

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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SECRET

Direct Garda-RUC discussions

At the meeting between Mr. Rees and the Minister for Justice at Baldonnell on 18 September 1974, it was decided to constitute four discussion panels, which would have the following terms of reference.

- (a) Speedy and secure communications, including means of ensuring that accurate information about incidents on one side of the Border can be transmitted quickly to the other side.
- (b) Exchange of information, including information concerning ballistics, explosives, etc: and suggestions for better methods of control.
- (c) Advance planning to prevent outrages and to prevent the smuggling of explosives.
- (d) detection of sources of supply of arms, ammunition and explosives.

Following a further meeting between the two Ministers (in London on 8 January 1976) it was agreed that these terms of reference would be expanded in order that the Garda and RUC would:-

- (a) Make a special examination of the security problems in the South Armagh area and report.
- (b) Consider and report on the planning and execution of joint operations by all the security forces North and South of the Border to inhibit and apprehend those responsible for violence, including surveillance and observation flights by unarmed military aircraft.

- (c) Consider joint arrangements for maintaining the effectiveness of Border road blocks, particularly in South Armagh.
- (d) Consider improved security for cross Border railway lines.

Details of the work of the Panels are not available. The Minister for Justice has directed that no information on this subject should be disclosed. This has led to difficulties in the past, as when the British asserted that information on arms finds was being conveyed through police channels and a considerable period elapsed before this Department was informed that this was not the case.

The Department of Justice/<sup>was</sup>asked recently to confirm that the work of the Panels was proceeding satisfactorily, that the British authorities were making information available as appropriate and that the pace and scope of the work was satisfactory. They have replied only in very broad terms that progress was satisfactory and that they did not foresee any problems being referred from the panels to the current Ministerial meeting.

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