

1972/Joint Sec/5

CONCLUSIONS OF A MEETING OF THE JOINT SECURITY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY  
3 FEBRUARY 1972 IN STORMONT CASTLE AT 10.30 AM

PRESENT:           The Prime Minister (in the Chair)  
                  The Minister of State at the Ministry of Home Affairs  
                  The Senior Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of  
                  Home Affairs  
                  The GOC  
                  The Chief Constable  
                  The Secretary to the Cabinet  
                  The Government Security Adviser  
                  The UK Representative  
                  The Security Liaison Officer  
                  The Assistant Chief Constable Crime Special Branch

ALSO PRESENT:    The Secretary to the Police Authority  
                  Mr C P Milway  
                  The Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet  
                  Mr D Gilliland  
                  Mr B Cummings  
                  The Press Officer to the Prime Minister  
  
                  Mr T A Cromey

1.   SPECIAL BRANCH ASSESSMENT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 2 FEBRUARY 1972

The Assistant Chief Constable Crime Special Branch confirmed the arrival in Dublin of a supply of short arms and automatic weapons from the continent for the use of the Brady IRA. He mentioned also that recent detentions included 3 explosives officers, one of them a top man, and that intelligence gleaned suggested that the tighter controls over explosives on both sides of the Border had bitten into the terrorists' supply lines.

2.   SCHEDULE OF INCIDENTS AND SITUATION REPORT

No particular comment.

3.   WEEK-END MARCHES

Dungannon: The Chief Constable reported a successful security operation. The Square in Dungannon had been kept clear to prevent confrontation, and outside Dungannon the March had been broken up and forced to take to the fields. Six persons had been identified for prosecution and 5 had been arrested for disorderly behaviour.

Londonderry: The GOC said the Army report on this operation had been fully presented in the House of Commons at Westminster. Lord Widgery would be holding a preliminary sitting on 11 February and a first formal sitting on 15 February, probably in Londonderry.

The GOC had been concerned about a report that police had been refused admittance to Altnagelvin Hospital on the Sunday, with consequent loss of vital evidence (swabs etc), and that the Press had eventually been admitted next day before police had been able to interview the people who had been injured, to the prejudice of

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their investigations. Inquiries revealed that only patients requiring treatment had been admitted on the Sunday, and that while the Press had in fact been admitted on the Monday there was no question of the police having been refused admittance. It was felt nevertheless that some advice might be offered administratively by the Ministry of Health and Social Services to the effect that in this sort of situation the Press should not be admitted without clearance from the police.

The GOC expressed gratification for the support the Army had received from the Government and indeed from members of the public.

## 4. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

It was still not certain that the NICRA March in Newry on Sunday would go ahead as planned. The probability was that it would and security arrangements were being made accordingly, though in the absence of precise information about plans for the March this could not be done in any detail at this stage. The basic plan will be to prevent assembly in the various Housing Estates (where it seems the marchers will foregather) and so keep the March fragmented. The centre of the town will be ringed off by means of fixed barriers. In anticipation of a mass influx of marchers from all parts North and South road checks will be established in advance of the week-end and, if circumstances justify it in particular areas, cross-border roads will be totally blocked (without notice). Information available to date about trains from Dublin on Sunday suggested that there will be no need to interfere with rail traffic.

The balance of argument was against having official observers in attendance.

The terms of a public announcement from the Committee about the proposed March were agreed as follows:-

"The Joint Security Committee at its Meeting this morning considered the proposed March in Newry on Sunday next.

The community is again reminded that, while there are numerous means of expressing views or of demonstrating opinion which are entirely within the law, any march or procession is contrary to law and measures must and will be taken to deal with any breach"

Arrangements will be made for a special Court on Monday to deal with any cases arising from the event, and prosecutions on identification will be speeded up as much as possible.

Information about "Disruption Day" on 9 February was very limited as yet.

## 5. SQUATTING

Mr Milway spoke to a Paper which had been circulated on the problem of squatting. The Committee accepted the view of the Chief Constable, supported by the GOC, that because of the present heavy commitments of manpower the time was not opportune

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for dealing with the problem.

6. GENERAL

A ADVERTISEMENTS RELATING TO MARCHES: The GOC raised the matter of possible legal action against those responsible for advertising illegal Marches. The GSA indicated that he had already submitted the point for legal advice.

B FUEL CRISIS: A Paper prepared by the Ministry of Commerce was tabled for information. It was agreed that there were no security objections to the measures proposed.

With reference to the damaged inter-connector with the Irish Republic (Para 7 of Paper) it was accepted that since the connection could be broken just as easily from the Eire side of the Border Army protection for a repaired connector would be pointless.

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