

C O N F I D E N T I A L

MEETING OF THE SECURITY INFORMATION GROUP ON WEDNESDAY
18 AUGUST 1995 AT 3.00PM IN STORMONT HOUSE

PRESENT

Mr Williams	Mr Gillies
Mr Steele	Supt McConnell
Mr Wood	
Mr Marsh	
Mr Jagelman	
Mrs Black	

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Brigadier Strudley, Mr Hanna, Mr McKervill

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 July were approved.

2. GENERAL REVIEW

Since the last meeting of SIG the period had been dominated by a number of parades and attendant public order incidents orchestrated by Sinn Fein.

In Portadown there was civil unrest and a two day stand-off before a compromise was reached which allowed an Orange Order parade to march along Garvaghy Road on 11 July. On 12 August there were disturbances at Apprentice Boys parades in Belfast and Londonderry when a number of RUC officers and civilians were hurt. At the protest on the Lower Ormeau Road, whilst it was understood that residents would have been prepared to reach an accommodation with parade organisers, they had been joined by other protestors who it was believed came from the

C O N F I D E N T I A L

17405/LO

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Poleglass/Twinbrook area. It was helpful that the Royal Black Institution had now agreed to re-route its parades away from this area on 20 and 26 August. In Londonderry on 12 August petrol bombs were thrown at the RUC, who fired a number of plastic baton rounds in return. On 13 August the parade and rally from West Belfast to the City Hall to mark the Anniversary of Internment, attended by around 3,500 people, passed off peacefully although there were some peripheral incidents and damage to property. During the period 12-14 August over 100 petrol bombs were thrown, the RUC fired 104 plastic baton rounds and 17 RUC officers and 21 civilians were injured. The RUC had however, not needed to call on the assistance of the Army, who had remained on stand-by.

The RUC had been in the difficult position of attempting to reconcile the rights of individuals to protest, alongside the rights of individuals to march. The most positive way forward would be for the different groups themselves to reach an accommodation through their community contacts. During this period the media had also been somewhat unhelpful in not giving wide coverage to remarks made by Acting Deputy Chief Constable Ronnie Flanagan at a press conference after the events of 12 August. The RUC also intended to send a statement to the Derry Journal attempting to set the facts straight and taking issue with some of the comments made by Mark Durkan.

The handling of these events had been raised by the Irish Government through the Anglo Irish Secretariat. In particular they attached importance to the reported breakdown in trust and confidence between the RUC and the SDLP in Londonderry (especially Mark Durkan - although it was understood that other members of the SDLP in Londonderry were not fully united behind Mr Durkan); were unhappy about the RUC being drawn into a political situation and the implications that might have for community attitudes towards

C O N F I D E N T I A L

17405/LO

C O N F I D E N T I A L

the force; and asked for the whole question of the handling of parades and the entire legislative framework to be discussed at the next IGC.

During the period punishment attacks had continued with 34 (22 Republican, 12 Loyalist) compared to 16 over the same period last year. Armed robberies had also continued, but both the number and amount stolen remained lower than over the same period last year. One incendiary device had been discovered in the Pink Pussycat Night Club in Cookstown and there had also been attacks on Orange Halls and a GAA Hall.

Political

A summit meeting between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach was planned for early September, and an Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference would be held in mid-September.

It was hoped to make progress towards convening Talks with the political parties, including Sinn Fein, and to move forward on the decommissioning of arms. The Secretary of State had now had two meetings with Gerry Adams and dates for a further meeting had been suggested to Sinn Fein.

3. KNOWN MEDIA PLANS

- a) Speech to be delivered by the Secretary of State on 25 August 1995

Efforts would be concentrated on promoting the speech to be delivered by the Secretary of State on 25 August.

- b) NIO Pamphlet

A pamphlet summarising the positive actions and developments over the past year would shortly be ready for circulation, with an initial print run of 10,000 copies. Mr Gillies considered that it would be useful for the Army to also be provided with copies.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

C O N F I D E N T I A L

- c) Ceasefire Anniversary
Ministers would be undertaking a series of pre-recorded interviews to be used by posts abroad and overseas broadcasters. Sinn Fein was expected to use the occasion to organise marches and possibly the picketing of RUC stations.
- d) Michael Ancram
Michael Ancram would be undertaking a series of dinners with journalists and would also be interviewed for the 'Today' programme and 'Good Morning Ulster'.
- e) Information Day at Ballykinler
Arrangements were in hand for an information day to be held on 23 August at Ballykinler, led by the Chief of Staff, to which all media correspondents based in Northern Ireland would be invited (but not the London defence correspondents). Representatives from the RUC, and the NIO and RUC Press Offices would also be invited. Mr Williams would consider the Army's offer to the NIO to use the occasion as a platform, if that would be helpful.
- f) HMS Liverpool
HMS Liverpool would be in Belfast on 17 August for an official visit.
- g) VJ Commemorations
Commemorative events to mark the anniversary of VJ Day would take place over the weekend 19/20 August.

4. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of SIG will be held on Wednesday 13 September 1995 at 3.00pm in Stormont House Conference Room.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

17405/LO