

Northern Ireland Office

Department of Justice

29 November 1993

APPENDIX 1

CROSS-BORDER SECURITY CO-OPERATION

Report to Prime Minister and Taoiseach from the Northern Ireland Office/Department of Justice Top Level Group ('Chilcot/Dalton Group')

Introduction

1. Following a summit in December 1991, a top-level working group co-chaired by the Permanent Under Secretary of the Northern Ireland Office and the Secretary of the Department of Justice was set up to review cross-border security co-operation and to take forward work on some specific issues. The Group has met on a number of occasions to pursue this remit.
2. At the meeting between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach on 16 June 1993, the Group was tasked to prepare for the December summit a review of security co-operation and the principal subjects currently under discussion. This paper provides that review.

Security Co-operation

3. The main channels for discussion of security co-operation issues are shown in the Annex. The current level of operational co-operation is very satisfactory. There is now daily exchange of security information between the Garda Siochana and the RUC, and the security forces on both sides of the border co-operate frequently in co-ordinated operations. Both sides are committed to maintaining and, where possible, enhancing co-operation.
4. The main security co-operation issues currently under discussion (in the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), the PUS/Dalton Group, and elsewhere) are as follows:

- (i) Police structures to counter terrorism. Papers have been exchanged between both sides and a sub-group, comprising the two Permanent Secretaries and senior officers from the two police forces, is considering whether any further adjustment of existing structures (North or South) could increase effectiveness.

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- (ii) Border Flight Safety Zones. There have been discussions on this issue at official, Ministerial and IGC level. Agreement has not been reached. Further work therefore continues, and progress will be reported to the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach at the next summit.
- (iii) Radio communications on the Border. In accordance with the principle of "police primacy", cross-border radio communications between the security forces are transmitted between the RUC and the Garda Siochana. While the system is working satisfactorily (both operationally and technically), the British side considers that the system could be improved by extending it to enable British Army patrols (where unaccompanied) to have direct radio communication with the Garda Siochana in **emergency** situations, to guard against a possible communications deficit which in some circumstances might have serious consequences. For various reasons, including operational considerations on the Irish side, agreement has not been reached on this proposal. The Irish side considers that emergency situations are best dealt with at an operational level in a manner which is both practical and appropriate to the circumstances. It has been **agreed** that where either side considers that the circumstances of a particular incident require a review of the current communications arrangements, a review will be undertaken without delay.
- (iv) Joint Automatic Fingerprint Recognition (AFR). AFR systems permit the much more rapid identification of fingerprints in both terrorist and criminal cases (the expert is offered a narrow range of likely suspects whose fingerprints resemble the marks, and can therefore make a final identification without the need for a lengthy manual search of the records). The Metropolitan Police anti-terrorist section and the RUC have now acquired compatible systems (Printrak) and exchanged terrorist print collections on disc. The Garda Siochana hope to have an AFR system in place in about 12 months. Their AFR selection process will consider the case for compatibility with the RUC/Metropolitan Police systems, including its relevance to the question of efficiency in tracing the movements of terrorists. They will also examine the legal/technical aspects of facilitating a sharing of information with those systems. The British side hopes that it will be possible to achieve compatibility, since it is their present view that this could help importantly in tracing terrorists who move between the Republic, Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

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- (v) Joint weapons and explosives database. A joint RUC/Garda weapons and explosives database would enable information on terrorist munitions and weapons (currently exchanged manually) to be pooled and computerised. This would considerably improve the accessibility of weapons and explosives information to both Forces, with consequent operational benefits. Work on implementing a joint computer database is being accelerated by the two Forces at the request of the Chilcot/Dalton Group.
- (vi) Police exchange visits. The Chief Constable and the Commissioner are developing a programme of RUC/Garda reciprocal visits, eg to see installations, receive presentations and discuss procedures and priorities in the other Force.
- (vii) Extradition. The Irish side has indicated that it will introduce amending extradition legislation in the Oireachtas before Christmas. The British side has had briefing on this legislation through Working Group II of the Anglo-Irish Conference.
- (viii) Home-Made Explosives (HME). Research continues on possible ways to inhibit terrorist production of HME on both sides of the border from widely available calcium ammonium nitrate (CAN) fertilizer. The ultimate aim is to replace CAN fertilizer with an acceptable alternative. Current research is focused on urea, which is a cheaper alternative to CAN but which is agronomically less effective. If a cost effective additive could be found or a new compound devised to improve the performance of urea, the way would be open for both sides to examine the scope for phasing out or tightly controlling the availability of CAN.