

THE UNDERMINING OF THE IRA'S WILL TO FIGHT

NOTE: This Paper from the Information Policy Co-ordinating Committee (IPCC) for submission to the Secretary of State expressly considers the fight against the IRA in a period following a final breakdown of the ceasefire. Much of its content is, however, relevant to all extremist paramilitary groups.

BACKGROUND

1. After 5 years and despite significant military progress:
 - a. The end of violence is not in sight.
 - b. Terrorists on both sides still have the will to fight and believe their ultimate political objectives can be achieved primarily by violence alone.
 - c. Public attitudes are still polarized and too large a proportion of the population, though perhaps sick of violence, remain passive and uncommitted towards rejecting the terrorists.
 - d. Political progress has suffered repeated setbacks because the authorities have failed so far to convince extremists that political progress is a practical alternative to violence.

2. In the past the Security Forces have endeavoured to formulate and execute policies for handling information activities in support of their activities. It is now proposed that an information campaign embracing all government departments and agencies be extended and co-ordinated under the general direction of IPCC, which would consider all aspects of Government and security force activity from an Information Policy standpoint.

3. A campaign aimed against the IRA can only succeed within a political, penal and economic climate which establishes certain conditions favourable to the attainment of government and security force objectives. It is suggested IPCC is used to the fullest possible extent to help establish such a climate and the committee proposes to submit further detailed papers suggesting uses of information policy in specific areas.

OBJECTIVES OF AN ANTI-IRA CAMPAIGN

Separating Provisionals from Roman Catholic Community

4. The principal aim of an information campaign against the Provisional IRA must be to separate the Provisionals from the Roman Catholic community in general. This could be achieved by:
 - a. Showing clearly that the IRA can no longer win.
 - b. Making the Roman Catholic community aware of the damage which is being done to them by IRA violence in political, economic and personal terms (including disregard for safety of innocent civilians).

R.

- c. Revealing clearly that the motives of the terrorists include criminal gain and are not, as the IRA claim, solely the political advancement of the Catholic/Republican minority.
- d. Fostering confidence in the Security Forces, especially the RUC.
- e. Promoting Roman Catholic involvement in the local forces such as the RUC, RUC(R) and UDR.
- f. Emphasising the economic and social benefits of peace.
- g. Showing how Government anti-IRA measures help the Catholic community.

DESTRUCTION OF THE PROVISIONAL IRA'S MORALE

5. At the same time as an information campaign strives to separate the Provisionals from the rest of the Catholic community, it must strive also to destroy the Provisionals' morale and hope of eventual success by denigrating the Provisionals' stated objectives, their organisation, their methods and the status of their leaders, on the following lines:

- i Showing the IRA that it can no longer win.
- ii Revealing the fraudulence of their claim to be the 'defenders of the Catholic community'.
- iii Separating the leadership from the followers by showing how the leaders plan and direct (often from the Republic) supported by criminal gains and intimidation.
- iv Exposing front organisations and front organisers, and individuals who are used and exploited by the Provisionals for propaganda purposes.
- v Discrediting various Provisional leaders by revealing their criminal activities.
- vi Highlighting the Provisionals' mistakes, blunders, and in particular, their disregard for the safety of civilians.
- vii Stressing when appropriate how much more co-operation and information is being received from the community.
- viii Encouraging and giving wider currency to calls by community leaders and clergy for an end to violence.
- ix Getting home the message that Irish people in Northern Ireland owe it to their friends and relatives in GB to demonstrate their rejection of the IRA.

6. A terrorist movement cannot survive without the hope, however remote, of eventual success. The best way to destroy that hope is to continue to show that the Government is absolutely determined to defeat terrorism. It is important that every opportunity is taken of showing the Government is resolute and consistent in supporting measures for the defeat of terrorism.

DETENTION

7. Since detention plays a large and often disproportionate part in justifying, in Republican eyes, the continuation of the IRA campaign, attempts to minimise its effects as an IRA propaganda point deserve special attention. For example, the criminal backgrounds

SECRET

of many men detained should be dwelt on whenever possible. When the government decides how to act on the Gardiner Committee recommendations it is essential to prepare the way with a carefully mounted Information Policy Campaign.

IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ANTI-PROVISIONAL IRA CAMPAIGN

8. Background. A campaign to undermine the IRA's will to fight can only succeed if it can be conducted against a favourable political, economic and penal background. Essential elements are:

- a. The proposed political progression of elections to the Constitutional Convention and the Convention itself should be fully explained and spelt out. The media should be encouraged to take a responsible and educative view of the Convention (this is being done with considerable success).
- b. Diversionary publicity on the 'good things' in Northern Ireland must be continuously presented to put violence in perspective.
- c. The Government must always demonstrate that violence and crime will not pay. In this context the suspicion of "amnesty" for special category prisoners could be a problem and any decision to abandon such a category should be welcomed and widely publicised.

CO-ORDINATED PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

9. An integrated central campaign is required to publicise the points outlined in paragraphs 5-9 through television, radio, local and national newspapers, government outlets and publications etc. Practical aspects might include:

- a. Stepping up the 'unattributed brief' system. This includes the expansion and improving of the system of collating briefs and of the research system.
- b. Better quality and quantity leaflets and posters, particularly for local usage.
- c. Where appropriate, the purchase of advertising space to publicise themes helpful to the agreed Information Policy.
- d. Enlisting 'friends' among prominent local spokesmen who can take up the message and propagate it among the particular communities where they, as individuals, have credibility.
- e. Intensifying low level Security Forces PR procedures and activities.

OVERSEAS PUBLICITY

10. The external aspects of a publicity campaign of this nature should be borne in mind. In co-operation with the FCO every effort should be made to nullify propaganda emanating from the IRA or its supporters abroad. (This recommendation is now being separately explored by IPCC)

CONCLUSIONS

11. A really determined IP campaign can help to undermine the IRA's will to fight. This

SECRET

SECRET

campaign should be:

- a. Aimed at isolating the Provisional leadership and movement from the remainder of the Roman Catholic community, and destroying their morale.
- b. Mounted jointly by the Government and Security Forces' information services, using all available media outlets, by Ministerial "appearances", and by person to person communication.

RECOMMENDATION

12. Ministerial agreement is sought for the urgent implementation of a determined and co-ordinated IP campaign as outlined above, aimed at removing support from the PIRA and undermining the PIRA's will to fight.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE IPCC

Brigadier P Campbell	HQNI
Mr D McDine	HQNI
Senior Deputy Chief Constable K Newman	RUC HQ
Mr W McCookin	RUC HQ
Mr R J Seaman	NIO London
Mr J Allan	Laneside
Mr D Gilliland	NIO Belfast
Mr T M Roberts	Central Secretariat
Mr R Ramsay	Central Secretariat
Mr B M Webster	NIO Belfast
Mr D Petch	NIO Belfast
Mr D Wyatt	Liaison Staff
Mr W E W Montgomery	Central Secretariat
Mr Michael Cudlipp	Chairman

31 January 1975

SECRET