order and protective services was taken over by the UK Government in January 1974.
- (3): While the total

cost of law, order and protective services (excluding the British Army) in Northern Ireland is estimated at about £249m in 1979/80, no figure is available as to how much of this is attributed to the extraordinary situation there.

The only reasonably firm figures available are

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(ii) Republic of Ireland

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	<u>Total cost of security *</u>	<u>Identifiable costs attributable to the Northern situation</u>	B as a percentage of A
	(IR £m)	(IR £m)	(%)
	A	B	
1969/70	30.7	2.0	6.5
1970/71	38.8	3.0	7.7
1971/72	46.2	7.0	15.2
1972/73	63.2	11.0	17.4
1973/74	75.6	15.0	19.8
1974 (9 months)	70.3	15.0	21.3
1975	130.9	33.0	25.2
1976	148.7	40.0	26.9
1977	168.1	47.0	28.0
1978	195.0	55.0	28.2
1979	241.3	60.0	24.9
1980 (est.)	314.0	83.0	26.4

Security costs per head of relevant populations

\* Departments of Defence and Justice Votes groups.



Security costs per head of population

(in £)

	Republic (1)		Northern Ireland (2)
	Total	NI Related	Total
1968/69	11		
1969/70	13	1	-
1970/71	16	1	-
1971/72	21	2	-
1972/73	25	4	-
1973/74	23	5	-
1974/75	41	5	2
1975/76	46	10	4
1976/77	51	12	4
1977/78	52	14	5
1978/79	59	17	6
1979/80	72	18	6
1980/81 (1)	81	25	8

Security costs per head of relevant populations

- (1) per head of population in Republic
- (2) Figures for Republic post 1974 refer to calendar years; the 1974 1975/76 figure for the Republic is for 9 months only.
- (3) per head of NI population.
- (4) per head of 1978 populations.



Security costs per head of population

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	<u>(IR £)</u>		
	<u>Republic</u> <sup>(1)</sup>	<u>Northern Ireland</u> <sup>(2)</sup>	
	<u>Total</u>	<u>NI Related</u>	<u>Total</u>
1969/70	11	1	-
1970/1	13	1	-
1971/2	16	2	-
1972/3	21	4	-
1973/4	25	5	-
1974/5	23	5	2
1975/6	41	10	4
1976/7	46	12	4
1977/8	51	14	5
1978/9	59	17	6
1979/80	72	18	6
1980/1 <sup>(3)</sup>	93	25	8

(1) per head of population in Republic

(figures for Republic post 1974 refer to calendar years; the 1974 (1974/5) figure for the Republic is for 9 months only.)

(2) per head of UK population.

(3) per head of 1979 populations.