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SECRET BY HAND

The attached material was received from the British side of the Joint Secretariat in Belfast. It is understood that the material was the basis for the presentation by Sir John Hermon, Chief Constable of the RUC, at the First Meeting of the Conference on 11 December 1985.

DECLAN O'DONOVAN
ANGLO-IRISH SECTION
27 December 1985

Given to our desks
by British side of
A-1 Secretariat in Belfast.
Rec'd 27/12

SECRET Conf. of 11/12.

Given to me only by [unclear] with
apologies for delay.

CROSS BORDER TERRORISM - A THREAT ASSESSMENT

cc: ASO ✓
PSS ✓
A-1
Kieran O'Donovan

Taneyard ✓
Tanants ✓
Minister for Justice ✓
Attorney General ✓
Mr Nally ✓
Mr Uland ✓
Mr Kirby ✓

Minister for Defense ✓

27/12/85.

It is not considered that an historical account of the role which the border has played in terrorist action down through the years is necessary. The events of the last 16 years are well known to all present here, so it is intended to illustrate only the prevailing threat to Northern Ireland as it is perceived to emanate from both PIRA and the INLA. It is also proposed briefly to touch on the threat to the Republic as we see it, from both of these organisations as well as from loyalist terrorism.

At the outset it is emphasised that there are committed PIRA/INLA terrorists, numbering 350-400 resident in Northern Ireland, who are active in perpetrating serious crime in Northern Ireland. This study refers to the impact of the border on terrorism in Northern Ireland.

Provisional IRA

For many reasons the PIRA does not wish to signal clearly the important part the border plays in its terrorist war. They are most anxious not to attract attention from the Security Forces of the Republic by committing any overt criminal/terrorist acts there. Indeed, the handbook of the PIRA makes this abundantly clear at General Order 8(a) which states:-

"Volunteers are strictly forbidden to take any military action against 26 County forces under any circumstances whatsoever. The importance of this order in present circumstances, especially in the Border areas, cannot be over-emphasised."

These orders were formulated in October 1973 and while there have been some serious incidents involving PIRA in the Republic which have broken with this instruction,

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● sentiments expressed therein still generally hold true. Those acts of terrorism which have resulted sadly in deaths of members of the Security Forces in the Republic have primarily been for other purposes and not directly targeted towards them. RUC members are specific targets for murder.

Additionally, PIRA is structured to make full use of the border. Southern Command PIRA covers 21 of the 26 counties of the Republic whilst Northern Command in its operational role has authority throughout Northern Ireland plus the five border counties of the Republic (Louth, Monaghan, Donegal, Leitrim and Cavan).

This cross border responsibility of the Northern Command is due mainly to the fact that operational terrorists who for one reason or another are 'on the run', are congregated in these southern border counties. An OTR terrorist is a convenient description to embrace those men from Northern Ireland, active in terrorist organisations who are not living at their home addresses. Some will be wanted by the RUC on criminal charges, many will be sought for interview on suspicion of having been active in recent or outstanding terrorist crimes. Others are members of Active Service Units who avoid living in the North to facilitate their involvement. Some voluntarily leave home after an incident fearing arrest or believing themselves to be chargeable. In many cases these people acquire accommodation in the Republic, make new friends, and settle down there, despite the fact that the reason for their initial flight subsequently fades or disappears.

Southern Command's main responsibility is to act in support of PIRA's operational members in Northern Ireland, to keep them trained and supplied for example in terms of finance, arms, explosives, etc., in order that the terrorist war can be actively promoted.

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A clear illustration of this was during the seizure of a PIRA arms shipment on the Marita Ann on 29 September 1984. Martin FERRIS who was arrested aboard the trawler when it was seized, was at that time reliably reported to be the OC of PIRA's Southern Command.

The current Chief of Staff of the PIRA, Kevin McKENNA, is a native of Co Tyrone, but resides in Co Monaghan and a number of other individuals on Northern Command who are responsible for the day to day direction of activists in the North also live in the Republic, rarely crossing into Northern Ireland. Some of these persons can be named as Thomas MURPHY, Ballybinaby, Co Louth, Michael McKEVITT, Drogheda, John DOWNEY, Co Cavan, now living in Donegal and Kieran McBRIDE, ex Lurgan and now of Dundalk. There are quite a few more.

In a nutshell the border enables PIRA to provide training, accommodation, meeting places, weapons and explosives resupply, and general support in the Republic for its Northern activists, adhering generally to its policy of not seeking confrontation with the Security Forces there. Those exceptions are generally when engaged in serious crime to obtain finance.

a. Training

The more remote and inaccessible areas of the Republic, principally in the Counties of Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo and Mayo, are known to provide locations for PIRA training camps in which volunteers learn the essential skills of terrorism. Such camps are cleverly created and difficult to detect. The volunteers attending them are often conveyed in such a manner as to prevent them becoming aware of the precise location.

b. Accommodation

On the run (OTR) terrorist (who are wanted - or believe themselves to be wanted - by the authorities in the Province) find accommodation or to use their own

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description, billets, in the Republic. Some of those who escaped from HMP Maze in September 1983 are believed to be living in the Republic where they participate in PIRA activities. Arrests already made by the Garda for example, would confirm this. James Pius CLARKE, was recaptured and Kieran FLEMING was drowned when fleeing across the border following an incident at Pettigo on 2 December 1984. Brendan McFARLAND, Seamus McELWAINÉ and Patrick Oliver McKEARNEY are three of the escapees reported to be active with PIRA and living South of the border.

c. Meeting Places

To avoid the attention of the Security Forces in the North, those members of PIRA who are responsible for making the strategic and tactical decisions affecting the conduct of the terrorist campaign in the Province prefer to meet in the Republic. It is fairly certain for example, from our intelligence sources, that most meetings of the full Provisional Army Council are held in the Republic.

d. Munitions/Safe Dumps

PIRA supply dumps for arms and explosives as well as factories for the manufacture of HME and bombs are housed across the border. Again by way of illustration, Garda in September 1984 made a very important find of a 'bomb factory' at Balbriggan, Co Dublin which is believed to have been the source of many of the component parts of PIRA explosive devices used in Northern Ireland over the past few years.

e. Supply Routes

Much of PIRA's effort is directed towards the procurement of weapons and explosives overseas. There is no evidence, nor has there been, that consignments of these are imported directly into Northern Ireland. The main supply route to the Province has traditionally been through the Republic, and several excellent seizures in recent

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years confirm current intelligence that munitions obtained abroad are initially received in and distributed from the Republic.

To illustrate the use of the Border by PIRA, a booklet has been produced which outlines terrorist incidents in Northern Ireland within the past three years where there are clear indications of cross border involvement. This is not a full list. In other incidents subsequent intelligence has indicated some degree of connection with the Republic.

PIRA terrorists on the run from Northern Ireland, as previously described, are in the main concentrated in the border counties of the Republic. A fairly accurate assessment is that these people number in excess of two hundred, albeit that only a small number of these may be active at any one time. The word active in this context, is important. This can range from being a member of an Active Service Unit to the provision of vehicles, or intelligence. Most will assist whenever called upon to do so in whatever role they can best help the campaign.

Many of these men and women who are members of active service units carry out attacks in Northern Ireland either on their own or in conjunction with Northern based elements. Intelligence for such attacks is usually provided by terrorists based in Northern Ireland.

An analysis of cross border operations and available intelligence suggests that they are directed from four main bases in the Republic.

1. Co Louth

This is probably the most important of the groupings, as Dundalk has long been the principal base for terrorists on the run from the Belfast area, Newry, South Down

and Co Armagh. There is strong evidence linking this grouping to attacks in South Down, particularly around Newry, and intelligence leaves little doubt that the activities of PIRA there is directed from Dundalk. Other elements in the general Dundalk area also link in with local South Armagh PIRA members, where they complement a small hard core of terrorists in regularly attacking the Security Forces on the Northern side of the border.

2. Co Monaghan

This grouping operates into both South Tyrone (Aughnacloy and Clogher Valley) and into South East Fermanagh. One part of it is believed based around Clones and to be under the control of a Maze escapee (Seamus McILWAINÉ), whilst the other part is based in the area just across from Aughnacloy. Indeed, this latter grouping is believed to have been linked with recent terrorist activity into Northern Ireland on 28 October and 14 November 1985.

3. Counties Cavan/Leitrim

Both domiciled terrorists and those who are natives of this area have a link in with internal PIRA groupings in South Fermanagh and have co-operated in attacks there.

4. Co Donegal

This area has long been a favourite with terrorists 'on the run' from Co Londonderry and West Tyrone and terrorists based in Bunrana, Letterkenny and Lifford have been involved in operations in Londonderry City, and from Strabane down to Castleterragh.

From the Bundoran/Ballyshannon area other PIRA terrorists have mounted attacks into West Fermanagh.

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Provisional Sinn Fein

The Provisional Army Council is the body responsible for the conduct of the IRA campaign and it has within its present membership several leading personalities identified with the recent advance of Provisional Sinn Fein in political and electoral affairs.

This means that the organisation is able to ensure that its dual politico/military strategy is directed by the same people, and that both the political and the military campaigns are properly balanced to suit prevailing needs or circumstances.

Provisional Sinn Fein therefore is not, as it is often described, the political wing of PIRA. It is, in fact, an integral part of one entity controlled by a small number of highly committed Republicans, dedicated to achieving their political ambitions through the widespread use of violence.

INLA

The INLA threat and border activity is on a much smaller scale than PIRA, although the reasons involving the border outlined as favourable to PIRA are equally true in the case of the INLA.

The few INLA terrorists who can be described as 'on the run' as in the case of PIRA are concentrated mostly around Dundalk and operate closely with INLA in Newry. Their main supply route also runs through Dundalk.

In the Londonderry end there are also a few INLA members originally from there, but now based in Co Donegal. They do not get involved in cross border operations to the extent of their PIRA counterparts and quite often spend long periods of

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in the public. However, as with PIRA, if called upon when manpower needs
sing, they have shown no hesitation in helping the Northern based elements.

paramilitaries

posite end of the spectrum, it is possible that attacks within the
f Ireland by loyalist paramilitaries may take place if or when the
ionist campaign of legal and constitutional opposition to the Anglo
ement fails.

at position and general state of readiness of both the main Loyalist
ions is fairly well known on the foot of a regular flow of reliable
nce and can be summarised as follows:-

Volunteer Force (UVF)

disarray within the UVF Brigade Staff has failed to produce any positive
her than a general opposition to the Anglo Irish Agreement. Their present
oint toward attacks within the Province, particularly on those who support
lican ethos. In general terms the UVF is limited by shortage of
es though the Mid Ulster unit have been reported to be in possession of a
ntity. They have over the years been able to acquire some commercial
es from the British Mainland, particularly from sympathisers with access
in Scotland where open cast coal mining still takes place. There are
igns that efforts to obtain supplies are still in the forefront of their
ut these were frustrated by arrests in the Glasgow area. They have also
ast made attempts to manufacture their own chemical explosives, but with
uccess. As far as weaponry is concerned, the organisation has a small but
stock, including several Armalite rifles thought to have been obtained
sympathisers in Canada and North America. The UVF is the most likely of
loyalist paramilitary organisations, in view of their violent record, to

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To summarise therefore both the UVF and UDA are more concerned at present in supporting a unified opposition to the Agreement as determined by the Unionist politicians. They seem unlikely to carry out attacks in the short term, but will undoubtedly formulate longer term plans with this intent.

The aim of this briefing, has been to highlight the serious threat posed by cross border terrorism to all the citizens of Ireland and also the importance of the border to the terrorist if he is to be able to sustain his terror campaign. His overall downfall, but particularly in the border areas, can only come through the closest co-operation of both the RUC and the Garda Siochana. It is our aim to destroy terrorism from wherever it comes and whatever the target.

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given to him in A-1 Secretariat
in Belfast.

Jim to me today,
with apology for delay,
by Mr. Stead

Nolan or Jovan.

cc P.S.
P.S.
A-1

Townshend
Treasurer
Minister for Justice
Attorney

Minister for Defence Mr. Ward
Mr. Walsh Mr. Kirby

CROSS BORDER TERRORIST OPERATIONS

24/12/85

1. This paper assesses briefly the current cross border threat to Northern Ireland from Irish Republican terrorism and the threat to the Republic of Ireland from Loyalist terrorism.

Mr. Tait

The Threat to Northern Ireland

referred to as Annex A
in para. 9 for details
from Commissioner

2. The border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland has always been important to the Irish Republican movement; politically, it is a symbol of the continuing British 'occupation' of Ireland; and operationally the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) and the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) have systematically used the protection afforded by the border for the advancement of their terrorist campaigns against Northern Ireland; for example, terrorists can evade pursuit by the Security Forces in Northern Ireland after mounting an operation in the North by retreating across the border, or they can attack targets just over the border in the North by sniping or using CWIEDs or RCIEDs without leaving the Republic.

Provisional Irish Republican Army

3. For many reasons, PIRA does not wish to signal clearly the importance of the Republic in its terrorist campaign against the North or that it uses areas of the Republic as a base from which to launch attacks against Northern Ireland. Although there have been some serious terrorist incidents involving PIRA in the Republic, the Green Book, PIRA's basic handbook for 'volunteers', makes clear that PIRA activities in the Republic are directed towards the eviction of the 'British Forces of Occupation' from the North, and not against the Republic itself:-

- a) 'Volunteers are strictly forbidden to take any military action against 26 County forces under any circumstances whatsoever. The importance of this order in present circumstances especially in the Border areas cannot be over-emphasised.'
- b) 'Minimum arms shall be used in training in the 26 County area. In the event of a raid, every effort shall be made to get the arms away safely. If this fails, the arms shall be rendered useless and abandoned.'

4. Examples of PIRA activity in the Republic in support of its terrorist operations in the North are as follows:

- a) Arms Dumps: It has dumps for caches of arms and explosives as well as 'factories' for the manufacture of Home Made Explosive (HME) and bombs. In September 1984, explosives and bomb-making equipment were discovered in Balbriggan, Co Dublin; this is thought to have been one of PIRA's principal bomb 'factories' and the source of many of the explosive devices used by PIRA in Northern Ireland during the past few years. A large consignment of HME was found in February 1985 near Letterkenny.

b) Training: The more remote and inaccessible areas of Counties Donegal, Sligo and Mayo, are used to provide locations for PIRA training camps in which recruits learn the essential skills of terrorism;

c) Safe Housing: On the run (OTR) terrorists (who are wanted - or believe themselves to be wanted - by the authorities in Northern Ireland) are found safe housing in the Republic; many of those who escaped from HMP Maze in September 1983 remain at large and some are thought to be living in the Republic where they participate in PIRA activities;

d) Safe Meeting Places: To avoid the attention of the Security Forces in the North, those members of PIRA who are responsible for making the strategic and tactical decisions affecting the conduct of the terrorist campaign in Northern Ireland regularly meet in the Republic. Most meetings of the full Provisional Army Council (PAC) and many Northern Command meetings (see paragraph 5 below) are held in the Republic.

e) Supply Routes: Much of PIRA's effort is directed towards the procurement of weapons and explosives overseas. Few consignments appear to be imported directly into Northern Ireland. The main supply route is via the Republic. For example, in September 1984 the Irish Navy intercepted a trawler, the 'Marita Ann', in the Republic's territorial waters, carrying a large consignment of arms, ammunition and other military equipment for PIRA. This was the most significant arms shipment intercepted by the Republic's Security Forces for over ten years. The OC PIRA Southern Command was arrested during the operation.

Northern Command

5. PIRA Northern Command is responsible for the direction of terrorist activity in Northern Ireland and the five border counties of the Republic - Donegal, Cavan, Leitrim, Monaghan and Louth. (The remaining counties of the Republic are the responsibility of PIRA Southern Command which acts in support of Northern Command by providing finance and training facilities and assisting in the movement of arms, ammunition and explosives).

Cross Border Terrorist Groups

6. Some 200 PIRA OTR terrorists are concentrated in the border counties of the Republic, although not all of them may be active at any one time. Some are responsible for the day-to-day direction of activities along specific sections of the border. Generally they live in the Republic and rarely cross the border themselves. Many others are organised into terrorist groups based in the Republic and maintain close cross-border operational links with groups in the North, as follows:

a) Co Donegal

Co Donegal has long been the home for OTR terrorists from Londonderry, West Tyrone and South Derry. Terrorists based

in Buncrana and Letterkenny in North Donegal have been involved in operations in Londonderry City; terrorists from Letterkenny and Lifford have operated in Strabane, in West Tyrone (particularly in the vicinity of Castlederg) and as far afield as South Derry; and terrorists based in Bundoran and Ballyshannon in South Donegal have mounted attacks in West Fermanagh. OTRs in Buncrana have returned to Londonderry to mount shooting attacks against the Security Forces. Landmine and shooting attacks against Security Force patrols have been a particular aspect of PIRA operations in rural areas of West Tyrone and West Fermanagh.

b) Co Cavan/Co Leitrim

Since early 1984 the Cavan/Leitrim ASUs have mounted a number of operations against the Security Forces in South Fermanagh, working closely with internal PIRA groupings, eg in Enniskillen. There are strong indications that the booby trap bomb attack on off-duty British soldiers in Enniskillen on 18 May 1984 killing three soldiers was carried out with the assistance of terrorists from Leitrim. There have been a number of reports of Maze escapers active in the Cavan area, participating in training camps and cross border operations.

c) Co Monaghan

There are currently thought to be two ASUs operating from bases in Co Monaghan. One group based in the Clones area is thought to have been responsible for mounting attacks in South East Fermanagh. This ASU is believed to come under the control of a Maze escaper based in Co Cavan. A second ASU based in the northern tip of the Monaghan salient is believed to have been responsible for a number of shooting attacks on Security Force members in the Aughnacloy area of Co Tyrone during 1984 and 1985. There are also strong links between the OTR communities in Monaghan town and Castleblaney and PIRA groups in Armagh City and South Armagh.

d) Co Louth

There are thought to be at least four groups of terrorists currently active in North Louth. There is a small but active group based close to the South Armagh border (which not only mounts its own operations but also operates in conjunction with Crossmaglen PIRA). This group includes local terrorists and a large number of South Armagh OTRs. A second group is based in Dundalk and has close operational links with PIRA ASUs in South Armagh. Two other groups comprise OTR terrorists from Newry and South Down. There have been clear indications in the past of Dundalk PIRA involvement in attacks mounted in Newry, for example against commercial targets, in the car bomb attack on 4 September 1984 and more recently the mortar bomb attacks against RUC stations in Newry in February and November 1985. Dundalk PIRA has also been involved in attacks in the Rostrevor-Warrenpoint area of South Down. More importantly Dundalk has for several years been the principal base for OTR terrorists from Belfast and the east of the Province. Dundalk also has a key role in PIRA's resupply and

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communications chain. Supplies of arms and explosives for ASUs working in the east are thought to be transported via Dundalk for distribution across the border. Dundalk is also an important meeting place for the PIRA hierarchy.

Irish National Liberation Army

7. INLA's tactical exploitation of the border is a comparatively new development but has occupied a position of vital importance in INLA's planning since June 1985. Prior to this date almost all of INLA's attacks were planned and mounted in Belfast and Londonderry, by locally-based terrorists. Pressure from the Security Forces against INLA in Belfast was the main factor which induced some INLA members from there to join with OTR associates in Dundalk in setting up a new group south of the border.

8. This shift in the focus of activity has led to a comparatively high level of bomb attacks, notably in the Newry/South Down area and against cross border trains, mounted either by Dundalk-based terrorists, or by associated groups north of the border which has been supplied for example with explosive controlled by the group in Dundalk.

Terrorist Incidents with cross-border links

9. A list of terrorist incidents over the last two years in which there are strong indications of cross border activity by PIRA or INLA is attached at Annex A. This helps illustrate the extent of the threat to Northern Ireland from terrorists operating from the Republic or using the Republic as a refuge in the aftermath of an attack.

The threat to the Republic from Loyalist Paramilitaries

10. For some years, there has been no terrorist activity south of the border mounted by loyalist paramilitaries. Significantly, however, the last loyalist campaign in the Republic was in May 1974, in the wake of the Sunningdale Agreement.

11. Shortly after the announcement of the Anglo-Irish Agreement the Ulster Freedom Fighters, the Ulster Defence Association's nom de guerre, issued a threat against members of the proposed Anglo-Irish Secretariat and Irish citizens visiting Northern Ireland. This was followed by a similar threat from the Ulster Volunteer Force against "collaborators". So far no mention has been made publicly of attacks on targets in the Republic itself, but before the Agreement was signed the UDA is known to have made reconnaissance visits to Dublin and planning for such attacks continues. Although at present the loyalist paramilitary leaders have expressed their willingness to leave to unionist politicians the initiative on opposition to the Anglo-Irish Agreement they regard the Republic as a legitimate target and attacks may be mounted south of the border. Both the UDA and UVF, however, are limited by shortage of explosive.