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AN GARDA SIOCHANA

Any reply to this communication should be addressed to:

Commissioner,  
Garda Síochána,  
Phoenix Park,  
Dublin 8.



OIFIG AN CHOIMISINEARA,  
BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH.

and the following number quoted

3c/2042/75

SECRET.

GARDA SIOCHANA  
SECURITY DEPARTMENT  
- 1 AUG 1975  
HEADQUARTERS

Secretary,  
Department of Justice.

Assessment of security problems consequent on an influx of refugees from Northern Ireland.

1. I am directed by the Commissioner to refer to your minute of the 14th, July, 1975 in above and to state that only a very general assessment of the problems which might confront us can be made at this stage since, obviously, the numbers and types of refugees arriving will primarily govern the matter and dictate the line of action to be followed by us.
2. Refugees in the normal way are usually law abiding citizens fleeing from advancing enemy forces. They are usually happy to be provided with shelter and food supplies on friendly soil until they can return home. A good percentage of those we would be likely to receive from Northern Ireland would not fall into this category. It is an accepted fact that the Queen's Writ does not run in many areas of Northern Ireland and that many Northern Ireland teenagers have known known but violence, indiscipline and destruction for some years past. Refugees from Northern Ireland in the past, limited though their numbers were, showed that they were demanding, indisciplined and destructive, indicating that they felt entitled to the best treatment here while, at the same time showing scant regard for property placed at their disposal. This category alone, while being more of a nuisance value than a serious threat, could make demands on Garda time and divert attention from more important serious work. The Garda Síochána should normally be concerned only with traffic arrangements, etc. while refugees are being moved from one area to another.
3. It can be taken that if there is a large influx of refugees from urbanised areas of Northern Ireland that many of these people will be bitter towards the Northern Ireland Establishment, Gt. Britain and possibly the Republic, depending on the stand taken by the latter in their defence. It can also be taken that a considerable number of refugees will have little regard to the political arguments or considerations which confine defensive activities by the Forces of the Republic to South of the Border. In this context we can expect many problems from refugees from ordinary criminal activity to armed action inside the Republic, in Northern Ireland and possibly Gt. Britain.
4. Refugees will include ordinary criminal elements, fringe members of subversive groups and persons who, because of injustices suffered, are conditioned for recruitment to the ranks of subversives and activists. After all many will be persons who have lost all and who have nothing to lose in attempting to regain what they have lost by every means at their disposal....

*Seen by Minister 8/8/75.*

*Minister,  
You had asked for this assessment. It is clear that any large scale influx of refugees from the North deriving from widespread violence there would pose enormous problems for the Garda Síochána. The IRA would seek to use the situation to their own advantage.*

P.T.O.

*R 8/8/75.*

5. The economic position and the ability of the Government of the Republic to provide employment of some sort for those refugees anxious to be self supporting will effect the level of lawlessness which inevitably will accompany a mass exodus from Northern Ireland. If the genuine refugee can be accommodated in the work force in the Republic then this should reduce to some extent the anticipated level of lawlessness.
6. The real problem as far as the Garda Siochana is concerned is the almost certain swing of the Northern Ireland Catholic refugees to the various wings of the I.R.A. and an increase in support for the I.R.A. from citizens of the Republic. The I.R.A. will doubtless be engaged in armed activity in Northern Ireland during and after the exodus and these organisations will certainly increase in strength numerically. The border areas will be the main assembly areas for armed incursions into Northern Ireland and with local sympathies strengthening in favour of the I.R.A. the problem of maintaining law and order will prove extremely difficult.
7. It can be expected that armed raids on banks, post offices, money carriers, etc. will increase and the attendant risk of death or serious injury to innocent persons will increase in proportion. Ordinary criminals will avail of the situation to commit crime under the guise of political activity.
8. Marches, demonstrations, etc. will increase and there will be demands for the Forces of the Republic to recover lost territory and restore the refugees to their homes and properties. Pressure groups with communist tendencies will doubtless exploit the situation to the full as also will those advocating a 32 county Socialist Republic.
9. Generally speaking dispossessed people create tremendous problems, social and economic, for host countries. These problems are aggravated by the conditions provided and are particularly aggravated where refugees are accommodated in large communes as is the case with Palestinian refugees in Southern Lebanon. In such conditions the seeds for aggressive activity flourish and a serious threat to the security and stability of the host country itself could be posed.
10. If the situation should ever arise where we are faced with a major refugee problem then it would appear that maximum dispersal should be planned for and the minimum number of refugees only should be permitted in border areas. This would reduce considerably the load on the Garda Siochana and would facilitate them in the discharge of their duties in border areas without the added incumbrance of also having to deal with a high level of lawlessness. Towns such as Dundalk, Monaghan, Buncrana, etc. could well become shades of the Bogside, Ballymurphy or the Falls if there was no refugee dispersal policy.
- II. Cross border activity in the wake of a mass exodus could easily become two-way with attacks by Northern Ireland Loyalist extremist elements on the security forces on the Southern side of the border not to mention the placing of bombs in populated areas near the border. This would pose a very serious problem.
- I2 Looking at the potential situation even in the most optimistic light, a mass exodus following a doomsday situation in Northern Ireland would tax the resources of the security forces in the Republic to the limit. Looking at the situation less optimistically it could well happen that some areas could become virtually uncontrollable and the involvement of.....

and the involvement of/

the Garda Siochana in security matters would be such that normal policing of the country would be practically non-existent. This type of situation would provide opportunity and reduced risk for persons who might otherwise not engage in criminal activity to commit crime. Even on a return to normality in the political context, the effect of freedom to engage in crime without fear of apprehension would create long term problems for our society which would prove very difficult to correct.

13. In conclusion it can be said that the extent and places of origin of refugee movement into the Republic will dictate the degree of involvement of the Garda Siochana. Small numbers from Belfast or Derry could create much greater problems than larger numbers from rural areas. In a doomsday situation we are likely to have a huge exodus compressed into a short period of time and it is of vital importance that advance planning be so geared that a controlled dispersal policy can be implemented. In such a situation it will be impossible to screen the refugees and failure to prevent mass communes in the border areas could have far reaching consequences as far as the security of the State is concerned.



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CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT.