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DMO Brief No 37/69

Copy No of 14

(42A)

CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE

MEETING TO BE HELD ON MON 21 APR 69

NORTHERN IRELAND SITUATION AND  
REQUESTS FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE

DATE	1	2
CDS		SECCOS
VCDS		DCDS(I)
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SITUATION

Londonderry

1. The riots in Londonderry began on Saturday night after a civil rights procession had been banned by the police who feared that militant Protestants might use firearms against it. The would be marchers then staged several sit-down protests which led to clashes with Paisleyites and the RUC. After some hours of "street fighting" in which stones were thrown, allegedly by both sides, a mob attacked the RUC barracks. The RUC managed eventually to get the rioters into Bogside (a Catholic, Nationalist poor area of Derry). The fiercest street fighting then took place in this area. This included an attack by a mob of some 200 on an RUC armoured car endeavouring to overturn and fire it. An RUC Sgt fired two warning shots (the only shots to be fired) and the mob withdrew. Petrol bombs were thrown during the violence. 181 police and 79 civilians were injured and 38 persons arrested.

2. Almost all the inhabitants of Bogside then withdrew to a Catholic council estate and a virtual ultimatum was given that the men folk would return to Bogside in two hours and unless the police had withdrawn by then they 'could not be responsible for the consequences". Half an hour before the deadline the RUC withdrew from Bogside.

3. Night 19/20 April. During the night there were two bomb outrages. An electricity power pylon was damaged in County Armagh but electricity supplies were not affected. A more serious outrage was when a bomb explosion at the Silent Valley reservoir in County Down seriously damaged two main outlet pipes. This reservoir is the main water supply for Belfast. As a result water supplies were cut off in some parts of the City

and seriously reduced in others. Steps are being taken by the civil authorities to maintain supplies in the City. HQ Northern Ireland are assisting by providing water vehicles.

4. Night 20/21st April. At least 9 Belfast Post Offices and a bus station were set alight in petrol bomb attacks. While it is considered that the IRA were possibly responsible for the bomb attacks on the power pylon and water reservoir on Saturday night it is not yet known whether the IRA or others were responsible for the attacks on the Belfast Post Offices.

5. Requests for Military Assistance.

The Northern Ireland Cabinet met on Sunday and as a result a signal was sent to the Home Office requesting military assistance to guard VPs. S of S and Home Secretary agreed that such a request could be met but making it quite clear that this would entail solely the protection of designated VPs. Any request for military assistance of any other nature would have to be considered quite separately. HQ Northern Ireland were informed by signal from MOD (Army Department) that the request of the civil power for military assistance to guard VPs could be acceded to for designated VPs.

6. HQ Northern Ireland informed MOD (Army Department) that the VPs concerned had not yet been designated and that details would be decided at a meeting on morning of 21 April. In the meantime RUC would remain responsible with military forces taking over later on 21 April.

Comments

7. The operational Army Garrison in Northern Ireland comprises:-

- |    |               |   |
|----|---------------|---|
| a. | 17/21 Lancers | In addition to personnel to guard own barracks one operational Squadron is available. |
|----|---------------|---|

.... /b.

b. 1 LI BALLYKINLER

c. 2 QUEENS HOLLYWOOD

8. The reinforcement plan for Northern Ireland is Op FARO and comprises:-

One inf bn  
 One fd tp RE  
 One tpt tp RCT  
 Misc detachments  
 Flt 6 Wessex heli  
 One RAF Regt (Fd) Sqn  
 RAF police

The force is not on special warning and would require four days warning followed by a further 26 hours of movement. This force, of course, might not be appropriate in toto for the present requirement for guarding KPs. It is likely that infantry reinforcements only might be required if reinforcement was necessary. In an emergency the Spearhead Battalion could be used. This has one company at 24 hours notice and the balance of the Battalion at 72 hours. Spearhead Battalion until 0800 hrs Wed 23 Apr is 1 RGJ. Battalion due to relieve the unit is 1 LOYALS. This Battalion has a large proportion of Irishmen. ASD are in touch with HQ Stratco to consider whether 1 RGJ might be extended as Spearhead Battalion in place of 1 LOYALS or possibly whether a further Battalion should be nominated in place of 1 LOYALS. It is for consideration whether Spearhead Battalion (or some other Battalion) should now be brought to shorter degree of notice.

9. Until the meeting due to take place this morning is ended the extent of the VP commitment, both as regards number of VPs and bill of troops required to guard them will not be known. Equally it is not possible to state whether HQ Northern Ireland will require reinforcement and, if so, what numbers. If the requirement for guarding VPs is small and duration is limited, HQ Northern Ireland may be able to meet the requirement. If the requirement is large or duration unlimited, this is not likely to be so.

10. At time of preparing brief:-

- a. No troops have been committed.
- b. Extent of commitment (number of VPs) is unknown and duration unknown).
- c. No requirement or requests as yet for reinforcement from UK.

Much will depend firstly on outcome of this morning's meeting and secondly on how situation in Northern Ireland develops.

11. Orders for sentries etc.

Instructions on IS in the UK in Peace show that in the event of incidents by the IRA ..... SIDEFLAG 1  
 troops may be called out to assist in the maintenance of law and order. The legal position of sentries and guards shows at... SIDEFLAG 2  
 Orders whether sentries will be armed, with or without ammunition rests with GOCs in Cs Commands and orders for sentries are contained in the Annex. Northern Ireland Standing Orders, which, of course were designed for protection of military installations but refers ..... SIDEFLAG 3  
 to assistance to RUC also lays down detailed instructions including orders for guards and sentries.

12. In the case of guarding civilian VPs when troops have been called out at the request of the civil power "Keeping the Peace" Part I, Paras 24 and 25 lays down: "24. Forces engaged in protection or defensive duties e.g. a sentry, guard, picquet or patrol may if it is essential to do so, use force in defense of person or property in particular as follows:

- a. In preventative roles.
  - (1) Other bodies of armed forces from being attacked.
  - (2) The capture of or damage to buildings etc in the charge of the armed force.

..../(3)

(3) Damage to or interference with VPs such as communications centres, railways and canals which they are guarding.

b. In Self defence.

25. In accordance with the general rule, however, no more force must be used than is necessary to achieve the aim".

These rules will apply in guarding of VPs.

Recommendation

13. Until further information is received from HQ Northern Ireland as a result of this mornings meeting it is impossible to know extent of requirement or whether reinforcement from UK will be necessary.

14. You should, however, consider the desirability of placing one inf bn on shortened notice as a precautionary measure.

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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
ARMY DEPARTMENT

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After Note.

I have now spoken to Chief of Staff Northern Ireland, minutes after he left this mornings meeting with RUC. The result of the meeting was:-

- a. The Army has been requested to take over protection of 16 VPs. These are all in Rural NOT town areas.
- b. HQ Northern Ireland assess that the requirement of forces to guard these will amount to 60 personnel from each of the two Garrison Battalions per day.
- c. HQ Northern Ireland do not require or request any reinforcement from UK nor do they request any shortening of notice.
- d. Only request is for two Army helicopter pilots (no helicopters) for three months emergency tour. ASD is producing.
- e. HQ Northern Ireland is quite happy with situation as it stands.
- f. VPs will be taken over by 1800 hrs tonight.
- g. Detailed orders for guards and sentries exist, and will be provided for all concerned.
- h. The 16 VPs comprise water, telecomms and electricity installations.
- j. As a result of this information I do not believe that you need (para 13 above) consider any question of alerting or shortening notice of any reinforcement unit for Northern Ireland.