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POLICING1. December 1973

<u>Strength</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Authorised Strength</u>	<u>Authorised Strength</u>
RUC	4,170	219	4,389	5,232	6,500
RUC Reserve	2,299	215	2,514	3,000	5,250
UDR	7,359	419	7,778	10,000	10,000
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<u>Totals</u>	13,828	853	14,681	18,232	21,750

Since 1970 the percentage of Catholics in the RUC has dropped from 11% to 4%. Similarly although no precise figures are available, the UDR has a predominantly Protestant membership (approximately 96%). Many of its members would be ex-B-Specials.

2. Recruitment to the RUC has dropped by 61% and wastage (retirements, resignations, etc.) has increased by 67%, since 1970. The true deficit in the authorised strength is nearly 1,000 members and this gap is unlikely to be bridged in the near future. In 1973 the strength of the RUC Reserve increased by 165 members but wastage has increased to 435 members in 1973. Wastage has increased by 400% since 1971. The UDR is having similar problems in that its strength is 1,500 lower than it was in 1972.

3. The Secretary of State announced proposals in relation to policing on 2nd September 1974. The main provisions were as follows:

1. A number of new local police centres to act as the focal points for local policing and as a point of contact with police stations and emergency services.
2. These local police centres to be staffed mainly by members of the RUC Reserve working in their own home areas.
3. The authorised strength of the RUC and the Reserve to be increased as indicated above.

4. The entry requirements for the Reserve to be reduced to get the maximum number of applicants.
5. The Reservists will not necessarily be armed, although "they may have the opportunity of accepting a weapon for personal protection while on duty and of being trained in weaponry".

4. The purpose behind these proposals would appear to be fourfold: (i) to resume policing of various areas where the RUC have been unable to operate effectively in recent years; (ii) by degrees to arrive at a situation where the RUC would be more acceptable in minority areas; (iii) to take some of the strain off the security forces and to enable the scale of British Army involvement to be reduced and eventually phased-out of its policing role. (It was announced on the 2.9.1974 that 1,000 troops are to be withdrawn from Northern Ireland); (iv) to take "the steam out of" proposals for a Loyalist Third Force.

5. The SDLP, prior to the above announcement, expressed the following attitude in private, in relation to the policing question:-

- (i) Any increase in the strength of the security forces as envisaged by Mr. Rees is unlikely to affect the present security situation.
- (ii) The SDLP would wish to see a police force which is accepted by all sections of the community but this can only come about as part of an overall political settlement.
- (iii) The operation of the Emergency Provisions Act 1973 makes it impossible for Catholics to identify with the police and there is no question in the present circumstances of the minority community being asked by the SDLP to join the security forces.
- (iv) Thus any hopes the British may have had that Catholics may be induced to join the security forces or any new force, in large numbers, is totally unrealistic.

6. The SDLP have, as expected, dismissed Mr. Rees proposals for the

reasons outlined above. The proposals have however received a warmer response than was expected from the UUUC which stated that it was "a useful first instalment". Mr. Faulkner welcomed the plan but said it did not go far enough. Mr. Napier of the Alliance Party did not see the proposals as solving the policing problem in every part of Northern Ireland. The UDA thought that the proposals reflected a lack of will on the part of the British Government in dealing with the IRA and said that an armed border security force was needed.

7. The Secretary of State's proposals on policing are not only unlikely to be very successful but could be of danger to the minority community. They will do nothing to diminish the threat of the emergence of a Loyalist third force. Mr. George Green, Chairman of the Ulster Special Constabulary Association who claims to have collected 33,000 signatures of people willing to join the third force, said that a simple build-up in numbers of RUC and UDR would not meet their case. Also Mr. John Taylor reiterated his call for the formation of a third force and said that the new policing proposal was "a complete irrelevance". Catholics are unlikely to join the RUC Reservists or the UDR in any great numbers. We are, therefore, going to see Protestants recruited and probably armed and recruiting standards will certainly be reduced. It is, however, unlikely that the numbers required will be recruited if the trends outlined in paragraph 1 above continue.