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Title: Extract from minutes of sixth meeting of the Inter-departmental National Security Group on 6 May 1976 reporting the circulation of a document by Assistant Commissioner Edmund Garvey, An Garda Síochána, regarding the capacity of the IRA [Irish Republican Army] to engage in a shooting war in the twenty-six counties

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Extract from Report on 6th Meeting of
Inter-Departmental National Security Group

Date 6/5/74

2. A document was circulated by Mr. Garvey regarding the capacity of subversive organisations to engage in a shooting war in the twenty-six counties. This document was fully discussed and various contingencies that might arise were considered. It was agreed that the document should be submitted to the Cabinet Sub-Committee.

*Revised by Arthur Garvey
at meeting on 6/27/41.*

CAPACITY OF I.R.A. TO ENGAGE IN A SHOOTING WAR IN THE
26 COUNTIES.

By "shooting war" it is presumed that we are thinking in terms of a direct confrontation.

The likelihood of the I.R.A. or kindred subversive groups starting a shooting war against the security forces of the State, either individually or collectively, does not merit any serious consideration. If attempted, it would be short-lived, ending in complete annihilation of the aggressors.

If, however, guerilla tactics were adopted, the situation would be quite different.

The latest estimated active strength of subversive groups in the 26 Counties is:-

Provisional I.R.A.....	1565
Official I.R.A.....	821
Splinter Groups.....	95
Total.....	2481.

Apart from above figures there is a comparatively large number of supporters, some of whom are activated by a genuine sympathy but many others who are forced to help mainly through intimidatory methods. In regard to this latter method there is the distinct possibility that a very large number of citizens would be forced to lend support if demanded to do so under threat of violence and, in the event of an extension of activities south of the Border there is no reason to doubt the capability of the I.R.A. to indulge in ruthlessness and violence and mount a similar campaign to that in the Six Counties.

In places like Dublin (433 Provisionals and 394 Officials) Cork City (the Division of Cork East has an estimated 161 Provisionals and 171 Officials) the position in a guerilla warfare situation could be very serious and security forces would find it very difficult, if not impossible, to contain the violence.

An active service group of subversives, comprising of a compact unit of about 6 persons with a well trained leader, would pose an extremely difficult problem and in the Dublin area it is believed that about 20 of these units could operate simultaneously.

It is not too difficult to imagine then the serious situation in which the security forces would be placed. The British Army in the Six Counties, with the aid of the other security forces, better equipped legally and materially, cannot cope with the situation.

There is a necessity, in our view for strengthening of the security forces both in regard to manpower and equipment to deal with any threat.