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Draft Minute to Secretary of StateOperational control of the RUC for Security Operations

You will recall that it was at the suggestion of the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland that the GOC should be put in overall control of the RUC and the USC as well as the Army in security operations. A directive was therefore drawn up which made provision for the deployment and tasking of the RUC.

The IG came to see me yesterday and expressed himself as not being happy with this situation. He thought that in principle it was wrong for the police to be controlled by the military. It was important to raise the morale of the RUC as much depended on its efforts in Northern Ireland and it was difficult to do this so long as local military commanders could give instructions to local policemen. He added that Northern Ireland Ministers were also unhappy with this situation and for some reason best known to themselves they have said they entered into the original agreement as a result of a process of blackmail. They thought they would be unable to obtain the use of British troops in any other way.

The IG has discussed with the GOC the question of control. He has apparently told the GOC that he will not take orders from him and he believes that he has reached a verbal agreement with the GOC whereby the GOC will not give him orders. The GOC for his part has suggested that paragraph 6 of his directive should be amended to read "you will co-ordinate the tasking of the RUC in security operations" instead of "you will have full control of the deployment and tasking of the RUC for all matters relating to security operations". The IG says the practical effect of this agreement is that he has told his county inspectors, etc., they are to co-operate with the Army but not to obey. In case of local

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differences the matter is to come back to the IG and GOC for solution.

The IG would like the agreement he has reached with the GOC to be made public.

I am not sure whether the Secretary of State for Defence knows about the verbal agreement nor whether the GOC regards the amendment to the directive he has suggested which the IG has agreed as superseding the verbal agreement. I understand Mr Healey's attitude is that at the present time the GOC must remain in control. He must have the casting vote when he and the IG differ. To satisfy the IG, however, I understand he is prepared to agree to the amendments to the directive subject to adding at the beginning of paragraph 6 the words "in accordance with your overall responsibility". I further understand he will be writing to you on these lines.

The IG is conscious he has reached an agreement with the GOC and he admits that there are many more troops on the ground than policemen. In the end he therefore accepted that any publication of the change in control could be delayed although not indefinitely. He feels so strongly about this issue that he will resign if he does not get his way. His agreement not to press matters further does mean that we should aim to accept the amendment rather than to re-write the directive. The question of when the RUC should resume normal police control of internal security can be discussed in slower time.

The actual meaning of the amendment is obscure. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Defence amendment is not strictly necessary in view of the very clear indications in other paragraphs of the directive that the GOC has an overall responsibility. It would seem best if, upon receipt of the letter from Mr Healey, you were to ask him to accept the amendment proposed by the GOC on the basis that it does provide for a working relationship between the GOC and the IG to which both have assented. You might also suggest that officials should begin to consider at what

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stage it would be proper for the GOC to relinquish overall responsibility for security operations.

1003/1/2 (30)  
~~1003/1/6~~

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NOTE

? by Mr Hopkins

Operational Control of the RUC

Sir Arthur Young, Inspector General of the RUC, saw Sir Philip Allen on 23rd October to discuss the control of the RUC. Messrs. Cairncross and Hopkins were present.

Sir Arthur Young said that in his opinion the future of Northern Ireland largely depended on the efforts of the RUC and that the RUC largely depended on him at the present time. He wished to ensure their loyalty and to restore their morale. This was difficult in a situation in which the GOC could issue orders on the deployment and tasking of the RUC and when local military officers were in the habit of giving orders to their local RUC colleagues. He had already told the GOC that he would not take orders from him. The GOC was in a difficult position but had agreed to recommend an amendment to paragraph 3 of his directive to the effect that the GOC would co-ordinate the tasking of the RUC in security matters.

Sir Arthur Young explained that the GOC had also agreed not to issue orders to him and that he had issued orders to local RUC men to co-operate with the military rather than to obey them. If there were differences at the local level about what was to be done the differences would be referred upwards if necessary to the GOC and IG for solution.

Sir Philip Allen pointed out that there were very many more troops on the ground than the RUC and that this was important operationally. He said that the Northern Ireland Government themselves suggested that the GOC should assume control of the police and the USC. He noted that Mr Chichester-Clark and Mr Porter now appeared to be anxious to change this arrangement. He considered that as a matter of tactics it might be advisable to accept the amendment to the directive suggested by the GOC and to leave for further discussions the question whether the directive should be scrapped and another one written confining the GOC's control to the military and the USC.

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Sir Arthur Young pointed out that Mr Callaghan had said he would name a date when the RUC would be released from this control. He would very much like the gist of his verbal agreement with the GOC and the change in the directive to be made manifest to all and sundry and he could not wait indefinitely for this to happen. Nevertheless he agreed that it would be best to accept the amendment and persevere more slowly with the formal and public transfer of control.

Sir Arthur Young thought that some means should be found of telling the Northern Ireland Prime Minister the progress made in this area. Sir Philip Allen said that it would be necessary to discover the reactions of the Secretary of State for Defence to the proposed amendment to the directive and for consideration to be given to what the Northern Ireland Government could be told and how. This was a question which would have to go to the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister.

**SECRET***Amended*DIRECTIVE FOR THE GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING  
NORTHERN IRELAND22.8.69Appointment

1. You are appointed Director of Operations in Northern Ireland and will, with immediate effect, assume overall responsibility for security operations.

Security Operations

2. Security operations are defined as relating to internal and external security and cover:-

- a. The execution of operations necessary to counter action (whether covert or overt) aimed at subverting the security of the State.
- b. The action necessary for the protection of life and property in case of actual or apprehended civil commotion.

Responsibilities

3. You will have the overall responsibility with immediate effect for all security operations throughout Northern Ireland. You will be responsible to the MOD but will consult as appropriate with the Northern Ireland Government. In the event of any disagreement you will at once refer the matter to HMG.

4. You will keep me fully informed on all major issues. You will also if time permits, obtain guidance from the MOD on any matters which in your opinion or that of HMG's representatives in Northern Ireland have wider political implications or which concern any major redeployment of your forces.

Intelligence

5. Separate instructions will be issued to you.

Relationship with other authorities

*In accordance with your overall responsibility as D. of Ops as defined above,*  
6. ~~You will have full control of the deployment and tasking of the RUC for all matters relating to security operations.~~  
Outside the security field you will have no responsibility for normal police duties for which the Inspector General will remain responsible to the Northern Ireland Government.

*Coordinate tasking in relation to*

7. You will have full command and control of the Ulster Special Constabulary (USC) for all purposes including their organisation, deployment, tasking and arms. You will be free to deploy the USC as you consider necessary and to stand down those personnel not required for these tasks. You will issue instructions as to the weapons to be carried by personnel who are employed on active tasks. You will be free to issue instructions for the centralisation and security of weapons of personnel of the USC.

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**SECRET**

*Note: The above amendment to para 6 was agreed by Mr. Healey and Mr. Callaghan.*

SECRET

8. In future the USC will not be used for riot or crowd control. Bearing in mind the requirement to defend vital public service installations and the problem of country areas, you should progressively stand down members of the USC as their services cease to be required.

Organisation

9. You are empowered to set up, in consultation with the Northern Ireland Government and H.M.G. representatives in Northern Ireland, security committees and such other machinery as you consider necessary.

Legal Aspects

10. Separate instructions will be issued.

11. Offences arising from subversion or civil commotion remain offences against the criminal law and are to be investigated and prosecuted by the police in the ordinary way.