



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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D.V. 2/12/93

Security Situation in Northern Ireland

Background Note

1. As of 2 December, 75 persons had died in 1993 as a result of paramilitary violence. 44 (or 59%) of the deaths are attributable to sectarian killings by Loyalist paramilitaries. The remaining 31 people have been killed by the IRA (29) and the INLA (2). The heavy casualties in October follow a period, January-September, when 46 people had died - one of the lowest totals in recent years. The total number killed in Northern Ireland as a result of paramilitary violence during October, however, was 27 (of whom 23 were killed in the period since 23 October). This was the highest death toll in a single month since October 1976.

Republican Violence

2. The IRA appear to have been relatively, although by no means totally quiet since the Shankhill Road murders of 23 October. In the last forty eight hours, however, there have been reports of IRA attacks on the security forces in North and West Belfast. The military approach of the IRA during 1993 has been marked by concentration on military and "economic" targets. They have in addition murdered individuals whom they suspect of working for the security forces, and have targeted members of Loyalist paramilitary groups. The bomb attack on UDA premises on the Shankhill Road, for example, which clearly went disastrously wrong, followed closely on this IRA strategy statement which indicated the IRA's intention of taking action against UDA figures and in particular the best known UDA commander in West Belfast (Johnny Adair).

Pattern of Republican Attacks

3. There have been several variations in the intensity of IRA activities and killings during the year. In addition to the lull since October, a de facto IRA ceasefire occurred in early September to coincide with the visit of a delegation to Belfast led by U. S. ex-Congressman Bruce Morrison. From

April to end-September, the IRA killed 8 persons. In the first three months of the year, however, they had killed 11. Attacks on military targets (e.g. sniper, gun and mortar attacks on patrols/bases) continued throughout the year.

4. Of significance in its impact in British Government, public and financial/commercial opinion, is the pattern of bomb attacks on civil/commercial targets. In each month up to April, devices exploded in Britain, culminating in March with the Warrington bombs and April with the devastating Bishopsgate bomb. On 10 May, the IRA reportedly offered a two-week ceasefire. Minor shooting attacks took place in the days following. On 20, 22, 23 May, however, a series of major bombs exploded in Belfast, Portadown, and Magherafelt, causing an estimated £22m worth of damage. (These bombings may fit in with reported IRA irritation at the refusal of the British Government to take up whatever the IRA had on offer). Bombing attacks against commercial targets in Northern Ireland and Britain continued through June, July, August and, in the case of Northern Ireland, September. A number of small devices were defused in the London area in October.

Loyalist Violence

5. The relative lightness of casualty figures during the late Spring and Summer should not obscure the fact that the level of paramilitary activity on the part of Loyalist groups has been intense for most of the year. The intensity of Loyalist murder attempts increased even further from September onwards. Early October was marked by a series of Loyalist sectarian attacks in which three Catholic civilians were killed. In the immediate wake of the Shankhill Road bomb, Loyalists murdered 13 Catholics, seven of them in the atrocity at Greysteel, Co. Derry, on 30 October. The RUC claim that there were up to 50 paramilitary attacks in Belfast within the two weeks up to 28 October.

6. We understand from informed contacts that the UDA have decided that scores are settled, for the moment, following the Shankill Road bomb. Moreover, the UDA and UVF have reportedly been involved in efforts to evolve their own political platform. That said, the Loyalist threat remains high and we have heard that the UDA have been regrouping and retargeting after a wave of arrests in Belfast and Derry. Moreover, the threat of Loyalist armed resistance to political change or perceived 'concessions' to the IRA, while not yet explicit, remains in the background and is given some credence by the evidence of activism in importation of weapons, and statements by the UDA in particular that they have ready access to weapons.

The "Loyalist Backlash"

7. Loyalist paramilitaries are responsive to two sets of perceived threats: first, IRA violence; second, a more diffuse and abstract threat deemed to be posed by the Nationalist agenda to the Protestant/Unionist identity as understood by Loyalists. This includes perceived moves towards a united Ireland; the fears of British sell-out; and, in particular at the UDA working-class level, suspicions of socio-economic advances by the Catholic community on foot of efforts to tackle discrimination and disadvantage. The subculture of this set of fears is an aggressive sectarianism and the belief that nationalist advances have been ultimately the result of IRA violence. Hence the UDA openness to the notion of the "pan-nationalist front", a concept nurtured by irresponsible remarks and prompts by mainstream Unionist politicians.
8. The operational significance of these realities is twofold: first, the UDA in particular target any available Catholic and justify this on the grounds that the Catholic community in general in some sense succours and benefits from the IRA. Second, even though the UDA say that an end to IRA violence is in effect a necessary condition for an end to Loyalist violence, it is not clear that it is a sufficient condition

and we have not seen any comments by Loyalist groups which are conclusively to the contrary.

9. Of particular concern in current circumstances is the recent shipment of weapons and explosives to the UVF from Poland, interdicted at Teesport in England. The inclusion of a large quantity of explosives and detonators highlights the Loyalist interest in enlarging its capacity in these areas. This shipment also raised again the issue of support by middle-class elements who are in a position to finance and direct Loyalist paramilitary activities. Against that, the shipment, although with an estimated value of nearly £250,000 may have cost less given the glut of former Eastern bloc weapons available in the Baltic states (and thus may have been affordable out of standard UVF rackets revenues).

10. The threat of the "Loyalist backlash" has been invoked in a number of occasions over the past twenty years: for example in 1972, following the prorogation of Stormont; in 1974, through the Ulster Workers' Council strike; in 1977, when an unsuccessful attempt was orchestrated by Dr. Paisley and the UDA to replicate the UWC strike; and in 1986, in response to the Anglo-Irish Agreement. What is clear from these events is that, with the exception of the UWC strike (in any event a short-term phenomenon) effective cohesion between Loyalist paramilitaries and the broader Unionist community, including mainstream politicians, has proved difficult to sustain. Indeed, recent and obviously orchestrated briefing by British official sources has claimed that, in the event of an agreement, a Loyalist backlash "could be very bloody indeed, but brief and containable by the security services who have infiltrated hardline Loyalist paramilitaries". While the risk of a Loyalist backlash should not be discounted, it must be seen against the background of a pattern of Loyalist violence which is hostile to any perceived advance in the Nationalist agenda and which, in terms of casualties, was at a far higher level in the early to mid 1970's than it has been ever since.

Present Situation

11. The RUC publicly responded to the increased threat of revenge attacks in Belfast following the Shankill Road bomb by drafting in extra RUC and military personnel to the Belfast area. The RUC made a substantial number of arrests following the Greysteel murders. The British side have indicated that they are alive to the concerns which we have conveyed about the vulnerability to revenge attacks of nationalists, particularly in mixed areas. The recent murder of a Catholic worker in an East Belfast factory demonstrates this vulnerability. We remain in touch with the overall situation on the ground through our own local contacts. We are picking up indications that the relaxation in tension discernible during November is at risk given IRA and Loyalist paramilitary attacks in the last few days.

Anglo - Irish Division

2 December 1993

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Breakdown of Fatalities by Agency Responsible
1969 - end November 1993³

	RUC	Army	UDR/RIR	PIRA	INLA/ IPLD	OIRA	Other Nation.	UDA/ UFF	UVF/ PAF	Other Loyal.
1969	7	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	2
1970	0	5	0	6	0	0	12	0	0	2
1971	1	40	0	57	0	3	33	0	0	21
1972	6	69	1	208	1	5	42	3	1	98
1973	1	29	2	111	0	1	17	14	1	66
1974	2	15	0	81	0	3	15	5	3	86
1975	0	7	0	51	3	2	45	8	17	91
1976	3	13	0	81	1	0	62	5	2	106
1977	2	7	0	47	0	0	23	3	2	20
1978	0	11	0	38	0	0	17	0	0	7
1979	0	1	0	50	2	0	38	1	0	12
1980	2	7	0	36	2	0	12	3	0	10
1981	6	11	1	46	11	1	20	3	1	7
1982	7	4	0	40	30	0	3	0	1	10
1983	6	5	1	41	6	0	3	0	1	9
1984	2	8	0	37	3	0	2	2	1	5
1985	1	3	2	43	2	0	0	1	1	0
1986	2	4	0	37	2	0	2	5	3	8
1987	0	9	0	54	10	0	1	3	1	10
1988	2	5	0	61	1	0	2	6	8	9
1989	2	2	0	38	0	0	4	4	9	5
1990	0	10	0	44	0	0	2	8	9	2
1991	3	3	0	41	7	0	1	14	20	7
1992	5	5	2	30	5	0	0	21	13	4
1993	0	0	0	29	2	0	0	28	13	3
Total	60	275	9	1,307	88	15	360	137	107	600
%age	2.0%	9.3%	0.3%	44.2%	3.0%	0.5%	12.2%	4.6%	3.6%	20.3%

7. Source: 1969 - 1986: Irish Information Partnership
1987 - present: Section records.

Agency Responsible for Fatalities 1969 - end November 1993
Breakdown by Category of Victim⁸

	<u>Security Forces</u>	<u>Republican Paramil.</u>	<u>Loyalist Paramil.</u>
<u>Category of Victim</u>			
Security Forces	17	903	10
Republican Paramilitaries	130	154	22
Loyalist Paramilitaries	13	22	46
Civilians	184	660	764
Prison Officers	0	26	3
Total	344	1,765	845
percent of Total	11.6%	59.7%	28.6%

8. Source: 1969 - 1986: Irish Information Partnership
 1987 - present: Section records.