

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## IRELAND



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ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Uimhir.....

Mr O'Dowd.

I attach, for your information, a copy of a note entitled "Security in the Republic", prepared some time ago in consultation with the Departments of Justice and Defence, as briefing material for members of the pro-Executive parties in the North. The Secretary did not favour its issue and only one copy has been supplied outside the Department - to Mr. Paddy O'Hanlon

ROINN AN TAOISIGH

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Uimhir.....

M. P. of the SDLP, as briefing  
for the BBC programme on  
Security I mentioned to you  
recently

Larkin

15.5.74.

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**SECURITY IN THE REPUBLICI Government's commitment to combat violence

The Government are fully committed to doing everything within their power to help to reduce and eventually eliminate politically motivated violence. The following are some relevant quotations:-

"We must do all we can to encourage and help the great majority of the population (of Northern Ireland) who have chosen political action in preference to violence, to persevere in that decision and work through the electoral process. We must do everything we can to ensure that those who seek to disrupt this basic choice - by violence and threat of war against the Irish people, North and South, or by killing and maiming Irish men and women of today in the name of Irish men and women of the past - will not prevail". The Taoiseach in speech of 21st June, 1973.

"The Sunningdale communique recognises the need for concerted action to deal with violence in any part of the island; and the parallel and equally pressing need to ensure that measures taken to deal with violence are such that they command the widest possible support throughout the whole community. I want to make it clear that we do not see action to deal with violence as something which we must do on our part in return for agreement on other issues of more direct concern to us, such as for example the Council of Ireland. It is quite clearly in the interests of all of us to ensure that those who insist on having their way by violence will find no refuge anywhere in the island." - The Taoiseach speaking in the Dail on 26th February, 1974.

"The problem of violence in Northern Ireland, which has had such tragic consequences for so many of its people was discussed. Both Governments reaffirmed their determination to intensify measures against violence. So far as local incidents of violence in relation to the Border were concerned, it was noted that the recent series of meetings between senior officers of the Garda Síochána and the RUC will lead to closer co-operation between the forces of law and order in both parts of Ireland.

When the Law Enforcement Commission, agreed at Sunningdale, recommends in the immediate future the most practical and effective means of dealing with fugitive offenders, both Governments will forthwith take the necessary action." - Press statement issued following talks between Irish and British Ministers, held in London on 5th April, 1974.

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II. Origin of violence in Northern Ireland

The following statistics are relevant in relation to the origin of violence in Northern Ireland.

- (a) Of 178 persons convicted before the Special Criminal Court in Dublin for offences committed in Border areas 60% were from Northern Ireland.
- (b) Of 108 murders in Northern Ireland in the last 6 months, apparently having, at least partly, a political motivation, only 18 were in what are usually regarded as border areas and of these 12 were in the South Armagh area around Crossmaglen.
- (c) About 1300 persons are in custody in Northern Ireland for offences having an apparent political motivation. 178 persons were convicted in Dublin for similar offences committed in border areas.
- Only 32 warrants, seeking extradition for offences having an apparent political motivation have been received from the RUC since June 1971, of which only 23, or less than 2% of crimes related to violence, are live now.

III. Action against violence

The following information shows the more significant features of the action which has been taken:-

- (a) Increase in total strength of security forces

Garda.

Total strength is now 7,850, the highest in the history of the State; 500 more are being recruited at present.

Armed forces.

The strength of the Permanent Defence Force has been substantially increased and is now at its highest level in over 20 years. Efforts are at present being made to effect a further substantial increase in strength and a new phase of the recruiting campaign has recently begun.

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(b) Increase in strength of security forces in border areas  
Garda.

At end March 1974, there were 1,030 Gardai on duty in Border stations. This is an increase of nearly 50% in the last five months. A substantial proportion of the additional men now being recruited will be for Border duty. Garda strength in these areas is kept constantly under review. Security activity is now coordinated by a senior Garda officer sent to the Border to make the work of the various divisions involved even more effective. In addition, extra detectives from the Special Detective Unit have been assigned to Border duty.

Army.

About 1,000 men are stationed in Border areas. Two new Battalions have been established near the border. Sub-units are located at 9 locations in the border zone. In addition, there is a permanent military presence at Blacklion; Batteries (Belleek); Cloughfinn (Clady); and there are permanent check-points on Ballyshannon Bridge and at Cloghore (Belleek).

(c) Action by security forces

Note

Primary responsibility for internal security rests with the Garda. The Army acts in support of the civil power.

Border patrols and check points

Patrols into the road network around the Border are sent out from each of the military posts in Border areas several times in every 24 hours. They have instructions to detain any persons found carrying arms illegally. The patrols are equipped with radio and they can be diverted to the scene of a Border incident by radio instructions.

During the period January, 1973 - March, 1974 over 7,800 patrols took place and nearly 20,000 joint Garda/Army road check-points were set up. In addition, Army stand-to parties are kept in readiness in each post at all times. These are available to respond to requests for aid by the Gardaí and can be on their way to the scene of an incident without delay. Helicopters and light aircraft are used as required.

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Arrests and convictions for offences related to violence

In the last two years about 700 persons were arrested for offences connected with violence.

From the end of May 1972, when the Special Criminal Court was set up, to the end of March 1974, 511 persons were tried by the Court; 377 were convicted about half of whom were convicted for firearms and explosives offences, armed robbery and similar grave offences. Sentences have ranged from 3 months up to 10 years.

Seizures of arms and explosives

The following are particulars of the number of seizures of arms and explosives

1973	-	108
1974 (1st 3 months)	-	36

These represented the capture of substantial quantities of arms.

(d) Co-operation with security forces in Northern Ireland

A number of top-level (Commissioner/Chief Constable or Assistant Commissioner/Assistant Chief Constable) meetings between Garda and RUC have been held since December, 1973.

Frequent meetings take place between senior police officers in Border areas.

(e) Other measures taken by GovernmentControl of Arms and Explosives

All explosives for civilian use are now stored in Army barracks or posts except in the case of a small number of locations which have military guards or full-time police protection. Military escorts are provided during the transport of explosives to destinations in sensitive border areas and for incoming shipments from the docks. The use of explosives is supervised by the Gardaí. Military patrols are also provided as required in connection with blasting operations. Quantities of privately owned arms and ammunition have been taken into and are being stored in military barracks. The

(5)

tight controls on gelignite forced subversive groups to use other explosive substances, such as ammonium nitrate and sodium chlorate. In August, 1972, the Government made an Order classifying sodium chlorate and certain ammonium nitrate<sup>mixture</sup> as explosives and thus brought them under strict control. In September, 1972 the Government made a similar Order in respect of Nitro-Benzene. The effect of these Orders has been to take these substances off the market altogether. The stocks of <sup>"banned"</sup> Ammonium Nitrate and Sodium Chlorate that were in the State were impounded and taken into military custody. All of these stocks have been exported or destroyed and compensation paid to the owners.

Order relating to trial of persons accused of murder in Northern Ireland

In accordance with the undertaking given at Sunningdale, the Government, on 20 December 1973 made an Order which, in effect, activated part of the Offences against the Person Act of 1861 to provide for the trial in the Republic of persons coming within its jurisdiction and accused of murder, however motivated, in Northern Ireland.

APRIL, 1974.