

Amulated 3/8/71

INTERNAL SECURITY

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## ROLE OF THE POLICE

### POSITION BEFORE HUNT REPORT

1. Prior to 1969 every member of the RUC had a pistol as a personal issue. In addition, the Reserve Force platoons were equipped with armoured cars, armoured personnel carriers and automatic weapons. Rifles and some automatic weapons were available for the defence of stations, but stocks were mostly held in reserve at Sprucefield Depot.
2. The part-time USC were provided with rifles in country areas and with pistols in Belfast. Mobilized members who carried out duties with the RUC were equipped in the same way as regular police. Those who were called up to guard installations during the IRA campaign in the late fifties and early sixties were normally supplied with rifles and/or automatics.

### THE HUNT REPORT

3. The Hunt Committee expressed the hope (paragraph 27) that the removal of causes of discontent would make a renewal of terrorism less likely. Nevertheless they thought it necessary to consider the worst that might happen and to take precautions against possible terrorist attacks (paragraph 28).
4. In particular the Committee believed (paragraph 167) that it would be necessary for some time to come to protect key installations and to undertake such other tasks as might be required to guard against the threat of armed guerilla-type attacks. But they added that all threats to the security of Northern Ireland from armed incursions and attacks, from whatever quarter and whatever form they might take, was a proper military responsibility and should rest with the Government at Westminster. They proposed (paragraph 171) a locally recruited part-time force under the command of the GOC to undertake this role.
5. So far as the RUC were concerned the Committee believed (paragraph 81) that any police force, military in appearance and equipment, was less acceptable to minority and moderate opinion than if it were clearly civilian in character, and they therefore recommended (paragraph 82) that the RUC be relieved of all duties of a military nature.
6. In pursuit of this policy they proposed (paragraph 102) that the general issue and carrying of arms should be phased out. All automatic weapons and self-loading

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files should cease to be part of the equipment of the RUC. The only firearms retained should be .38 revolvers, .303 rifles and gas pistols or gas grenades; these should be available under strict security conditions at selected police stations for issue as required. Ordinarily (paragraph 103) firearms should be available only to personnel on mobile or detective duties or for the protection of police stations.

Armoured cars should cease to be part of police equipment (paragraph 114). Armoured personnel carriers and jeeps should be retained, but not replaced, until experience showed the extent to which they were likely to be required in future.

7. All these recommendations were carried out.

#### POSITION FOLLOWING HUNT REPORT

8. With the recrudescence of IRA activity in 1970 police personnel began to come under armed attack. The response to this was twofold. In the first place police patrols moving into dangerous areas were given Army protection. Secondly, the Police Authority ordered larger supplies of the new Walther pistol, which is now the standard weapon for British police forces. Pending the arrival of supplies many of the old .38 pistols were re-issued. Pistols are still not a personal issue (except in the case of a few members of the force whose lives have been threatened), but they are available at all stations, are carried by all mobile patrols and may be issued in other circumstances at the discretion of the station commander. A total of 2,400 are either issued or on order.

9. A new situation has, however, arisen as a result of the stepping-up of IRA attacks, and the security forces now require firearms not only for personal protection but also in the following circumstances --

1. Crowd control
2. Engagement of IRA
3. Protection of police stations
4. Protection of key installations

10. Crowd control becomes an Army responsibility as soon as serious violence erupts; there is, therefore, no case for the police to be specially armed in these circumstances. The engagement and pursuit of armed terrorists is also an Army responsibility, and the view taken is that mobile patrols of the RUC should not be armed with automatic weapons for what would then be front-line duties.

11. This leaves the static protection of police stations and key installations, and

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There is an acute problem. Since attacks can be mounted with automatic weapons, static guards must be put on equal terms. The guarding of police stations by the RUC would mean not only a re-arming of the force with heavy weapons but also the diversion of men from beat duty. The guarding of key installations by the RUC would be out of the question on manpower grounds alone.

12. The Army have, therefore, assumed responsibility for guarding a limited number of police stations which are at special risk. This is a commitment which the GOC regards as purely temporary and as particularly distasteful because it deprives him of troops for use in an offensive role. So far as key installations are concerned the UDR can provide night-time protection, though a recent examination has identified a limited number of members of the UDR able and willing to undertake spells of duty at all hours; these men will be employed at full-time rates of pay to guard police stations and key points requiring twenty-four-hour protection. The UDR remains, however, primarily a night-time or weekend force.

13. Much better defensive coverage could be provided if a full-time battalion of the UDR were formed. Pressure is now being exerted by the Northern Ireland Government for the early creation of such a battalion. The battalion could be made up not only of men serving long engagements but also of men willing to volunteer for short periods of mobilized service.

14. Until the UDR can be made a more effective force by these means it will be necessary for the Army to continue to provide soldiers to guard police stations and to provide some armed guards or patrols at Stormont or other prestige targets. The Army view is that the job could be done by the police within the terms of the Hunt Report.

But if the Army are left with the task it may well be that the need to save regular troops will accelerate the creation of a permanent UDR battalion. The alternative would be the general re-arming of the RUC. This would mean a reversal of the Hunt Report which might be unacceptable to the Police Authority and the Home Secretary, and, from the Northern Ireland Government's point of view, might create more problems than it would solve.

15. A note on the UDR is attached at Appendix A, and a comparison of police strengths at Appendix B.

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## ULSTER DEFENCE REGIMENT

The UDR was formed on 1 January 1970 and began to undertake operational duties on 1 April 1970. The Regiment is a part-time volunteer force whose role is to support the Regular Army in protecting the security of the Border and the State. It discharges this duty in the main by providing guards for key points and undertaking Border patrols and check-point duties when necessary. The Regiment is not employed in crowd control or riot duties in towns.

The Secretary of State for Defence announced in January 1971 that recruiting to the Regiment would proceed as quickly as possible to achieve a force of 6,000.

The Regiment is divided into 7 battalions and 38 companies, and on 23 July 1971 the strength was 249 officers and 3,907 soldiers. These figures include 12 officers and 240 soldiers who are full-time members on consolidated rates of pay. The balance are part-time members of whom about 11% are not yet fully trained.

Recruiting has recently shown an improvement and there are a considerable number of applications in the pipeline being processed. It is worthy of note that younger men - 18 to 25 age group - are now coming forward. Previously a considerable number of applicants were in the 40 to 50 age group. The general standard also is rising.

Since 1 April 1970 over 170,000 man/days of operational duty have been undertaken on tasks which would otherwise have fallen upon regular troops. These can be broken down into the following main groups:-

Routine Commitments

The most important routine task of the UDR is to provide static guards at night on certain Key Points and the patrol of Key Points not requiring static guards. The Regiment has provided static guards at night for 16 Key Points, including 4 border police stations. In addition an average of 17 patrols operate each night, mainly in the border areas, visiting target installations not requiring static guards. The total manpower requirement for both these commitments is approximately 250 men per night.

Patrols, particularly in remote rural areas, were initially restricted in their mobility due to the lack of vehicles and radios. However, each battalion now has adequate vehicles and equipment to operate with a high degree of mobility and flexibility.

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### Security Committee Operations

Many operations, particularly at weekends, are planned through Area Security Committees on which the Regular Army, UDR and RUC are represented and the UDR contribution to these co-ordinated operations usually consists of patrolling combined with road blocks in rural areas. On occasions UDR reinforcements have been sent by helicopters.

An example of this type of operation occurred when trouble was expected some time ago outside the jail at Armagh, and an operation was launched to dominate the situation. Regular troops were given tasks within the city of Armagh, and the UDR set up road blocks for twenty-four hours on all routes entering the city. The second battalion co-ordinated the UDR contribution as well as providing six road blocks and two heliborne border patrols.

### Contingency Operations

The UDR has made an important contribution to security during the past year by taking part in a number of contingency operations planned in close co-ordination with the Regular Army. One of these operations provides for up to 120 road blocks and vehicle control points in depth to cover all roads leading from the border. At present, if all positions are manned simultaneously the task is shared between the Regular Army and the UDR. On these occasions the UDR has produced up to 800 men at a time every 24 hours for this task. Another contingency plan is a UDR operation, manning up to 31 vehicle control points on the periphery of Belfast. Up to 400 men are deployed at any one time on this operation.

The manpower required for these operations is in addition to existing routine commitments; and Brigade Commanders have on these occasions authorised call-out for the strength of force required to meet the task. If road block operations are carried or extended beyond eight hours, a roster has to be organised to relieve those on duty. Because contingency operations are superimposed on routine tasks, members of the UDR from Belfast, Down or Antrim carry out at least one operational duty every week of eight hours' duration.

### Immediate Reaction Force

There have been a number of occasions when the UDR has been called out at short notice for full-time duty, with the aim of relieving the Regular Army to deal with disorders in urban areas. On these occasions the UDR battalions have taken over operational control within certain areas, relieving the Regular Army of 24-hour static guards and providing additional road blocks. The Regiment has the capability

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manning up to 230 road blocks at short notice on roads in the home areas of UDR locations throughout Northern Ireland. This operation requires up to 1,800 members of the UDR at any one time.

Initially the UDR has been armed with the same weapons as the USC - No 4 rifles and Sterlings. The No 4 rifles will be replaced with the SLR.

The scale of radios is being increased from 163 to 340. Radios exist at all command posts down to platoon level. Company commander vehicles and certain vehicles used for patrols will contain sets.

The UDR is trained to enable it to work in close conjunction with Regular Army units. It is the aim to bring the force to progressively higher standards of field craft, signals and weapon training and to increase its mobility. Additional paid training is being provided to this end over and above the minimum laid down for recruits. Provision is also made for officers and senior NCOs to attend selected centralised courses at Ministry of Defence schools and elsewhere.

It is expected that the overall strength of the Regiment will increase steadily but perhaps slowly towards full establishment. The main problem is to maintain keenness in carrying out duties which are for the most part repetitive and unspectacular. As training standards improve the UDR will vary its methods of carrying out tasks. In addition to helicopter sorties thought is being given to water-borne operations in loughs and sheltered inlets. Proposals are currently being examined for forming a full-time battalion; this would have the same general role in support of the Army as the part-time force with which it would be closely integrated. The morale of the Regiment is good, particularly in times of stress, and men respond willingly to exacting calls to attend duties and training. Discipline when on duty is excellent and co-operation between regular units and the force is easy and efficient.

The image of the force could be improved if it were possible to publicise the work which it is doing. This is not easy in view of its relatively routine character. Much of the work of the security forces attracting favourable notice - searches, catches, etc - has been performed in the main by the regular forces, Army and Police, and not by the UDR on its own.

Any steps that can be taken to encourage recruiting should be taken - not only to strengthen the UDR but to make it clear that opportunities exist for men of good will to assist in the defence of Northern Ireland.

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POLICE STRENGTH DURING 1956-1962 IRA CAMPAIGN

	RUC		Mobilized	Total	Part-time
	Men	Women	USC	Full-time	USC
31.1.56	2,783	37	201	3,021	10,274
31.1.57	2,801	29	478	3,308	10,750
31.1.58	2,827	45	1,417	4,289	12,301
31.1.59	2,852	40	1,579	4,471	12,223
31.1.60	2,839	49	1,625	4,513	12,185
31.1.61	2,879	56	1,376	4,311	11,946
31.1.62	2,934	55	1,203	4,192	11,596

AT 30.6.1971

				RUC	UDR
				Reserve	
	3,808	115	-	792	4,183
				3,923	

The authorised strengths are:-

RUC	4,940
Reserve	1,500
UDR	6,000

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