

**NATIONAL ARCHIVES****IRELAND**

<b>Reference Code:</b>	2005/7/603
<b>Title:</b>	Report of a meeting of the Inter-Departmental Unit on Northern Ireland at Iveagh House, Dublin, on 23 October, 1974, at which participants considered what planning arrangements might be made for the furnishing of supplies to distressed and isolated Catholic communities in the event of a total breakdown in Northern Ireland, and a potential influx of refugees to the Republic of Ireland.
<b>Creation Date(s):</b>	23 October, 1974
<b>Level of description:</b>	Item
<b>Extent and medium:</b>	3 pages
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of the Taoiseach
<b>Access Conditions:</b>	Open
<b>Copyright:</b>	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL UNIT ON NORTHERN IRELANDReport of meeting held on 23rd October 1974

1. A meeting of the Inter-Departmental Unit on Northern Ireland was held in the Department of Foreign Affairs, at Iveagh House, on Wednesday, 23rd October, 1974. The members present were:

Mr. D. Nally (Chairman), Department of the Taoiseach,

Mr. S. Donlon, Department of Foreign Affairs (for part of the meeting),

Mr. T. Ó Cofaigh, Department of Finance,

Mr. S. Brosnan (Alternate member), Department of Defence,

Mr. P. Colwell (Alternate member), Department of Justice.

Also present were Mr. W. Kirwan, Department of the Taoiseach,

Mr. J. McColgan and Mr. T. Bolster, Department of Foreign

Affairs, Mr. M. Healy, Department of Defence, Mr. L. Murphy,

Department of Finance and Mr. D. Whelan, Department of Health.

Following the Government decision of 22/10/74 (S.18717 C), the

Unit considered how it should respond to the Government's request to investigate and to report on what planning arrangements might be made for the furnishing of supplies to distressed and isolated Catholic communities in the event of a total breakdown in Northern Ireland and failure by the British authorities to provide essential supplies. The meeting also considered what further study should be undertaken on the related matters of provision for a large scale influx of refugees including provision of medical care, in the event of a situation such as that just mentioned arising in Northern Ireland.

2. It was agreed that the Department of Defence should provide a note on the implications of providing for refugees on two assumptions, (1) that the number of refugees involved would be up to 10,000 and (2) that the number might reach 100,000. The note should cover the position in relation to all the resources - personnel, finance, accommodation and so on - that would be required to meet a situation of the kind postulated and whether any legislative changes were necessary.



2.

3. It was agreed that the Department of Health should prepare a note on the capacity available in hospitals in border areas to deal with casualties which might enter the State from Northern Ireland. That Department might also prepare a note on the longer term question of the additional health care provision that would be needed to provide for the health needs of additions to the population of (1) 10,000 and (2) 100,000, resulting from Northern troubles.
4. It was agreed that the Department of Justice should supply paragraphs on the implications of providing material supplies to Catholic groups within Northern Ireland, having regard to the likelihood that in a situation of civil disturbances, Catholic areas might be subject to the control of the Provisional IRA.
5. It was agreed that material might also be drafted by the Departments of the Taoiseach and Foreign Affairs of the apparently rather bleak possibilities of providing supplies to Catholic communities within Northern Ireland in the event of any of the situations postulated arising.
6. It was also agreed that it would be helpful to establish the scope of the present activities of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and also, what that body would be able to do in the event of a large scale refugee situation in this country. It was agreed that any information on these matters should be gathered in a discreet manner.
7. The meeting noted the paper which had been prepared by Mr. Murphy of the Department of Finance on the cost of repartition. It was agreed that this paper might be incorporated, mutatis mutandis, into a more general report on negotiated independence and negotiated repartition, in response to the request for studies on these matters in the Government decision of 18th July, 1974.



## 3.

8. It was agreed that all reports would be furnished within about ten days of the date of the meeting.
9. A start is to be made by the Departments of the Taoiseach and Foreign Affairs to get together the framework of a report on the issues now before the Unit.