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NH/12/17

COPY

FROM: NIGEL HAMILTON
DATE: 7 DECEMBER 1990

cc. Mr McConnell - B
Mr Walker
Mr Wilson - B

PS/MR LEDLIE

POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF SECURITY POLICY

1. I agreed to provide Mr Ledlie today with two short papers on:
 - (a) Briefing; and
 - (b) Peace Wallsto form part of his composite reply to Dr Mawhinney.
2. The drafts are attached. I understand that Mr Ledlie wants to consider these over the week-end.

[Signed NH]

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BRIEFING THE SECURITY FORCES

1. Purpose

Improving the quality of life in Ireland for all communities depends on making progress in the defeat of terrorism, political developments, and improved economic and social prospects. These are complementary and inter-related however and so the purpose of revised briefing arrangements for all sections of the security forces must be to:

- (a) make the security forces aware of objectives; strategies and policies at regional and local level; and
- (b) alert those outside the security field to the policies being implemented, and operational needs of the security forces.

This two-way process is essential if confidence between the civil and security side is to be built up.

2. Content

2.1 Overview

It is highly desirable that all senior officers in Brigade, resident and roulement battalions (both regular Army and UDR), together with Headquarters and Divisional RUC officers have an understanding and an overview of civil issues in Northern Ireland. This would include a basic understanding of

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- the nature of the community
- the physical, social and economic conditions which persist (eg unemployment)
- the general policies being adopted to address those issues (eg inward investment, community relations, education reforms)
- an understanding of Government priorities, and the public agencies which exist to deliver policies.

On the political front, again an understanding of the nature of the divided community, the political background to and aspirations of each community, current Government policies being pursued to facilitate political progress and an overview of the position and major stand points of each political party would seem to be a necessary feature of a general overview briefing.

2.2 Local Strategies

In addition to the overview of Northern Ireland, it would also be important for each local unit to be aware of the specific strategies and programmes which are being pursued in the area for which they have responsibility. In Belfast, for example, this would include a summary of developments in -

- physical infrastructures (eg housing, roads)

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- the city centre
- Laganside
- Making Belfast Work (and related social and economic policies)
- Similar material could be provided for Londonderry and the North-West/Newry/South Armagh and Fermanagh/Tyrone.

There would seem to be considerable merit in these briefings being given shortly before a new Army Unit arrives in Northern Ireland. Local security forces could be given this as part of a rolling programme.

These briefings would be given by optimum use of visual aids, particularly videos and slides. It is essential to use maps, diagrams and photographs with which the security forces are familiar or will become familiar - and to use a script so that briefings depend more on visual and audio content, rather than personalities. It is important however that those giving the briefings have both presentational skills, and sufficient seniority and knowledge to appear credible to the audience.

2.3 "Walking the Message"

The third element of civil briefing requires officials to meet local commanders and identify projects at street level of which the security forces should be aware. For example, the BRB should know of the wide range of facilities from Falls Road

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to Poleglass which are open, under construction, or shortly to go on site (eg knowledge of large numbers of young people going to a new Employment Agency or FE College is essential to help relationships with the local community). This could be done at local barracks, or, if necessary, 'on the road'.

3. Responsibility

Arrangements for such briefings should be made by Central Secretariat, in consultation with PAB and SPOB. Cent Sec would want to have oversight of the preparation of briefing material, and to identify and orchestrate key players in civil government who would best carry out this work.

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PEACE WALLS/INTER-FACES

1. One of the major blights on the Belfast landscape which reflects both the divided nature of the community, and local demands for physical protection is the existence of over 20 'peace-walls'. There would be many advantages, not the least of which would be symbolic, in undertaking sensitive efforts to see if alternative arrangements could be made in each of these locations.
2. There would be two major issues in such work -
 - 2.1 the views of the adjoining communities; and
 - 2.2 possible alternative physical measures.

There are examples in Belfast where former inter-faces have been altered, with the agreement of local communities, thereby removing the need for new walls. These include the Short Strand - Albert Bridge area where the combination of a new major road scheme, and planting, has resulted in the virtual disappearance of inter-community problems, and in lower Oldpark - Crumlin Road area where a major change of land use from "Protestant housing" to a neutral Enterprise Park has produced similar results.

3. Central Secretariat, with responsibility for the Central Community Relations Unit and Making Belfast Work, proposes to carry out a review of all existing peace lines and to draw up a list of locations where progress might be possible. Any such exercise would require the closest possible co-operation with NIO security officials and DOE

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which has responsibility for land use planning. Responsibility for leading this exercise must be seen to rest with civil government however, since success will require a coming together of local people, and the introduction of more normal types of local building.

4. Each of these locations will be different, although in many cases the principles will be the same. It will be a staff intensive exercise because of its sensitivity but in the longer term it must be a major objective for Government if we are to improve community relations at street level.
5. All proposals for new peace lines, and proposals for development at existing inter-faces (such as Duncairn Gardens) need to be handled the same way, and with the same sensitivity.

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