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SECURITY POLICY REVIEW WORKING GROUP: SUB-GROUP ON STATISTICS

Summary note of a meeting held on Friday 29 June in the Conference Room of Stormont House Annexe.

Present

- Mr R Davies - NIO Chair
- Mr I Jones - HM Treasury
- Chief Inspector J Willis - RUC HQ
- Major P Wilkinson RM - HQNI
- Dr G Mulligan - NIO
- Mr A McVeigh - NIO
- Mr J Margetts - NIO
- Miss R Neill - NIO
- Mr D Wilson - NIO

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Introduction

1. Mr Davies explained the general background to the establishment of the Sub-Group. The Group had 2 main tasks:-
 - a. to comb through the statistical material that had already been circulated with a view to identifying any significant trends and any ways of presenting them clearly to the Working Group;
 - b. to assess whether there might be any scope for using OR expertise in the study of resource utilisation in relation to these trends.
2. Mr Davies commented that the conceptual theme before the Sub-Group was not so much that of what total level of resources should be devoted to law, order and protective services in Northern Ireland, but rather that of how to make the most effective use of whatever resources were available. The former question was of great importance and was being pursued separately. The Working Group wished to know whether available statistical material gave any useful pointers to fruitful trends or successful outputs upon which we might build - or else to the necessity

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for changes in resource allocation to overcome continuing difficulty or to avoid developing problems.

Discussion

3. In the course of the discussion which followed, Dr Mulligan indicated that the trends and topics of most significance which emerged from existing data, or indeed data in preparation seemed to be as follows:-
 - a. evidence of a 'hardening' in terrorist expertise;
 - b. the comparatively low level of performance, (measured in relation to indictable crimes cleared per officer), of the RUC by comparison with forces, for example, in England and Wales. These would require explanation and analysis notably on a regional basis. Work on that is already in hand and might go some way towards describing and explaining the difficulties confronting the police and the diverse demands that are made upon them in different areas of the Province;
 - c. material on the interaction between 'ordinary' crime and terrorism should be presented in a readily assimilable form to help in the development of policy or operations;
 - d. trends in the performance of the criminal justice process in respect of, for example, bail and acquittal rates (scheduled and non-scheduled) and trends in sentencing policy to show the extent to which the 'criminalisation' policy has operated with impartiality and effectiveness before the courts;
 - e. recidivism rates also provided a measure of performance in the whole system and should be pointed up.
4. The Group also agreed that any statistical data on the comparative performance of different methods of approach to tackling crime should also be featured in a report to the Working Group. Chief Inspector Willis and Major Wilkinson undertook to check on whether any statistical data

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existed on for example the success rates of particular methods of operation, (for example in relation to patrolling or community relations), and on the efficacy of specific organisational structures in dealing with crime, (for example by targetting specific problem areas or by working in teams).

5. So far as the use of OR expertise was concerned, the Group recognised that the ground for any study would have to be carefully prepared the topical topics for study would need to be clearly defined and a feasibility study might be necessary in advance. It might be that the Treasury could be of direct assistance throughout - but the degree to which Treasury staff could help would be conditioned by the scale of the study and the timescale for its completion. It might be necessary to seek help from the Home Office of the MOD (DOAE, West Byfleet), who have the capacity to act on a consultancy basis. But the Treasury would certainly be in a position to advise on task definition and the most appropriate choice of expert help.
6. Mr Jones commented that in advance of the meeting he had thought that it might be useful to examine the possibilities of studies on the following lines:-
 - a. a model of the typical 'terrorist career' with a view to identifying the point at which resource investments and intervention might most fruitfully be made;
 - b. the modelling of the interactive effects of different operational policies in particular areas. This approach had most in common with 'war gaming'. The timescales were lengthy but DOAE had a worthwhile track record;
 - c. a focus on output measurement and performance measurement - and in particular on assessing the different effects on the community of measures designed to obtain compliance and to build confidence as opposed to those designed for successful arrests.
7. The Sub-Group agreed that all of these suggestions were worthy of consideration by the Working Group. There were clear dangers however

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in attempting to conduct very lengthy studies that would have little or no bearing upon security policy as a whole. It might be that the first of Mr Jones' suggestions could be subsumed in the statistical presentation on the hardening of the terrorist expertise. Similarly the DOAE approach might be applicable to a specific geographic area in the Province which gives rise to continuing security problems. Again the statistical presentation of performance factors by region might provide some useful pointers. Again, Mr Jones' last suggestion on output measurement was wholly in conformity with the Sub-Group's own approach - though it seemed likely that this would be the area in which statistical resources were the poorest.

Action

8. Dr Mulligan agreed to provide a readily assimilable statistical presentation on each of the key items listed at paragraph 3 above. He also agreed to send Mr Jones some further information on crime and criminal statistics with special reference to scheduled and non-scheduled offences. Mr Jones undertook to reflect on what steps might usefully be taken next from the point of view of using OR expertise. The Chairman agreed to make arrangements for Mr Jones to be briefed further by the security forces either during the course of his next visit to Belfast or some time soon after.
9. It was agreed that the Sub-Group's programme of work should be submitted to the Working Group for their information and any necessary comment.

Next Meeting

10. The next meeting of the Sub-Group was provisionally arranged for 10 July - the time to be confirmed by NIO Law and Order Division, taking account of discussion at the Working Group meeting on 5 July.

David B Wilson

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Law and Order Division
Northern Ireland Office

3 July 1984

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