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Our reference MISEC 11

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Date 26 October 1971

COMMANDER LAND FORCES DIRECTIVE FOR FUTURE INTERNAL SECURITY OPERATIONS

1. Attached is the Commander Land Forces Directive for Future IS Operations.

2. Please acknowledge on the enclosed receipt.

3. Sufficient copies are enclosed for Brigades to redistribute to major units.

Lieutenant Colonel
for Commander Land Forces

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HISEC 11*

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COMMANDER LAND FORCES' DIRECTIVE FOR FUTURE INTERNAL SECURITY OPERATIONS

Reference: A. Our Internal Security Instruction 1/71 (Revised) dated 15 Oct 71.
B. Our 13/9/2 dated 18 Oct 71.

BACKGROUND

1. Our campaign against the IRA is making real progress, and this is reflected in some increase in confidence within Northern Ireland and a measure of cautious optimism in Britain.

2. In the Irish Republic and amongst Republicans in the North, however, we have only just begun to undermine the belief that the IRA is capable of winning. Furthermore, there is evidence that the opposition are stepping up at least their propaganda offensive in an effort to regain the initiative and achieve their aim - to break Unionist morale in the North and at the same time to persuade the British public that their best and safest course is to abandon Ulster.

3. We, for our part, must continue to demonstrate by military successes the certainty of defeat of the IRA. We must do all that we can to increase confidence in the Security Forces by all sections of the community, while ensuring that our image remains untarnished. It is equally important to maintain the goodwill and support of the public in Great Britain.

4. This Directive is intended to amplify the current Internal Security Instruction (Reference A) with particular reference to the emphasis which should be placed on each aspect of our current task.

MISSION

5. You are to restore and maintain law and order throughout your brigade area, acting in aid of the civil power in conjunction with the RUC.

GENERAL OUTLINE

6. The campaign against the IRA is to be conducted on three simultaneous and inter-related fronts: the intelligence front, the operational front, and the public information front.

7. The closest links must be maintained with the RUC, including Special Branch, and wherever practicable operations should be conducted jointly. The establishment of mutual confidence with a full exchange of information is basic to success on both the operational and intelligence fronts. It is the duty of brigade and battalion commanders to know and work not only with their RUC uniformed colleagues but also their Special Branch links or MILO representatives; good intelligence remains the cornerstone of our effort. Equally, the effect of an action upon public opinion is a factor always to be considered in the formulation of a plan or a policy.

TASKS

8. First Priority. The first priority task is the defeat of the IRA's campaign of violence. To this end all brigades are to:

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a. Defeat IRA armed attacks by resolute armed action within the terms of the current rules of engagement.

b. Respond to all other forms of violent IRA activity with vigorous follow up action.

c. In conjunction with Special Branch, arrest all IRA suspects as quickly as the capacity of the interrogation system will allow.

d. Protect MPs, and certain other possible IRA targets when ordered, to the extent necessary to prevent the IRA from having easy access to targets the destruction of which would seriously damage essential services and undermine public confidence.

e. Ensure that, by accurate and fast reporting of operations, all information staffs are able to present the truth about Security Force actions quickly and convincingly.

9. Second Priority. The second priority task is to overcome threats to law and order from all other directions, including in particular inter-sectarian strife. However much the first priority task brings us into conflict with one section of the community, we must retain our sectarian impartiality. Furthermore, we must avoid unnecessary alienation of Roman Catholic opinion because the rejection by the Catholics of IRA violence is an essential ingredient of our ultimate success.

10. 5 Airptbl Bde. Additional Tasks.

a. Progressively improve the control of subversive movement across the border both to assist the campaign against the IRA and to increase public confidence. To this end:

(1) As many as possible of the unapproved border crossings are to be closed and kept closed, although not to the extent of causing major confrontations with local communities or of running a serious risk of incurring casualties or damaging publicity.

(2) The maximum practicable security control of other routes should be maintained by VCPs (which contribute to public confidence), surveillance and counter-ambush operations.

(3) Other measures, which are now being studied, will be ordered from time to time.

b. Disrupt IRA movement of men, weapons and explosives elsewhere in the Brigade area, with particular reference to routes into Belfast.

11. 8 Inf Bde. Additional Tasks.

a. Progressively impose the rule of law on the Creggan and Bogside. Hooligan fringe activity is to be vigorously countered; arrest operations are to continue to be mounted; and normal patrols through IRA dominated areas are to be restarted when considered practicable.

b. Be prepared to occupy and dominate the Creggan and Bogside, when sufficient forces are provided.

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c. Jam and if possible eliminate Radio Free Derry.

d. Progressively improve the control of subversive movement across the border both to assist the campaign against the IRA and to increase public confidence. To this end:

(1) As many as possible of the unapproved crossings are to be closed and kept closed, although not to the extent of causing major confrontations with local communities or of running a serious risk of incurring casualties or damaging publicity.

(2) The maximum practicable security control of other routes should be maintained by VCPs (which contribute to public confidence), surveillance and counter-ambush operations.

(3) Other measures, which are now being studied, will be ordered from time to time.

12. 39 Airptbl Bde. Operations are to be framed with particular emphasis on their effect on public confidence in Belfast, since both economic confidence and civilian morale throughout Ulster stem so largely from there.

13. Ulster Defence Regiment. UDR battalions and companies are under the operational control of brigades, and regular army commanders must take full account not only of the valuable part that the UDR now plays in IS operations, but of the vital long term role of the Regiment. A high level of good quality recruiting can only be sustained if priority is given to efficient, varied tasking and other aspects of volunteer morale.

CONCLUSION

14. The rate of attrition within IRA ranks is already having some effect on their morale. We must increase this rate in terms of wanted men seized, gunmen and bombers killed, and arms caches discovered. In themselves such successes may not be decisive; what matters is the determination, will and morale of those who are left. We must endeavour by all possible means to work towards their total demoralisation: by quick and effective military response to events; by painstaking searching, patrolling and surveillance; by the variety and ingenuity of our techniques; and by a sound application of public information policy.

15. We should not hesitate to fire whenever events demand it and the law permits. Nevertheless, we must not permit standards of conduct to deteriorate, whatever the provocation. We must ensure that fire discipline is good and discipline generally is of the highest order - particularly now that the rules of engagement themselves are less restrictive - and we must never give an impression of being a repressive Army at war with a large section of the population.

16. As the IRA become less effective so must we be prepared to change our priorities, and it is most likely that the prevention of inter-sectarian strife, dealt with swiftly and impartially, will become yet again our priority 1 task. But for the moment the primary aim is the destruction of the IRA.

[signature]

Major General
Commander Land Forces

26 October 1971

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14 December 1971

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FUTURE MILITARY POLICY FOR LONDONDERRY
AN APPRECIATION OF THE SITUATION BY CLF

BACKGROUND

1. Up to the first week of July 1971, very significant progress towards normality had been made in Londonderry. There were comparatively long periods of peace and the RUC had, for the first time in 12 years established a static post in the Creggan and Bogside area from which they were gradually extending their influence, even to the extent of patrolling in pairs on foot. There was a low level of overt military activity, the hooligan element had been isolated and the IRA were quiescent. On 4 July 1971 the local IRA campaign began and the situation changed overnight. The military reaction to the gunmen, and subsequently the introduction of internment resulted in renewed violence on a large scale and the campaign of civil disobedience began.

2. On 20 August the meeting between the GOC, the UK Rep and the "Committee of 30" took place after which it was decided, that in a last attempt to maintain the hitherto successful policy of minimum pressure, the military profile should be lowered in Londonderry in the hope that moderate opinion would win the day. There was moreover a tacit understanding that the period allowed for this detente was to be of the order of one month.

The Current Situation

3. None of the expectations of the meeting with the "Committee of 30" have materialised. At present neither the RUC nor the military have control of the Bogside and Creggan areas, law and order are not being effectively maintained and the Security Forces now face an entirely hostile Catholic community numbering 33,000 in these two areas alone. Between 4 July and 13 December the Security Forces have suffered 22 casualties from the gunmen - 7 of which were fatal; there have been 380 confirmed shooting incidents; 1932 rounds have been fired at us - 364 rounds being fired in reply and 1741 lbs of explosives have been used in 211 explosions (not counting about 180 nail bombs). There are at present 29 barricades up, 16 of which are impassable to 1 ton armoured vehicles.

Serial No. 6800

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4. Until mid November, the policy adopted after the meeting of 20 August generally obtained, namely, no military routine patrolling in the Bogside and Creggan, and no military initiative other than that demanded in response to aggression or for specific search or arrest operations.

5. Since 3 December, when the force level was increased by one battalion, the Security Forces have been carrying out battalion strength operations in the hostile areas. These have included recce and fighting patrols in depth and arrest, search and barricade clearance operations.

6. The strength of the opposition is difficult to judge. Although a fair rate of attrition has been maintained against the terrorists, the three month containment phase between 20 August and 3 December has enabled the extremists to increase their hold on the Catholic community, and to recruit and train more volunteers. On internment 68 men were arrested in Londonderry, and 84 men have been arrested since. Since 4 July we claim to have shot 54 of whom 7 are known to have been killed, but these casualties cannot be fully substantiated, as the dead bodies or wounded persons, and their weapons have been recovered on only five occasions. Taking these uncertainties into account, our best estimate is that the activists total some 1000, of whom half can be counted as the hooligan element, who themselves have a hard core of 250. The IRA strength is estimated at 100, of whom at least 40 are active gunmen.

7. Meanwhile the extremists have made good use of the period of limited military activity. There are now sentries and searchlights on all major obstructions during hours of darkness and an efficient alarm system of sirens, hooters and car horns has been established. Groups of men are organised, each under a leader and 30 to 40 strong, who appear to be at very short notice to deploy to prearranged positions. As a result of these precautions surprise has become almost impossible to achieve.

AIM

8. The aim of this paper is to recommend what military action should now be taken in Londonderry.

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DISCUSSION

9. It is very unlikely that the "Committee of 30", the SDLP or any other so called moderate body will succeed unaided in overcoming the extremist and revolutionary element in the present situation and there is no sign that any other leadership will emerge which might be capable of doing so. Military action is therefore required to establish control and stability and enable the political situation to evolve. There are three options now open to the Security Forces:

a. Course 1. To revert to the previous policy of containment of the Creggan and Bogside from their periphery but adopt a much more offensive attitude than in previous months.

b. Course 2. To continue the present policy of undertaking major operations within the Creggan and Bogside but without providing a permanent presence in those areas.

c. Course 3. To establish, on a permanent basis, a full scale military presence in the Creggan and Bogside.

The ensuing paragraphs discuss these three options.

COURSE 1

10. The first course is to revert to the previous policy of controlling and protecting the more compliant areas of Londonderry and entering the hostile areas ie the Creggan and Bogside, only for specific tasks. This amounts to a policy of containment and envisages that operations in the hostile areas are conducted with the minimum forces compatible with safety and the minimum aggravation of the community. It would include sniping with every available aid from our present positions on the periphery, recce and fighting patrols and ambush and search operations whenever intelligence justified them. It would not preclude the establishment of additional dominating but static positions should this prove possible, nor the setting up of permanent road blocks with the object of increasing control of the hostile areas. There would be constant patrolling in the Bogside and to a lesser extent in the Creggan, where larger forces would have to be deployed. Individual operations would however be of short duration and measured in minutes rather than hours.

Advantages

11. The advantages of this course are:-

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a. The minimum pressure is exerted on the Catholic community and the tension caused by large scale military operations is reduced.

b. There is at least a chance that such anti extremist feeling as there is in the hostile areas might be directed against the activists instead of the Army. Since our operations would be seen to be selective and directed against them rather than against the population as a whole.

c. Some opportunity is afforded to moderate leadership to wean the people away from the extremists, although there is little evidence that this is likely to happen nor indeed has it happened in the three month pause since 20 August.

d. Should hostilities end elsewhere in the Province and the minority settle for some form of political solution, a military occupation of the hostile areas of Londonderry with all its implications could be avoided.

e. The force level problem disappears.

Disadvantages

12. The disadvantages of this course are:

a. It will not restore law and order in the Bogside and Creggan and it makes it difficult to deal with gunmen or to make arrests in that area. By seeking to operate with the minimum aggravation of the population, we are imposing even more restrictions on ourselves than exist already.

b. It encourages the IRA and the various other revolutionary groups to increase their influence over the local population and discourages the local community from submitting to government or providing information for the Security Forces because of its lack of a permanent presence.

c. It is a difficult policy to implement from the point of view of keeping up the morale of the Security Forces and RUC and retaining the initiative and an aggressive spirit.

d. It is unsatisfactory from the Stormont and local Protestant point of view.

e. It represents a retreat from our current military positions and offers little hope of quick relief to those in the hostile areas who are getting fed up with the IRA, the hooligans, the hardships of their daily existence and conditions of semi seige.

f. The stalemate continues.

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COURSE 2

13. This course is that which is being pursued at the present time. It has been made possible by a modest increase in the local force level by one battalion (of three companies only) and the policy permits operations to be conducted in the hostile areas, in more than battalion strength mainly in the form of arrest, search and barricade clearance operations interspersed with fighting patrols. To date these operations have averaged at a force level of five coys.

Advantages

14. The advantages of this course are:

a. It has demonstrated our ability to go in and out of the area at will and has broken the stalemate. We have been able to take the initiative and there has been in consequence a marked improvement in the morale of the Security Forces.

b. It has brought considerable pressure to bear on the gunmen.

c. It has mollified the local Protestant 'hard-liners' who have behaved responsibly in the face of determined explosive attacks against commercial targets and intimidation of their employees.

d. It has achieved a limited initiative comparatively cheaply in terms of force levels and has tested the reaction of the local community and the troops involved in large scale operations.

e. It has permitted the flow of information to restart, albeit with only a trickle at this stage.

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Disadvantages

5. The disadvantages of this course are:-

a. Law and order is still not restored because there is no permanent presence in the Bogside and Creggan areas, which are still effectively dominated by the IRA. This has meant that the Security Forces have encountered well organised opposition on each occasion that an operation has been mounted and have had to deploy in considerable strength in order to remain in the area for any length of time.

b. Due to the rapid reaction, numerical strength and aggressive tactics of the opposition, the Security Forces are forced to use Baton Rounds and CS Gas in large quantities. The former are ineffective and the latter, being an area weapon and indiscriminate in nature, causes havoc amongst large sections of the community who are not involved, nor intend to be involved in the violence. In these circumstances too, the use of ball ammunition becomes more likely, particularly when units of platoon strength are assaulted by organised mobs numbered in hundreds. This in turn raises the question of opening fire on "unarmed" mobs, whose strength lies not in fire-power, but in numbers and brick power.

c. It has served only to aggravate and alienate the Catholic community further, without providing the continuous protection necessary to allow the moderates, ie those who are opposed to violence, to come out into the open without fear of intimidation and exert their influence. There is no evidence that the number of moderates has decreased, but there are indications that the hat fear and distrust felt by the Catholic community for the Security Forces is deeper now than at any time during the current campaign. This is demonstrated in the violent reaction to our operations, particularly in the Creggan area.

d. It has not restored law and order, even on a temporary basis. Upon the withdrawal of the troops (usually conducted under considerable pressure, including verbal abuse, stone, brick and bottle throwing, nail bombs and sniper fire) the hostile areas have reverted at once to their state of lawlessness. There has been no permanent removal of the barricades, which are usually rebuilt as soon as the troops withdraw.

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COURSE 3

16. This course is to establish a permanent military presence and achieve a full scale security coverage in the Creggan and Bogside areas with sufficient forces to ensure the rapid restoration of law and order.

Advantages

17. The advantages of this course are as follows:

a. With the force levels contemplated, it offers the best, perhaps the only prospect of a quick restoration of law and order thus creating the conditions in which a political initiative may be taken with some chance of success.

b. Although the community in the Bogside and Creggan are certain to be extremely hostile at the start, it is difficult to predict how long the period of active and violent hostility will last. A military presence permanent or otherwise will never be welcome, but in due course those who are already fed up with the disruption of their lives and everything else connected with the current situation, may come to regard the Army as the lesser of the two evils and cooperate in the destruction of the IRA. A permanent military presence offers the best chance of permitting this.

c. The local Protestant community would be delighted at such a show of determination, and it would also have an effect throughout the Province in restoring Protestant confidence in the security forces, and discouraging unilateral action.

d. The fact that the security forces are present in large numbers throughout the area will enable the local community to see for themselves that the opposition's propaganda on such matters as brutality are untrue.

Disadvantages

18. The disadvantages of this course are:

a. There is a considerable force level penalty since the military presence must be at a sufficient density to guarantee the restoration and maintenance of law and order and prevent the troops from

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being submerged by the sheer weight and numbers of a violently hostile community. Furthermore once the occupation has been completed it must remain tenable, as a failure on this scale would have serious repercussions throughout the Province. In the light of the increased hostility and preparedness of the extremists, and in particular of the increased hold of the gunmen, a detailed force level assessment now shows that the requirement is for 7 battalions of which 5 must be infantry.

b. The military action would be represented by the Republican propaganda organisation as repressive and punitive to the Catholic population (It will be up to us to show by our actions that this is not so). It will have a marked effect on Catholic opinion throughout the world and particularly in the Republic where opinion is extremely sensitive to any action directed towards the Catholic areas in Londonderry. Adverse reaction in Catholic communities elsewhere in the Province, including Belfast is also likely. One of the factors which makes Londonderry different, is her proximity to the Republic, just seven minutes away by car. Reaction there may result in even greater support from the IRA Active Service Units in Donegal, who already come across all too frequently to provide the professional touches. This in turn could lead to frequent cross border battles which would be unacceptable to HMG. All these political implications of course require expert judgement at a higher level.

c. The risk of casualties is high and apart from gunmen or bombers, so called unarmed rioters, possibly teenagers, and certain to be shot in the initial phases. Much will be made of the invasion of Derry and the slaughter of the innocent.

d. The provision of accommodation for the occupying force presents a major difficulty. No abandoned houses or other accommodation is at hand as in Belfast and the eviction of families and requisitioning of their property has obvious disadvantages. There is an acute shortage of suitable buildings as the areas concerned consist of housing estates. Such buildings as do exist are often in the wrong place and taking them over is bound to cause intence resentment. For example the new Community Centre in the Creggan, which

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is not yet complete, is one of the only buildings available in the area. For these reasons the deployment of troops and establishment of company and platoon bases throughout the area is no easy matter.

e. It might have an adverse effect of the Security Forces campaign elsewhere in the Province.

CONCLUSIONS

19. The policy of restricting military activity in Londonderry as a result of the meeting on 20 August has produced no apparent beneficial result. The moderates have failed to assert their influences and the Bogside and Creggan areas are completely dominated by the extremists. The pause for political activity is now over and some new initiative is clearly necessary if the present stalemate is to be broken.

20. The only way to restore law and order in the Bogside and Creggan areas is to adopt Course 3 and there is no doubt that this is the best military solution. The difficulty of course is that the problem is not entirely a military one; indeed it can be argued that there is really no military necessity to enter the area at all, since it could be contained from the outside until such time as a solution is reached elsewhere in the Province. The political disadvantages of Course 3 are considerable. It will be represented as repressive against one section of the community and will generate an emotive reaction, which could become politically counter productive. It also requires 7 battalions, which cannot be provided from within N Ireland and therefore means a reinforcement of 3 additional battalions - all infantry.

21. Taking into account the history of Londonderry, the fact that it is almost universally recognised as something different from the rest of the Province, the proximity of the border, the Republican reaction and the fact that the IRA may well call off their campaign if defeated in Belfast, all lead to the conclusion that the decision whether or not to adopt Course 3 at the present time is entirely a political one. Circumstances could however change if for example the IRA were to amount an offensive from the hostile areas into other parts of the city.

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22. There seems to be little military value in continuing the Course 2 policy compared with the antagonism which it is arousing in the community. It is true that gunmen may be shot, some intelligence may be gained and our ability to enter the area is demonstrated, albeit only in battalion strength and with copious use of CS gas. However the basic fault of this policy remains its temporary nature and its very harmful effect on those who might otherwise be prepared to forsake the IRA cause. It can be argued that all that it achieves is to drive the community further into the arms of the IRA and to increase the danger of a massive reaction. The wisdom of continuing with Course 2 is therefore in doubt unless the introduction of Course 3 were imminent.

23. The best that can be said of Course 1 is that it does not stir the pot unduly in Creggan and the Bogside, but it must be recognised that the price to be paid is the fact that a community of some 33,000 citizens of the UK will be allowed to remain in a state of anarchy and revolt. The containment aspect of this policy can certainly be achieved and the temptation to adopt this course until a cessation of hostilities elsewhere in Ulster is strong and certainly attractive from a political point of view. Some limited military benefit will also accrue in that some pressure is brought to bear on the IRA provided that the offensive aspect is given sufficient emphasis.

24. To summarise, although Course 3 is the correct military solution to the problem of restoring law and order in Londonderry, the political drawbacks are so serious that it should not be implemented in the present circumstances. The dangers inherent in persisting with Course 2 are in no way balanced by the limited military gain and the right answer in the present circumstances is to adopt Course 1. In order to avoid comparison with the previous Course 1 which was adopted up to mid November and was too defensive and defeatist in concept, it might be best to call it Course 1½.

RECOMMENDATION

25. It is recommended that the present policy in Londonderry should be abandoned in favour of Course 1 as described in this appreciation.

R C FORD
Major-General
Commander Land Forces

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NOTES FOR MEETING WITH HOME SECRETARY ON 14TH DECEMBER 1971

GENERAL OPERATIONAL SITUATION

1. The level of IRA violence, though lower than in previous months, is still considerable. There are reports that both factions of IRA are hard pressed for both men and materials and some evidence to confirm that Brady morale is low.

2. The number of explosions and shooting incidents has in fact reduced to about two thirds of the level of previous month. However, there has been an increase in activity in the rural and border areas and there is some evidence to suggest that the IRA are trying to draw our eyes away from the crucial battle in Belfast because of the pressure and successes which we are achieving there.

3. Our own casualties have reduced a little to an average of about one killed and seven wounded per week.

4. Rate of attrition remains high. We are taking in about 100 a week of which about 35 are eventually being interned. We hope to maintain this rate of attrition in the coming weeks although there is likely to be a slight drop over the Christmas period. There is a temporary drop this week because of the introduction of a number of replacement units who are finding their feet.

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5. IRA current strengths probably total 900 (600 Brady) plus a thousand auxhiliaries.

6. We are killing and wounding them at a steady rate killed and wounded per week.

7. The total "out of action" per month is therefore about 125. Evidence suggest that the shooting and wounding is a major cause of the reduction in morale. Internment is faced as an almost inevitable finale and those arrested rarely resist.

8. Numerical depletion in itself will not be the over-riding factor in the present situation. What matters is, of course, the morale, determination and will of those who remain.

9. There is also the possibility that the Provisionals will call it off their campaign of violence before it is depleted to such an extent that they lose their influence. It is just possible that they may call it off whilst it is at its height.

10. However, we foresee the violence carrying on at the present level and even more desperate actions being attempted. Whilst they took very considerable heed of public opinion until recently, now they appear to have almost completely disregarded it.

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There are indications this morning that political assassination has been attempted again and I would suggest that this may be followed by kidnapping. We also fear attempts to plant explosive devices in major stores prior to Christmas.

But overall the position is good with the one exception of Derry and here a major decision will have to be taken shortly.

→ not refer to discontinuation of house raid, public policy adopted in Derry; this had stopped on 3 Dec.

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R.A. File
Dup 7 Ln

Army Report on Hooligan Control in Londonderry

C&F report written a week after BIS's entitled 'Army Report'

In Londonderry one of our major problems has always been the hooligan element. They number about 500 total, 250 hard core. There is a daily pattern of DYH activity. They turn out every afternoon with the aim of destroying more and more of the main shopping centre. We combat them daily with baton rounds and CS gas.

Recently their infiltrations into the shopping area have been such that the subject has been raised in JSC and I have met the Strand Shopkeepers Association who complained that they could not go on much longer in the existing environment.

In the past we have attempted to snatch these hooligans but have always failed because of their clever tactics and look-outs.

In the two weeks prior to the march, the IRA were particularly active within the city and we were fired on 61 separate times and we had 52 nail bombs thrown at us by the DYH. Our casualties during this period were 2 killed and 3 wounded.

Our defensive posture since we abandoned Course 2 has produced a slight morale problem in Londonderry. The Brigade Commander spoke to me on two occasions about this and I have been concerned for a few weeks. Indeed, I mentioned it to CGS at his last briefing here. This was due to the entirely deffensive course of action in Londonderry where troops were being stoned, nail bombed and sniped at on an ever increasing scale daily.

Perhaps I should turn here to the whole question of peace keeping. Peace keeping as I see it is a great confidence trick and nowhere else is this so than in Belfast where a small number of troops control a situation by the threat that they pose and the belief of the locals that they will take the necessary action to maintain law and order should it be necessary. For instance, the deployment of one platoon of 1 PARA will stop a large riot, because they are aware that in the past this unit has gone in fearlessly with its batons and, as always in Ireland, their effect has been exaggerated in the telling. Never was this more so than during the period 9-12 August when 1 PARA took down barricades on three successive nights

→ Reputation

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normally under the fire of gunmen but with the massed locals disappearing into the distance as soon as 1 PARA moved in.

In Londonderry the deterrent effect was almost nil. Indeed, the baton round is treated with distain by the DYH and it is only by the massive use of CS gas that has prevented our troops from being overwhelmed on numerous occasions. I have little doubt that after the speeches were over last Sunday the hooligans, supported by quite a considerable element of the crowd would have descended on Waterloo Place and the Strand with the aim of doing the maximum damage. I believe that we would have had the greatest of difficulty in containing the situation without shooting into the crowd and indeed, I had prepared a paper on this subject in the preceding week with a view to possibly putting it to the MCD this week. The paper was based on the assumption that there was a gap in our armoury which could only be met with a lethal weapon, and that it would be necessary to revert to the hard concept used in other counter-insurgency campaigns of warning ring leaders that they would be shot if necessary doing so.

It was because of this situation and because of this possibility that we included in the plan for 8 Bde a quick snatch operation (which we have tried before) to pick up a high proportion of the hooligans and in this way prevent major hooligan activity after the meeting. 1 PARA were moved across for this specific purpose because of their expertise and their training in this very role. They were also unlikely to be panicked by gunmen should they intervene. An essential element of this plan was that the Brigade Commander would only launch it when he could see that the civil rights crowd was seperated from the main body of the hooligans. For this reason he had a CO in a helicopter circling overhead assessing the situation and recommending the moment critique. It was agreed that if a separation did not take place that he would not launch a snatch operation.

It is of interest that in the 40 minutes prior to the snatch operation only after volley after volley of baton rounds were fired at the hooligans without effect.

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