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Mr McCusker

Mr Murphy

ASST SEC
29817
23 JUL 1993
CENT MBW SEC

ASST SEC
08 JUL 1993
CENT MBW SEC

DEADLINE: FRIDAY 16 JULY

FRC... N P PERRY
Security Policy and Operations Division 1
7 July 1993

UNDER/ 294/7
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-8 JUL 1993
CENT SEC

- cc Mr Steele - B
- Mr Bell - B
- Mr Watkins - B
- Mr Deverell - B
- Mr Rickard - B
- Mr Leach o/r
- Mr Marsh o/r
- Mr Cooke - B
- Mr Brooker - B
- Mr Maccabe - B
- Mr Lavery - B
- Director TFU - B
- Mr Maitland
- Mrs Johnston - B
- Mr Rogers

HEAD OF THE UNIT
20 JUL 1993
CIVIL SERVICE

Mr Ledlie - B

TCO (I): PRESENTATION ON STRATEGY FOR COUNTERING PIRA

It was agreed at yesterday's discussion with PUS that TCO (I) should receive a presentation on our strategy for countering PIRA at their meeting on 28 July: and that the text of the presentation might also serve both as an aide memoire for TCO (I) members and as a paper for others not present with an interest in the issue. It was felt that the presentation might last for an hour (with slides).

2. The meeting agreed that the outline circulated by Mr Leach with his minute of 28 June would provide the framework, subject to the changes noted in PS/PUS's minute of today's date. As you know, I am out of the office over the next couple of days, and with the Twelfth weekend intervening time will soon be running short. I therefore attach a hastily prepared first draft (which shamelessly plagiarises Peter Bell's Defeating Terrorism paper): it requires much further work, but at least provides something for others to get their teeth into.

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comments are welcome; but I would be particularly grateful specific contributions from the following:

CPL: political development (para 9);

Central Secretariat: a revised version of para 11, if required;

SPOB 1 (Mr Maitland): security cooperation/border policy (para 25);

SPOB 2 (Ms Johnston): the Annesley agenda (para 23), and any other comments on the 'confidence' section; and

TFU (Director): a paragraph on police/TFU success (para 22).

We will also need to identify appropriate slides: perhaps Mr Rogers would be kind enough to start thinking about this in my absence.

4. With apologies for the short timescale, would it be possible to have contributions/comments by close of play on Friday 16 July, please?

[signed
Simon Rogers]

pp N P PERRY
SHA Ext 27030

Return to Mr. Lythall by 20/7.

NP/ Mr Pell

David,

Many thanks - amendments incorporated.

in the end

Given his earlier interest, I named this to DF who then conveyed our changes to SPOB 2. 21.7

Nick Perry
SPOB 1

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TCO (I): PRESENTATION ON STRATEGY FOR COUNTERING PIRA

Introduction

Mr Pilling's recent report on the Government's response to Irish Republican terrorism contained a number of recommendations on how that response could be further refined. One was that TCO (I) should take and discuss a paper by the NIO on the strategy for countering PIRA. This presentation and paper seek to fulfil that remit.

2. Our aim this afternoon is to provide an overview of the series of interlocking and complementary policies which comprise the Government's strategy for defeating terrorism in Northern Ireland against the particular background of the nature of the threat presented by PIRA. In the time available it will not be possible to cover the ground in detail, though we will of course be happy to provide any further information which colleagues would find helpful, and there will be an opportunity during discussion to cover points of particular interest.

3. The paper concentrates on the Provisional IRA, not only because it is the most significant terrorist organisation, but also because it sets the agenda and tempo for other paramilitary organisations, Loyalist and Republican. This focus does not of course imply any indifference to Loyalist paramilitary activity, which will continue to be tackled vigorously.

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The point should be made at the outset that PIRA's campaign of violence - which is accompanied by a parallel and reinforcing political strategy articulated by Sinn Fein - has an objective which is political and constitutional rather than military: to force a British withdrawal from Northern Ireland and bring about the achievement of a united Ireland. PIRA operates within a divided community in Northern Ireland, and one with a long tradition of functional political violence, on both sides. In this society, for complex historical reasons, the legitimacy of Government (including the security forces and the criminal justice system) cannot be taken for granted, particularly amongst nationalists. That legitimacy has to be won by demonstrating the integrity and evenhandedness of the State's institutions. In these circumstances, the Republican movement is potentially well placed to exploit actual or perceived nationalist grievances: and also, when opportunity permits, to manufacture them. Sinn Fein can rely on considerable levels of political support, especially in deprived working class areas of West Belfast and Londonderry, while externally they seek to exploit sympathy for PIRA's cause, if not its methods, in the Irish Republic, the United States, and elsewhere.

5. Against this background, it is clear that a Government strategy for containing PIRA which was narrowly focused on security issues would stand no long term chance of success. We recognise this and seek instead to counter the PIRA threat by undermining the credibility of its political and constitutional objectives as well as by tackling terrorism directly.

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aims and objective in Northern Ireland

The Government's position on the constitutional status of Northern Ireland is that it will remain part of the United Kingdom for as long as the majority of its inhabitants wish. This has two important corollaries: that there will be no change in the status of Northern Ireland as a result of violence; but that should a majority in the future desire such a change, then HMG will give effect to that wish - the democratic road to a united Ireland is not blocked. In support of this the Government has a number of overall aims:

- to maintain the rule of law;
- to ensure freedom of expression of political opinions;
- to defend the democratically expressed wishes of the people of Northern Ireland; and
- to create the conditions for a just peaceful and prosperous society in Northern Ireland.

The Government's main security priority is to bring terrorism to an end by the evenhanded and energetic enforcement of the criminal law, with the police taking the lead in preventing and investigating crime, and the Armed Forces acting in support as necessary.

The threat from PIRA

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The presentation should also cover PIRA capabilities, including the prospects for the PIRA campaign in the medium term, given the lack of recent major arms shipments and the drying up of overseas sources of funding; and the potential read-across for the mainland of recent developments here - eg mortar and sniper attacks.]

Security Policy

8. As we have seen, the elimination of PIRA terrorism demands a holistic approach, which seeks to address the underlying political and socio-economic problems as well as tackling terrorism directly. In order to frustrate PIRA's wider political aims, including its desire to build up political support within NI, and also because such policies are right in themselves, the Government continues to seek to create in NI an ordered, prosperous and, above all, just society, underpinned by institutions which are widely accepted as authoritative and fair. Considerable resources are devoted to this end - the annual subvention to Northern Ireland stands at about [£2.4]bn, though of course there are other regions of the UK which also receive similar transfers of resources. There is inevitably a complex interplay between the different strands of the Government's security policy, and balances have constantly to be struck; while security cannot be considered in isolation from its wider context, equally political and socio-economic policies need to reinforce our security priorities.

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Political Factors

9. Political development is a key part of our overall security policy. The Government's objective is to seek to establish political structures in Northern Ireland which will allow more responsibility to be exercised under arrangements acceptable to both communities. [CPL to provide a section on political development.]

10. The maintenance of good relations between the British and Irish Governments is particularly important. This, in effect, means operating the Anglo-Irish Agreement to the satisfaction of both sides. At the political level, the support of the Irish Republic is essential because it denies legitimacy to the claims of PIRA to represent the authoritative voice of Irish nationalism. The Republic also sponsors the interests of the Nationalist community, and as such helps to break down the alienation which PIRA seeks to foster. In security terms, good inter-governmental relations remain the key to providing effective security cooperation with the Republic, and denying PIRA the tactical advantage it derives from the existence of the border. To the extent that the Republic and the UK Government work, and can be seen internationally to work, towards common ends, then PIRA, and its claims to speak for Irish nationalism, are devalued and marginalised. Despite occasional differences and disappointments, the machinery of the Anglo-Irish Agreement remains the best suited for these purposes.

Socio-Economic Policies

11. Progress towards a ~~fairer~~ ^{fairer} and more prosperous society, besides

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*... continues to suffer materially high unemployment
an any other UK region, + ~~the~~ persistently high levels of long-term
unemployment.
the likelihood of support for*

being right in itself, reduces the scope for and tolerance of terrorism within the nationalist community, while at the same time enhancing the acceptability of the Government and its institutions.

Despite the very considerable resources which have been devoted to *within N-I-*, and which

social and economic programmes over the years, however, *despite notable success improvements* in some areas, such as housing, have led to profound changes -

Catholics in Northern Ireland still experience, on all major social and economic indicators, much greater levels of disadvantage than Protestants, *though that is not to say that disadvantage does not also exist in Protestant areas*. The resultant feelings of discrimination and

alienation influence attitudes to political and security issues. We are working hard to change this. Targeting Social Need, HMG's third

public expenditure priority in NI, aims to eradicate the significant inequalities which persist between the two communities by targeting programmes and resources more sharply on those suffering the highest levels of social and economic disadvantage. *on both sides of the community divide* The fair employment

legislation now in place is amongst the most far-reaching pieces of anti-discrimination legislation in the world. *and ~~not~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~reversed~~ ~~in~~ ~~1995~~* Specific initiatives,

such as Making Belfast Work, are designed to reinforce these efforts in areas of particular disadvantage *by March 1995* - MBW, when completed in 1994/5, will have channelled £150m *since 1988* into regenerating disadvantaged areas in

addition to the extensive resources already allocated to the Government's mainstream programmes in these areas. The progress that has been made in Londonderry in recent years is evidence of what can be achieved in terms of bringing about improved prosperity, greater civic pride and self-confidence, and reduced violence in particular areas.

*Need to expand a little
in consultation with DCI*

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Security Strategy

12. Turning now to those elements of our policy which bear directly on terrorism, our security strategy comprises 4 elements:

- 14. - ensuring that the security forces have the necessary resources;
- ensuring that the legal framework is adequate;
- maximising cooperation with the Irish Republic; and
- isolating the terrorists from the community.

I will take each of these elements in turn.

Resources

13. At the moment force levels in Northern Ireland stand at just over 13,000 policemen (including 4,600 reservists) and 17,300 soldiers (including 5,600 serving with R Irish (Home Service) units). There are, in addition, 1,300 RAF and RN personnel on duty in the Province. These force levels are significant: we are aware of the burden that they impose on the Armed Forces in particular. Nevertheless, the Government's overriding priority in Northern Ireland is to bring terrorism to an end. The support provided to the RUC by the Armed Forces has a crucial role to play in the achievement of that objective. What is involved, after all, is the protection of UK territory and UK citizens. It behoves us, nevertheless, in view of other pressures ^{to} the Army, to ensure that

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troops levels are justifiable and productive. The issue was considered carefully by NI Committee earlier this year, which concluded that existing force levels were about right. We will be reviewing them again early next year.

14. Turning to commitments, we need always to strike a balance between protective and proactive operations. To a considerable extent the nature of these operations is determined by the availability of intelligence and resultant tasking. The benefits of the additional 2 battalions deployed in the Province last year have been seen in terms of the ability to maintain high overall activity levels and to conduct proactive (or 'surge') operations; in more manageable work rates for other units; in a reduced need for short-term reinforcements and the call-out of part-time R Irish soldiers; and in community perceptions that levels of protection have improved.

15. The RUC's role is to provide a policing service throughout NI. Wherever possible they do so with little or no direct support from the Army eg Antrim, North Down, South and East Belfast. The Government's aim is that this trend should, as far as circumstances allow, continue. In other areas, however, considerable military support continues to be required, which can tie down significant numbers of troops. Nevertheless, the very fact that the RUC's writ runs throughout the Province in itself sends a powerful political signal.

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is clearly essential that the best use possible is made of the considerable security resources devoted to NI. Recent initiatives to ensure that this is so include in the area of command and control, the appointment of a Deputy Chief Constable (Operations), to provide a clearer focus for operational policing; the formation of the Province Executive Committee; an examination of tour lengths for key Army appointments; the restructuring of police and Army boundaries; the reorganisation of the R Irish; and the merging of a number of bases. We are also looking at various other aspects of the use of resources, such as how best to meet certain static guarding tasks, the most efficient use of helicopters and the possibility of developing quantified indicators to help in the assessment of future force levels.

17. The RUC, like the police service throughout the UK, will also face a number of potentially far-reaching changes as a result of Sheehy and other recent initiatives, and we will be examining the implications of these for our anti-terrorist effort.

18.

19. The nature of the PIRA campaign means that often the terrorists have the initiative: the level of the threat and the targets against which it is directed can vary significantly over short periods of time, and the security forces and the Government need to be able to respond flexibly to new situations. Current operational issues include:

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- a. The need to protect security force bases from mortar attack. There have since December last year to date (8 July) been 11 attacks on security force bases using the Mk 15, fortunately without so far inflicting heavy casualties. Potentially, however, the threat is a serious one. We are responding to this in a variety of ways - changed patrolling patterns, strengthening the physical protection at SF bases, closing roads or limiting access in the vicinity of bases, and so on. Some of these measures have a downside in terms of disruption caused to the local community: that is one of the balances we have to draw, and we seek to conduct these operations as sensitively as possible;
- b. The need to protect town centres from attack, the economic and political costs of large bomb attacks are considerable. The best cure is, of course, prevention, and a number of bombs have been intercepted in transit. But defensive measures are also important, and some of the issues here are relevant to GB also - for example, the use of checkpoints, barriers, security cameras, pedestrianisation, and the need to balance the requirement for protection with the disruption caused to the commercial and social life of the community; and
- c. The threat from sniper attack, particularly in South Armagh, is particularly high at the moment, and a number of measures to counter this are in hand.

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Legal Framework

20. Defeating terrorism within the law is the corner-stone of the Government's security policy. This means not only that terrorists should be treated as criminals answerable to the law - very important in terms of challenging PIRA's self-image as an 'army' - but also that in all their counter-terrorist activity the security forces themselves will be subject to the law. It is essential that the legal framework within which the security forces operate is, on the one hand, adequate for the task, while at the same time, deviating to the least degree possible required by the situation so as to secure the widest possible acceptability and legitimacy. It must also comply with European standards (eg the ECHR) for dealing with terrorism in ways that are seen to safeguard the rule of law and to protect human rights. We keep the legislation constantly under review and seek to strengthen it where appropriate. But this approach involves a clear recognition that there is a point beyond which the law cannot go, that known terrorists will walk free unless there is evidence to convict them.

21. The anti-terrorist provisions are contained within the PTA (which of course is UK wide) and the EPA. The EPA contains various powers (eg stop and search) which are not available in GB but which we judge essential in the context of NI, though it should be noted that, in themselves, these powers cannot prevent completely the movement of explosives, weapons and personnel.

22. Currently 'live' issues on the legislative front include how best to counter the increasing effectiveness of terrorist suspects

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n eliminating forensic evidence and resisting police interrogation; the difficulty in securing convictions against those who direct terrorist operations; and the special problems associated with the use in Court of intelligence material and informants evidence. We are also looking at ways of strengthening further our powers to tackle terrorist finances.

23. The Chief Constable has recently put forward various proposals for changes in a number of areas [SPOB 2 to provide a passage on the Annesley agenda]

Cross-border security cooperation

24. We have mentioned the need for close cooperation with the Irish Government. Working level contacts between the RUC and the Garda are very good. More, however, needs to be done.

25. In May the NIO and the security forces met to draw up an agenda of security co-operation issues to be pursued with the Irish: these include the Garda anti-terrorist organisation; border flight safety zones; and compatible automatic fingerprint retrieval systems [Mr Maitland to expand (including a few sentences on border policy?)].

Isolate terrorists from the community

26. An integral part of the Government's security strategy is to isolate the terrorists from the communities within which they operate. We have discussed the need to provide 'good Government'

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for the entire community. There is also a requirement to obtain the confidence of all sections of the community in the effectiveness and impartiality of the Government's security policy and, more generally, in the criminal justice system as a whole; and in the operational activities of the RUC and the Army. Security force operations need to be precisely targeted, effective, proportionate and conducted with integrity and evenhandedness, with the public being treated with consideration and politeness as far as humanly possible.

27. This is not always easy to achieve, given the difficulties facing the police and Army in certain areas. But it is essential to avoid actions and measures which are likely to offend the susceptibilities of ordinary people, and especially non-terrorist nationalists. The keys to achieving this are good training, effective complaints mechanisms and the maintenance of adequate safeguards against abuse.

28. There is another side to the confidence agenda, of course, and that is the need to reassure the victims of terrorism that the Government is prepared and able to protect them, and that terrorism will not prevail. The security forces themselves, who bear the brunt of the campaign, also have to be confident that they have the Government's support and the means to enable them to operate effectively against the terrorists.

29. Here again difficult balances have to be struck. We have in hand, together with the RUC and Army, a series of initiatives designed to address particular points of concern. Some of these

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...ve a statutory basis; others do not. Recent examples are, on the army side, the introduction of Patrol Identification Cards and the appointment of an Independent Assessor of Military Complaints Procedures. On the RUC side the Secretary of State has appointed Sir Louis Blom Cooper as Independent Commissioner for the Holding Centres with a remit to monitor their operation and report publicly on an annual basis. Other initiatives in the pipeline include [the operation of police complaints and disciplinary procedures,] the introduction of Codes of Practice to cover the detention, identification and questioning of suspects, and (possibly) the operation of the stop and search powers contained in the Emergency Provisions Act. The common feature is that confidence measures of this nature should either demonstrate the fairness of the system or reduce conflict where the system impacts on the individual. But we need to avoid an adverse effect on the operational effectiveness of the security forces.

30. There will always be areas of policy where it may be impossible to satisfy concerns often held by reasonable people as well as those with an axe to grind. Three examples are the law on the use of force by the security forces, together with the procedures to be adopted after a fatal incident; inquest procedures; and the recording of interviews with terrorist suspects. Here our approach is to analyse the subject in depth, assess the implications of the various options for change and, if none are possible, to be more assiduous in explaining why the status quo, however unsatisfactory it might appear, must remain. Work on the three issues I have just mentioned is in progress and we hope to see the fruits in the next few months.

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Information handling

31. It is clearly essential that HMG's policies are presented consistently and effectively. This is especially important in view of the highly efficient PIRA/Sinn Fein propaganda effort at home and abroad, and regular, unbalanced interventions by civil liberties groups (though where they have something useful to say, we should listen). Our security strategy must be presented as committed, effective and coherent, and one from which HMG will not be deflected. This requires steadiness in the wake of particular atrocities. It also dictates that we have the capability to put the strategic message across to the various audiences important to HMG, at home and abroad; and to be able to respond quickly and effectively to particular issues.

32. We are looking at various ways of strengthening our organisation for doing this, as well as drawing up, in close cooperation with FCO, information strategies for getting our message across to audiences overseas, particularly in the United States and Europe. Domestically, this month has seen the launching of a major TV campaign in NI designed to reinforce the message of the futility of violence.

Conclusion

33. HMG's security policy is coherent and defensible, politically, morally, operationally and intellectually. It aims to tackle PIRA (and other terrorist groups) at both the political and security

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levels, by providing good Government for the people of NI and by defeating terrorism within the law. It must be consistently developed and executed over the long term - indeed, unremitting consistency of policy and of application is one of the Government's strengths.

34. Consistency does not imply any lack of dynamism on the security front: far from it. Present policies being energetically implemented: improvements always sought, and new terrorist techniques need to be neutralised. To the extent that relatively constrained resources within the NIO security command permit, work is proceeding in all the areas discussed above eg more effective use of security force assets; methods of strengthening the legal framework, including anti-racketeering; initiatives to improve cooperation with the Irish; and measures to improve community confidence in the security forces. There may be lessons in other countries' experience, or in previous campaigns: as other pressures allow, we will be looking further at this.

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