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Our Ref: SP(B)51/75/18

CO-ORDINATION OF ACTION ON CIVIL DISTURBANCES AND INTIMIDATION

Mr McGrath, NIHE, has advised of amendments he wished to make to paragraph 7 of my note (dated 31 March) of the meeting held at Stormont House on 11 March. The note, as previously written, suggested that a list of contractors' key staff was available for consultation. It is understood that this is not in fact the case and a revised paragraph 7 of the note has, therefore, been incorporated in a replacement page 3, a copy of which is attached. Copy recipients are asked to substitute this page for the one issued previously.

Hodge Mayes

H J MAYES

Law and Order Division

12 May 1987

Distribution:

PS/Mr Bloomfield
NI Permanent Secretaries
Mr A W Stephens)
Mr Elliott)
Mr Innes) NIO
Mr McConnell)
Mr Dunlop, CIVREP)

SACC Whiteside)
ACC Steenson) RUC
Supt Willis)

Col Drummond, 39 Inf Bde
CIVAD, HQNI

Mr Simmons) DOE
Mr Cadden)

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HC 1204

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7. In some areas it was reported that contractors had been intimidated into restricting their sub-contractors or employees to those put forward by the paramilitaries. It was reported that the names of contractors who had been successful in tendering for Housing Executive work was information which was made public. As such it was available for perusal on request should the police wish to do so in their attempts to deal with any problems which might arise in this area. The Executive itself however had no information about those employed by contractors.

8. The RUC reported that their detection and case clear-up work had suffered because of the intimidation of witnesses to crimes. In one instance they had had to take the extreme step of arresting known witnesses to a serious crime in the hope of making a breakthrough in an investigation. This was a very difficult area in which to make progress and all the police could do was to continue their efforts and, dependent on the DPP's backing, pursue matters through the courts.

9. Intimidation in Lisburn featured prominently in the discussions. Reference was made to the perceived rather than actual level of intimidation existing (an observation not confined to Lisburn) which had at times resulted in additional police manpower having to be deployed to reassure those believing themselves to be threatened. Such action, necessary though it might be, was a drain on resources at the expense of the needs of other parts of the Province. The situation in Lisburn, however, was generally considered to be somewhat exceptional with Loyalist paramilitary influences being particularly dominant there.

Housing Policy

10. The effects of housing policy on the issues being discussed were raised. In response it was confirmed that in principle people were normally housed on a basis of need without regard to religious persuasion. In practice, however, because the boundaries of territorial areas had already largely been drawn at those locations where sectarian feelings ran most

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Mr. Hurrell

Mr. Selby

Mr. H

31/3

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6/4 3/4*

SP(B) 51/75/18

Note for Record

*Mr. Robertson
Dyett
1/4/87*

CO-ORDINATION OF ACTION ON CIVIL DISTURBANCES AND INTIMIDATION

1. A meeting was held at 1500 hours on Wednesday 11 March in Stormont House under the umbrella of the Standing Committee on the Security Implications of Housing Problems (SCH). It was called following concerns expressed at a liaison meeting between the RUC and NI Government Departments chaired by Mr Bloomfield on 18 December about sectarian intimidation and subsequent population movements in public sector housing estates and the adequacy of the exchange of information on the subject between the various agencies involved. A list of those who attended the meeting is at Annex A.

Purpose

2. The purpose of the meeting was to review the existing arrangements between civil agencies and the security forces for dealing with incidents arising from civil disturbances and intimidation and the way in which they had been handled in 1986 and to determine what, if any, improvements should be made for the future. As had been suggested at Mr Bloomfield's meeting it was proposed to put matters into some sort of focus by looking at and possibly drawing lessons from the experiences of a particular area. Lisburn had been chosen and among those present were a number of people well placed to describe what had occurred there in 1986.

General

3. It was reported that the police had made numerous demands of the various civil agencies for assistance during 1986 since around the time of the Loyalist 'day of action' (3 March).

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Requests had varied from the urgent need to re-house intimidation victims, to the boarding-up of bomb damaged property, the erection of fences at community interfaces and the removal of graffiti. In nearly all cases the degree of co-ordination and co-operation shown had been first class and much appreciation was due to those concerned for this. The Army, through the Royal Engineers, had also played its part in a reactive role to supplement the services of the civil agencies at times of urgent operational need.

Intimidation

4. During the discussions it was stated that alleged instances of domestic intimidation, many of which had subsequently been proven, had risen dramatically after 3 March. This was reflected on the graph at Annex B which was distributed to those present. Lisburn had clearly suffered most with over 170 cases recorded in the district's different wards. These had resulted in around 140 families having to be re-housed.

5. The next worst area after Lisburn was Loyalist North Belfast with just over 50 cases noted. A knock-on effect of moving intimidation victims to alternative housing in a given locality was observed here. In this instance it had resulted in the NIHE being unable to accommodate people who had been awaiting re-housing for some time with all the attendant problems, adverse publicity and further delays.

6. Intimidation of contractors was also seen to be a problem area. This had presented difficulties for NIHE where a number of building programmes had been affected. Fortunately the position had eased in recent months. Problems had also been experienced with contractors employed to remove graffiti, board-up bomb damaged/derelict premises etc. In some extreme cases materials had been given to the police who had arranged for the work to be done.

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7. In some areas it was reported that contractors had been intimidated into restricting their sub-contractors or employees to those put forward by the paramilitaries. It was suggested that the police should be permitted to peruse lists of those who had successfully tendered for contracts and also lists of contractors' key staff to enable them to deal with any problems which might arise in this area.

8. The RUC reported that their detection and case clear-up work had suffered because of the intimidation of witnesses to crimes. In one instance they had had to take the extreme step of arresting known witnesses to a serious crime in the hope of making a breakthrough in an investigation. This was a very difficult area in which to make progress and all the police could do was continue their efforts and, dependent on the DPP's backing, pursue matters through the courts.

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high this meant that prospective tenants knew the make up of the community in these areas in advance and indicated a preference in the light of that knowledge.

11. The availability of historical records on housing allocations to enable some forecasting of where trouble might be expected was raised. It was established that no information which might be of any positive help was available.

12. The meeting noted that at times in Belfast during the year, the prompt erection of security fences at sectarian flashpoints had significantly reduced immediate tensions. It had subsequently been necessary to obtain retrospective planning approval. Similar measures might be useful elsewhere in the Province. The NIO representatives pointed to the desirability wherever possible in future to design "buffer" developments on likely sectarian interfaces between public sector housing projects to prevent conflicts such as those that had arisen in North Belfast in 1986.

Removal of Debris

13. A matter of recurring concern raised during the meeting related to the clearance of debris. This referred to such things as hijacked and burnt out vehicles and to bonfire material at times of heightened tension. Whilst, with Army assistance, it had proved possible to move obstacles sufficiently to re-open roads the final clear up and removal operations undertaken by civilian agencies was sometimes very slow. This did not assist any rapid return to normality.

14. It was explained that DOE Roads Service was responsible for the removal of large items of debris usually on an agency basis, or with the assistance of the technical services departments of local councils. Clearance operations were therefore dealt with on a local basis and early progress on them was sometimes determined by local circumstances and by attitudes towards those tasked with carrying out the work.

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15. At those times, such as the "day of action", when excessive demands for route clearance were anticipated the RUC were able to activate a civil emergencies contingency plan. This enabled the Army to make key plant available at set locations. To supplement this and also to cover less troublesome but nonetheless demanding occasions it was proposed that RUC Divisional Commanders and DOE Roads Service Divisional Managers should contact one another to try and anticipate in advance when and where problems might arise and to identify the availability and positioning of resources.

16. To assist the police in these operations a need had been identified for 'road closed' signs to be made available. This was to assist with the sealing of areas and redirection of traffic. DOE representatives undertook to provide signs for the police and to provide the police with DOE contacts in the Road Services Division who could assist in emergencies. The meeting also noted the need for the urgent repair of street lighting after civil disturbances.

Co-ordinating Machinery

17. The meeting agreed that the most appropriate local forum for coordinating the efforts of the various agencies in civil emergencies or disturbances was the RUC's Divisional Area Committee (DAC) which met regularly. The NIO Civil Representatives and the DOE District Development Officers could make an invaluable input to police contingency planning. It was agreed that the RUC would be provided with the necessary contact telephone numbers.

Public Confidence/Reconciliation

18. The meeting agreed that encouraging further public confidence in the police and promoting reconciliation in the community were the most difficult areas in which to make progress. The importance of fostering harmony in the community was obvious but there was a dearth of suggestions as to how this could be brought about given the present acute

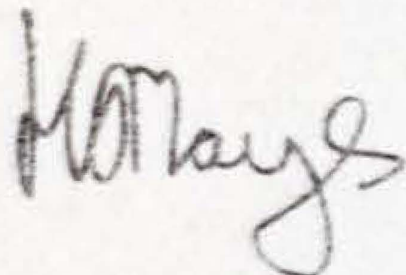
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polarisation. The police were in an impossible position in a divided community, on the one hand having to balance their enforcement of the law whilst at the same time maintaining public order and on the other being accused at times by both sides of inactivity. On the latter point the length of time it took to process people charged with scheduled offences and with public order offences through the courts did not help.

Summary

19. It was generally agreed that the meeting had been useful and had established that, based on last year's experience, machinery to coordinate support of Government agencies for the police in dealing with civil disturbances and emergencies did exist but the meeting had provided the opportunity to ensure that all were aware of how to make the best use of it. The RUC were particularly keen to foster contacts with DOE representatives. Contact telephone numbers of those attending the meeting have been included in the attendance list at Annex A.

20. On the question of fostering public confidence and community reconciliation the meeting had nothing radical to suggest. It was a matter of seizing every reasonable opportunity at all levels to reinforce and support the message of the caring face of government and the security force alike in the hope of overcoming some of the barriers which existed on this front.



H J MAYES
Law and Order Division

31 March 1987

Distribution

PS/Mr Bloomfield
NI Permanent Secretaries
Mr Stephens
Mr Elliott
CIVAD, HQNI
Those Present

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ANNEX A

to note for the record
dated 31 March 1987

LIST OF THOSE WHO ATTENDED MEETING IN STORMONT HOUSE CONFERENCE
ROOM AT 1500 HOURS ON WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH 1987

		<u>Tel No</u>	<u>Ext</u>
NIO:	Mr Innes	)	218
	Mr Blackwell	) Belfast	201
	Mr McConnell	) 63255	238
	Mr Mayes	)	202
RUC:	SACC Whiteside	) Belfast	21027
	ACC Steenson	) 650222	21209
	Supt Willis	Lisburn 77421	24
39 Brigade:	Col Drummond	) Lisburn	41000
	Mr Dunlop, CIVREP	) 5111	41002
DOE:	Mr Simmons, BDO	) Belfast	272
	Mr Cadden, Area Development Branch	) 242486	261
NIHE:	Mr McGrath, Director of Housing and Planning	Belfast 240588	2077

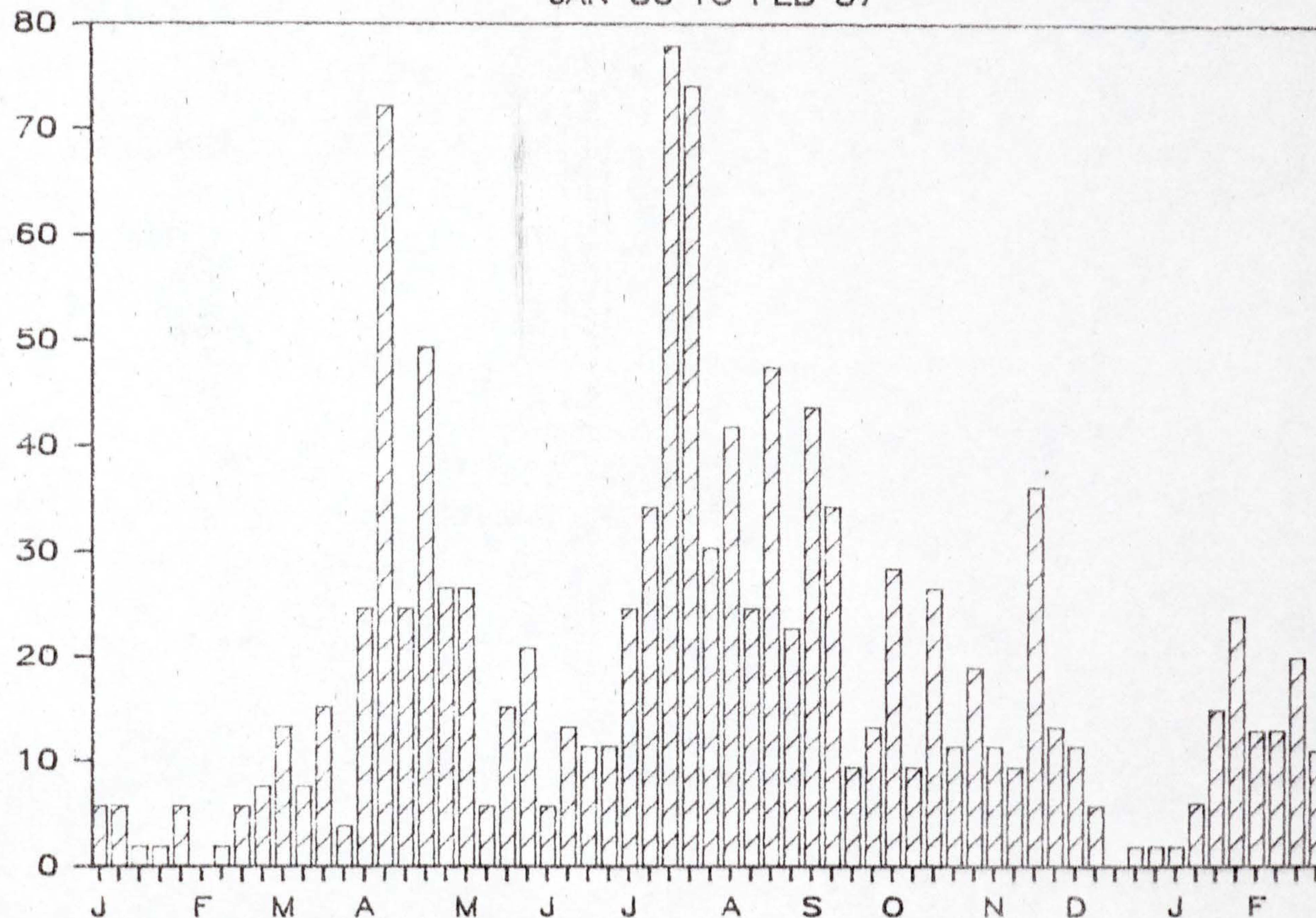
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ANNEX B

to note for the record
dated 31 March 1987

CLAIMED INTIMIDATION LEVELS

JAN 86 TO FEB 87



NIHE 11-3-87