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Acknowledged A. A. Murdoch
8/2/71.16

CONCLUSIONS OF A MEETING OF THE JOINT SECURITY COMMITTEE HELD
ON THURSDAY 4 JANUARY 1971 IN STORMONT CASTLE AT 11 30 AM

February

PRESENT: The Prime Minister (in the chair)
The Minister of Development
The Minister of Education
The Deputy Director of Operations
The Chief Constable
The Deputy Chief Constable
The Secretary to the Cabinet
The UK Representative

ALSO PRESENT: The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs
The Secretary to the Police Authority for Northern Ireland
The Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet
The Private Secretary to the Prime Minister
The Press Officer to the Prime Minister

Mr T A Cromey

1. LAST NIGHT'S RIOTING

The Deputy Director of Operations reported as follows:

The trouble originated ^{after} ~~with~~ Army/Police searches in the Clonard area. The immediate local reaction came from women and children.

Men appeared on the scene around 4 pm. Incidents were quickly dealt with and some arrests made.

In the late afternoon crowds began to gather in the Clonard and lower Falls areas and stones and petrol bombs were thrown. The position worsened after 8 pm and attempts were made to spread the rioting with only limited success in Ballymurphy but with more success in the Ardoyne area.

After midnight the trouble spread to the New Lodge Road area where the Army suffered 4 casualties, one serious.

The Army had ^{fired} ~~fought~~ back 4 times and inflicted casualties.

54 people had been arrested, 24 of whom had since been released for lack of evidence.

The UDR was being called out to relieve the regular troops of ordinary duties. A battalion of soldiers had been drafted in from Derry and another was due to arrive today from England plus an Armoured Car Squadron. Searches were continuing in the Clonard and Ardoyne areas based on observations made during last night's rioting.

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The police had helped tremendously in preventing confrontations, especially in the Springfield Road area.

The Chief Constable added that last night's activities had all the marks of 'provisional' rather than 'official' IRA activity. Some of the hi-jackers of vehicles had been identified and the police were hoping to pick them up. The Clonard and Ardoyne areas had been pretty well sealed off after last night's shooting as a preliminary to today's searches.

The Prime Minister expressed concern about the possible spread of unrest to the country and urged full scale UDR activity throughout the Province, with intensive searching for arms on the move. He thought that a statement should be issued urging people to keep out of Belfast and avoid unnecessary movement on the roads.

The Minister of Development expressed concern that press reporting which had not adequately reflected Army aggression in last night's events might provoke trouble tonight in Protestant areas and thought that all possible steps should be taken today to put over the full story in demonstration of effective Army action. The Deputy Director of Operations said a communique was being prepared for issue by the Army. The Army and police were also giving a Press Conference. The Committee considered the possibility of a TV broadcast by the Prime Minister but concluded there was a danger of overstating the case and that the matter would be best left for decision after the Army/Police Press Conference.

The Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet emphasised the importance of balanced newspaper reporting in what was a near-war situation. It was felt there was justification for an approach by the Prime Minister to the respective editors.

The Minister of Education inquired if anything was known about centres where money was paid out to rioters. He himself had information which he would pass on to the Chief Constable.

2. SCHEDULE OF INCIDENTS

No comment.

3. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Londonderry and Newry were the most likely trouble spots. The Prime Minister suggested that following recent events the Republican Club march in Newry on Saturday February 6 might well attract considerable outside support and urged substantial road block operations.

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