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AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2
DUBLIN 2

*by [unclear]
[unclear]
20-1-92
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17 January, 1992

Mr. Dermot Nally,
Secretary to the Government,
Government Buildings,
Merrion Street,
Dublin 2.

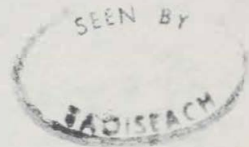
*Taoiseach
To see please
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Dear Dermot,

Further to the letter from Secretary of State Brooke to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the related Secretariat report (copied to you earlier), I enclose further background material, in case the Taoiseach should wish additional details on the operation and on the points we have conveyed to the British side in relation to how it should be presented, particularly as regards sensitivities in the nationalist areas near the border.

Yours sincerely,

Seán O hUiginn



Seán O hUiginn
Assistant Secretary

Border PVCPs: Major Programme of Construction
and Improvements by British Authorities.

1. The Secretary of State Mr. Brooke wrote to the Minister for Foreign Affairs on 10 January informing him that a major programme of works at Permanent Vehicle Checkpoints (PVCPs) along the Western section of the border was due to begin within a few days. On the same date the Secretariat was given a detailed briefing on British intentions.
2. The operation involves major construction at or near ten (10) PVCPs, eight (8) of them in Fermanagh and two (2) in Derry. Work is due to begin on 20 January (delivery of materials commences 13 January) and will last about six months.
3. The British side present the programme as the outcome of a major review of the operation of PVCPs in border areas. This was initiated following the wave of "human bomb" attacks during 1990, which highlighted the vulnerability of existing PVCPs to this kind of attack.
4. The operation (codename: LOREN) is regarded by the British as offering a number of advantages:
 - it meets the security concerns of Unionist communities in border areas
 - it enhances the safety of Security Force personnel
 - it will result in PVCPs becoming more "user-friendly": two-way traffic arrangements and by-pass facilities should mean reduced delays. While the plans as described offer some prospect of this, and would therefore to that extent be welcome to us and

to the nationalist community, it is also inevitable that at least during the building period there will be a deterioration in the situation at many of the locations.

5. The British have indicated that the numbers involved in the operation will be considerable, both building workers and the necessary security component. Extra troops (approx 400) are being brought in from the Royal Artillery Field Regiment to support the operation. The British acknowledge that the sites, the personnel and the associated transport arrangements are likely targets of paramilitary attack, once the nature and extent of the operation becomes known. They have asked for our co-operation through the involvement of the Garda and the Army in dealing with this situation.

Points of Concern

6. The issue was raised by officials on our side at a previously arranged meeting with their NIO counterparts in Dublin on 10 January. Concern was registered on a number of aspects (within a framework which reiterated our traditional scepticism of the value from a security perspective of fixed check-points):

Presentation: it was essential that the programme should be presented as one aimed at minimizing delays and reducing the inconvenience to local communities, especially those who transit the border on a regular basis. The temptation to pander to Unionist politicians by presenting the measures as an instalment of "Fortress Ulster" had to be resisted: otherwise the impact on the nationalist community would be extremely counter-productive. This would also have a resonance in our jurisdiction.

The British side indicated that they would be initiating

in the period after 20 January a major information programme designed to advise public representatives, church and community leaders etc. of what is under way. However the impression left was that the British hope to have it both ways i.e. give each community the message it wants to hear. Our officials pointed to the obvious pitfalls in this approach.

- Balanced Package: the British were pressed to balance the package by, for example, allowing some closed cross-border roads to be re-opened. There was no immediate response on this, but it was indicated that the discussions under way through another channel between the Garda Commissioner and the RUC Chief Constable were not prejudiced by the present decision with regard to PVCs.

 - Security Implications: it was stressed on our side that the operation had significant implications for the security forces of this State. There was the likelihood of increased activity by subversives, and considerable additional resource would have to be provided. It was strongly emphasised that the approach taken by the British authorities in "selling" this programme would have an important bearing on public opinion on our side of the border, and accordingly on the likely effectiveness of the co-operation which the Irish authorities would be able to provide.
7. A copy of the letter to the Minister for Foreign Affairs from the Secretary of State together with a report on the briefing provided through the Secretariat is attached.

Anglo-Irish Division
16 January, 1992

W8181

SECRET

10 January, 1992.

Mr. Sean O hUiginn,
 Assistant Secretary,
 Anglo-Irish Division,
 Department of Foreign Affairs.

PSM
 PSS
 Mr Nally
 Mr. Brennan
 John
 10/1

Dear Assistant Secretary,

Border PVCPS.

We were told here on Wednesday that we would be briefed on a security initiative in connection with border PVCPS. In the absence of Mr. Crowley who is away today, I was briefed at Stormont this morning by Mr. Alston, Mr. Wilson and Ms. Collins and given the text of a letter from the Secretary of State to the Minister (sent earlier by Secure Fax). A copy of the letter is requested to be given to the Minister for Justice. I understand that the British Embassy in Dublin will be delivering copies also. I attach a map of the Fermanagh sites for convenience.

The operation involves major construction at or near (perhaps a few hundred yards away in some cases) ten PVCPS, eight of them in Fermanagh and two in Derry; it will last about six months. The operation was described to me as, in physical terms, the biggest ever conducted in Northern Ireland. When I had heard the detail below, I said it seemed as if the operation would present itself as the construction of a ring of new military bases along the border. The British side did not disagree with that description.

They see the operation as a major effort to answer the concern of local Unionist communities about security and the concern of the British Army about the safety of its personnel. It is also intended to make the PVCPS more "user friendly"; in particular the operation will result in two-way traffic arrangements and by-pass facilities which should reduce delays.

The work is intended to start on Monday 20 January but delivery of materials will commence next Monday. The British expect that the IRA will see the operation as a challenge and will make attacks. In order to protect the operation so far as possible, no information will be given to the press or to community leaders until Monday 20 January except that the Fermanagh Bishops, Dr. Duffy and Dr. Hannah, will be briefed later next week.

Extra troops from the Royal Artillery Field Regiment are being brought in to protect and support the operation. They will be

arriving later today. The numbers involved will be about 250 soldiers "at the sharp end" and about 150 support staff. No mention of the operation has been made as yet in the police channel. It is expected that the RUC will contact the Garda authorities later today. I noted that a police working group has been considering the question of border patrolling for some time and I wondered if the operation did not cut across its discussions. I was told that the operation "does not go against the drift" of the Working Group's expected report which I was told is nearing completion. I understand the Working Group will meet next Wednesday.

Detail

There will be three types of PVCP in future. Type 1 will be a "patrol base" which will involve the building of a structure away from the road and providing overnight accommodation. The checkpoint barriers will be controlled remotely and there will be traffic lights. This type of base will be constructed at Clonatty Bridge, Wattle Bridge, Killyvilly and Roscor Bridge.

Type 2 will be a PVCP with a by-pass road which will allow the Army to route traffic through or around the base. This type of base will be built at Annaghamartin and Gortmullen (which will benefit the Quinn cement factory there).

Type 3 will be of the type that exists at present at Kilturk, Mullan Bridge and the two Derry PVCPs on the Muff Road and the Letterkenny Road. The heavy ground at the Kilturk base will not permit construction of a two-way traffic system there.

Work will begin initially on five bases in South East Fermanagh, Killyvilly, Annaghamartin, Clonatty Bridge, Kilturk and Wattle Bridge. It is expected that work will begin in March on three PVCPs to the west at Mullan Bridge, Gortmullen and Roscor Bridge and in March/April at the PVCPs on the Muff Road and Letterkenny.

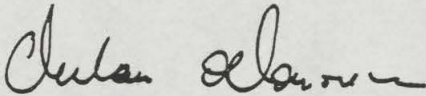
I was told that work will be going on separately at the Camel's Hump PVCP at Strabane in connection with a road by-pass scheme there. This will involve the construction of a new PVCP and a sangar nearby. The end product will be type 1 "patrol base" but without overnight accomodation.

There will be a need for further requisition of land, some permanent and some temporary. The owners have been identified. They are already associated with the Ministry for Defence in the sense that they are taking rent for land already requisitioned. In the British view, they are most unlikely to make difficulty. One owner, Mr. Goodwin at Annaghamartin, is a brother-in-law of Deputy Jimmy Leonard. (I was told that if the attempted bomb attack at Annaghamartin had succeeded last Autumn, his house would have been blown up.)

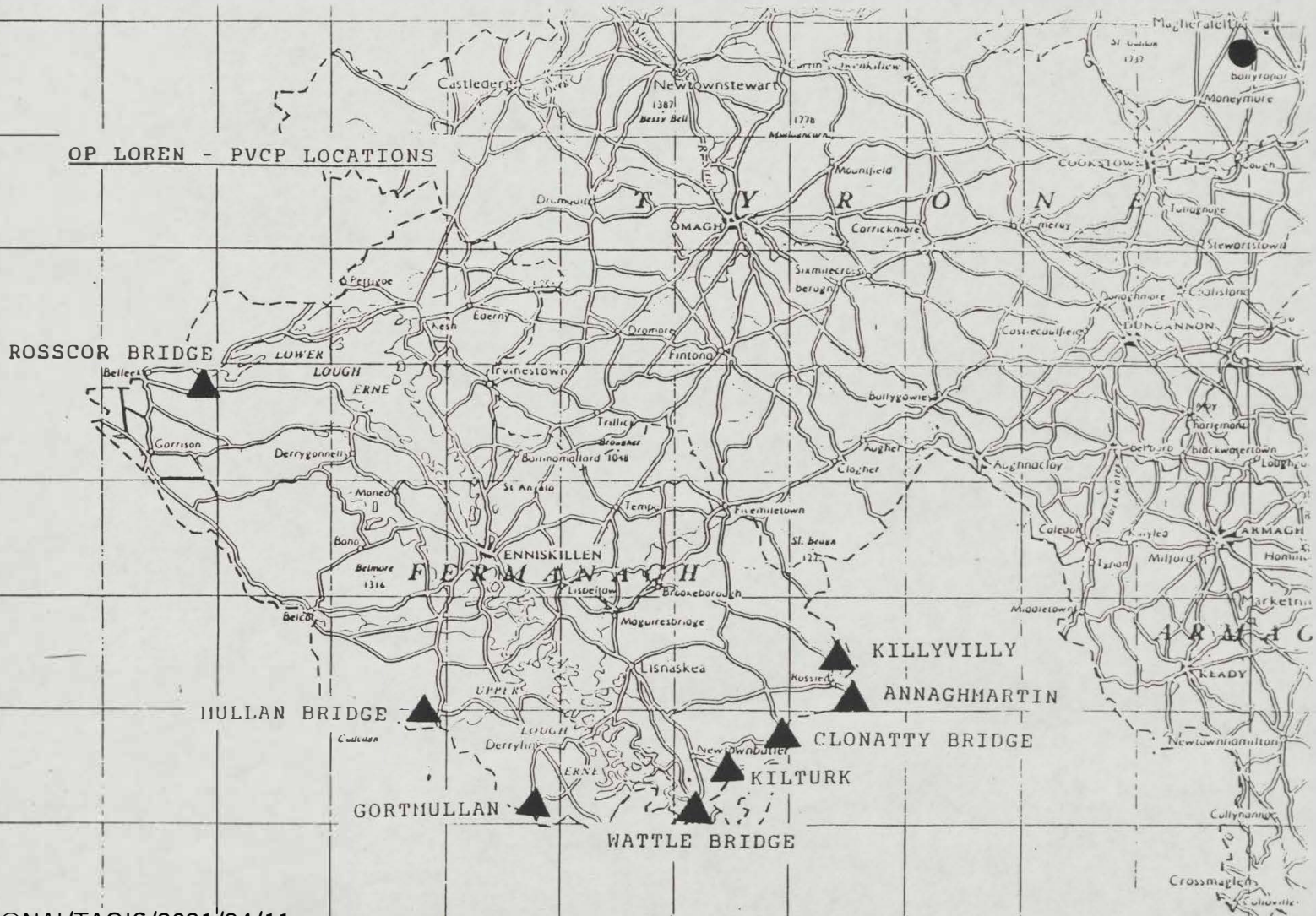
There is a likelihood that this operation will cause increased IRA activity in border areas. It remains to be seen what will be requested of the Garda Siochana but it seems certain that the operation will involve extra strain on our resources. There is

also likely to be some political fall-out: people will be inconvenienced although the new bases may eventually improve traffic flow as the British claim; and in wider terms, the operation may be seen as the creation of a ring of fortified bases along the border which, however, the PVCs already are to a degree.

Yours sincerely,



Declan O' Donovan
Joint Secretary



OP LOREN - PVCPC LOCATIONS

ROSSCOR BRIDGE

MULLAN BRIDGE

GORTHULLAN

WATTLE BRIDGE

KILTURK

CLONATTY BRIDGE

KILLYVILLY

ANNAGHAMARTIN

I M M E D I A T E

SECURE FAX 030

TO: HQ FROM: Belfast - 10 January, 1992 PAGES: 4
FOR: A/Sec O hUiginn FROM: Joint Secretary

Border PVCPS

Herewith text of letter from Mr Brooke to the Minister with copy
Minister for Justice.

Briefing given this morning. Report follows.

SECRET

Mr G Collins TD
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Department of Foreign Affairs
DUBLIN

/0 January 1992

I am writing to tell you, in the strictest confidence, of a very major security operation which will commence in South-East Fermanagh, on Monday 13 January. We expect that it will last for some considerable time. The intention is to make the PVCs in South-East Fermanagh more secure for the members of the security forces who are deployed there and more 'user friendly' to the local communities who live and work around them.

You will recall that, following the appalling human bomb attacks on the PVCs at Cloghogue and Bunrana Road in October 1990, emergency measures had to be taken to protect the personnel manning PVCs from such attacks. Although the need for these measures was, I think, appreciated throughout the community, it was undoubtedly the case that the inconvenience caused to the public was at times considerable. That consideration led, in the short term, to a re-examination, and then to some refinement, of those measures. But it was clear that these changes could only be a temporary expedient. And PIRA's repeated attempts to bring huge and lethal devices into PVCs gave added urgency and importance to a more fundamental review of the role and future of PVCs which the security forces undertook at my request and which has now been completed.

That review examined in depth both the need for PVCs as a concept, and the pros and cons of retaining (or modifying) each

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PVCP individually. Its first outcome was the removal, in April 1991, of the PVCPS at Derryard and Boa Island.

The review has led to the conclusion that, for the foreseeable future, there is a need for permanent security force bases in the border areas. I have accepted that they are necessary both to enhance the security of an area (by controlling road traffic and by providing a secure base for wider proactive patrolling) and to continue to monitor and control traffic on certain routes. In the light of the conclusions of that review, I have authorised a programme of work which has as its principal objectives the enhancement of the value of the bases to the security forces as part of the total anti-terrorist effort, the reduction of the danger to those manning them, the release of personnel for patrolling tasks, and the reduction of inconvenience to the local community (by improving traffic handling arrangements, and minimising delays).

This programme of building work has been carefully planned to minimise the inconvenience to the local community. But a major security operation is required to protect those involved (many of whom will be civilians) as well as the sites themselves. This heightened level of security force activity will be apparent across a wide area. But I am in no doubt that it is absolutely necessary. In particular, there will be a serious risk of cross-border attacks, aimed, for example, at the movement of material into the area. Any such attack could, of course, cause the death or injury of bystanders, or ordinary members of the public, as well of those at whom it might be aimed.

The RUC will shortly be in touch with their colleagues in the Garda, to brief them about the impending operation and, specifically, to ask for their help in preventing such attacks.

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you will already know how much we appreciated the very able assistance offered by the Garda and their Irish Army colleagues during the refurbishment of the South Armagh observation posts last year. I am sure that we shall be able confidently to look for similar co-operation and assistance during this even more extensive and difficult operation.

As they carry out this operation, the security forces will be acutely aware of the need to keep disruption to the local community to an absolute minimum. The operation has been planned with this aim firmly in mind and arrangements have been made to inform local elected representatives, parish priests, and other key individuals of what is going on and why. My own Department's Civil Representatives will be on hand throughout the operation to deal with any problems that may arise and, in particular, to ensure that any complaints or claims for damage are dealt with speedily and effectively.

Although I am writing to you only in general terms, I have arranged that my officials should provide you with briefing through the Secretariat. I would, of course, be ready to speak to you on the telephone about this matter if you wish - although because of the necessary high security classification of the operation I could do so only in guarded terms.

I am sending a copy of my letter to Ray Burke.

PB