

CONFIDENTIAL

SUMMARY NOTE OF A MEETING IN DUNDONALD HOUSE ON 8 JANUARY 1987 TO DISCUSS SECURITY PRECAUTIONS FOR THE DURATION OF THE MAZE ESCAPEES' TRIAL

1. Present:-

Mr J Semple (Chairman)	-	Director Director, Prison Security and Operations
Mr D McMullan	-	Governor, HM Prison, Maze
Mr R D T Gibson	-	Governor Designate, HM Prison, Belfast
Mr J Baxter	-	Deputy Governor, HM Prison, Belfast
Mr H Ritchie	-	Circuit Administrator, NICS, Belfast
Mr W Hanna	-	Chief Clerk, Belfast Crown Court
Superintendent Dixon	-	RUC Headquarters
Inspector Sexton	-	RUC Court Security
Major B Radford	-	HQNI
Mr D McCall	-	Prison Personnel, NIO
Mr D Ritchie	-	Prison Security and Operations, NIO
Mr N Johnston	-	Prison Security and Operations, NIO
Mrs L Sloan	-	Prison Security and Operations, NIO

2. Mr Semple explained that the meeting had been convened to consider what action should be taken by various authorities prior to the forthcoming Maze Escapees' trial which was scheduled to start on Monday 26 January 1987. To date, we were unsure whether McFarland and Kelly would be included in this trial, however, there were positive indications. Mr Hanna had confirmed that the case was fixed for 26 January and in the absence of any pre-trial applications, which should have been lodged by today, it was assumed that it would start on 26 January in the Crown Court, Crumlin Road.
3. Mr Semple referred to an earlier RUC intelligence report which indicated that PIRA believed there were 2 possible options for escape from HM Prison, Belfast. However, he also considered that the courthouse was vulnerable from an escape point of view. Inspector Sexton outlined the RUC security procedures which operated in the courthouse. He confirmed that RUC officers would be located in the public gallery of the courtroom and when this area was full to capacity, no further member of the public would be admitted unless space became available. RUC personnel would be responsible for searching members of the public before entry to the public gallery and handbags, etc must be left outside the courtroom.

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- The RUC would also search the courtroom each day apart from the dock and the witness box which would be checked by prison staff and the room would then be sealed. Mr Ritchie enquired whether hand-held metal detectors would be used when searching members of the public. Inspector Sexton advised that none were used at present, however, Superintendent Dixon undertook to check on the possibility of acquiring one for use during this particular trial.
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4. Mr Ritchie then asked whether the prisoners would be handcuffed in the courtroom. After some discussion, both the RUC and prison authorities agreed that from a security viewpoint it was necessary. Mr Baxter undertook to advise how the handcuffs would be used while Mr Hanna agreed to consult the trial judge on this particular aspect and advise Prison Security and Operations.
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5. Mr Semple then turned to the mode of transport for the prisoners from Maze, Belfast. Mr McMullan advised that the prisoners would move on Saturday 24 January. The meeting debated the practicalities of transport by road or air and after discussion, Major Radford, having been assured that if a helicopter was used the prisoners would be handcuffed, agreed to consult with the RUC and advise Prison Security and Operations of the final decision.
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6. Mr Baxter intimated that on arrival the prisoners would be full searched and housed in the Committal Base overnight. Next morning, they would be full searched again and located in either A or C Wings with the Top Risk prisoners going to A3.
7. The meeting then moved on to discuss the staffing implications. Mr McMullan stated that potentially 114 staff would be called as witnesses and he suggested that as on the last occasion, Chief Officer McVeigh be used as the Liaison Officer. The indications were that 6 to 8 witnesses per day would be called. Mr Semple agreed that the appointment of a Chief Officer as Liaison Officer was sound practice. However, whether we could get the CO in question, bearing in mind the length of the trial, was another matter. He asked Mr McCall to pursue this issue and advise
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Prison Security and Operations. Mr Hanna stated that on present predictions, the trial could last 10 weeks, however, this was a guesstimate. Mr Semple proposed that once a Liaison Officer was appointed, both the Governors of Belfast and Maze should ensure a contact person at their respective establishments. Mr Semple enquired what the implications were for Belfast prison as their staff would man the court.

Mr Baxter stated that it was impossible to predict what other courts may sit in the week commencing 26 January, however, he felt Belfast may be able to manage with the proviso that some detached duty staff would be available if required. Mr Semple asked Mr McCall to consult with

5 Governors and alert them to this requirement. Mr McCall explained that staff would require 72 hours' notice, however, he foresaw no problems as Prison Personnel would adopt the same procedure as before in relation to the provision and monitoring of detached duty requirements.

Superintendent Dixon enquired about the ratio of prison officers to prisoners in the courtroom and would one officer be assigned to one prisoner. Mr Baxter stated that one Chief Officer, one Principal Officer, 2 Senior Officers and 30 Basic Grade Officers would be on duty in the courtroom and the dock would be surrounded as detailed on the copy plan.

8. Mr Semple asked the Deputy Governor to bear in mind legal visits taking place after the court finishes each day, in the evenings and at weekends. Mr Baxter did not anticipate any difficulties in this area with the exception of weekends when no female prison officers would be on duty. Mr Semple suggested it would be prudent to assume legal visits would take place at weekends and therefore arrangements should be made for female prison officers to remain on detached duty for 7 days. He
- 6 asked Mr Baxter to pursue this point and advise Prison Security and Operations.

9. Mr Ritchie raised another matter which had only recently come to light. Over the past few weeks the Prison Guard Force at Belfast had ceased their patrols of the external wall. He considered this very disconcerting bearing in mind the RUC intelligence reports.
- 7 Superintendent Dixon and Major Radford agreed to liaise on this aspect and advise Prison Security and Operations.

10. Mr Semple considered one final matter worthy of mention at this meeting. Arrangements were being made to bring a GB Specialist Dog Team over to conduct a full-scale search of Belfast prison after the prisoners have been transferred. The officer i/c the team, Mr McLeod, would be arriving prior to the team to plan the logistics of the search. Mr Semple asked Mrs Sloan to liaise with the RUC once the dates had been finalised to ensure smooth travelling arrangements for both the handlers and their dogs. Mr McMullan pointed out that from his experience with the team at Maze last year, the appointment of a member of the Prison Security Department to assist Mr McLeod was a great asset.
11. There being no further business, Mr Semple thanked everyone for their attendance and assistance in relation to this forthcoming trial.

L.P. Sloan

L P SLOAN
Prison Security and Operations Division

13 January 1987

cc Those present
Mr R J Kendrick

J. Gilmore

JW