

SECRET

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July*

1969/Joint Sec./4

CONCLUSIONS OF A MEETING OF THE JOINT SECURITY
COMMITTEE HELD IN STORMONT CASTLE ON TUESDAY, 19TH AUGUST, 1969, AT
12 NOON

PRESENT: The Minister in the Senate
The Minister of Finance
The Minister of Home Affairs
The Minister of Education
The Minister of Development

ALSO PRESENT: The Chief of Staff
The Inspector General
The County Inspector of Crime Special Branch
The Security Liaison Officer at Headquarters,
Northern Ireland Command

The Secretary to the Cabinet
Mr. R. McClelland
Mr. J.L. Semple

The Sub-Committee considered a report by the Intelligence Sub-Committee dealing with events from 8.00 a.m. on 18th August to 8.00 a.m. on 19th August.

1. GENERAL SITUATION

The Ministry of Home Affairs reported that the situation in the Province in the previous twenty-four hours had been quiet, and that the major feature of the evening had been a statement by the I.R.A.

2. ARRIVAL OF ARMY REINFORCEMENTS AND THE DISPOSITION OF TROOPS

The Chief of Staff said that a fourth company of the Queen's Regiment had now been moved to Londonderry; B Squadron of the Life Guards would be arriving in Londonderry during the day and would proceed as previously agreed to Holywood, stopping in Strabane, Omagh (overnight), Dungannon and Armagh. A battalion of the Hampshires was flying into Aldergrove in the evening and would be held in reserve at Ballykinlar, while a battalion of the Green Jackets would arrive at Ballykelly to replace the Prince of Wales Own in Londonderry. 24th Brigade Headquarters was now complete in the North West. By Wednesday night all the reinforcements which had been asked for would be in Northern Ireland.

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/3. PATROLLING

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The Chief of Staff indicated that patrolling arrangements on the border had been reorganised and intensified. It was planned to make greater use of helicopters and more of these had now been obtained from the R.A.F. In Belfast it was planned to extend the patrolling area but it was agreed that until reaction to the Downing Street meeting could be assessed, it would be unwise to place troops in police barracks.

4. BARRICADES

The Chief of Staff reported that the Army was dismantling its own barriers on main roads in Belfast and was attempting to persuade, but not to force, residents to dismantle their own barricades. The position in the Ardoyne had greatly improved with many buses returned to the Ardoyne depot but new barricades had been erected in the Andersonstown area.

5. I.R.A. ACTIVITY

The Minister in the Senate asked how much was known about the fully-equipped I.R.A. units referred to in the I.R.A. Statement. The County Inspector of Crime Special Branch said that the R.U.C. had known about the existence of such units, about the possibility of an attack on Crossmaglen R.U.C. Station, and about the presence of local I.R.A. units behind the barricades in Belfast and in Londonderry. These local units had been activated prior to the disturbances on Thursday, 14th August. Nothing was known about any new I.R.A. units, nor could conclusive proof be provided that the civilians who started the shooting in Belfast had been members of the I.R.A., although they were assumed to be so.

6. ROLE OF THE ARMY

The Chief of Staff asked whether it would be possible for the Conciliation Committee to issue a statement which would make it quite clear that no one was being attacked or persecuted in Belfast or Londonderry at the present moment and that the Army were fully in control in the areas where they were located and were able and determined to repulse any such attacks if they were made. It was agreed that the Minister of Finance would put this before the Conciliation Committee at its evening meeting.

7. POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER DISTURBANCES

The Minister of Development asked about the possibility of further trouble in the Londonderry area if demands for the disbandment of the Special Constabulary and the disarming of the R.U.C. were not met. The County Inspector of Crime Special Branch said that there had been a resumption of preparations for disturbances in the Bogside. The Chief of Staff said that much would depend upon the statement issued after the Downing Street meeting. The wording of the statement should be carefully weighed to avoid any immediate inflammatory effect.

The County Inspector of Crime Special Branch indicated that the Newry/Dundalk area was of particular concern because of the presence of well-organised republican groups.

The Chief of Staff said that he had arranged for a company to go to Enniskillen.

8. NEXT MEETING OF THE JOINT SECURITY COMMITTEE

The next meeting of the Joint Security Committee will be held on Wednesday, 20th August, at 12 noon.