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HEADQUARTERS NORTHERN IRELAND INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO 49/71
FOR THE PERIOD 2-8 DEC 71

General

1. The events of the week have been dominated by the explosion at McGurk's bar on 4 Dec 71, in which 15 died and 13 were injured. There have been 35 bomb attacks during the week. These have been mainly directed at commercial premises or public places and appear to have been part of a deliberate campaign to keep the IRA in the public eye. Two UDR soldiers have been killed by IRA gunmen in their own homes and an officer, wounded in a shooting incident on 4 Dec 71, has died. On 2 Dec 71 three members of the IRA escaped from the Granlin Road Prison.
2. In Belfast search and arrest operations have continued with considerable success. The IRA have had 6 officers arrested and three gunmen were arrested on 2 Dec 71 while attempting a wages snatch in the Harbour area. On 8 Dec 71 an arms cache was found which included 3 SMGs, 6 pistols and 3,500 rounds of ammunition. The city was virtually cordoned off in a massive security force search operation on 2 Dec 71 following the escape of who did not reach the Republic until 7 Dec 71. Following the explosion at McGurk's bar on 4 Dec 71, there was an increase in minor incidents and security forces deployed to keep sectarian crowds apart came under automatic fire on two occasions: an Army officer, who has since died, and two RUC constables were wounded. Other explosions during the week have gutted a five-storey carpet factory and extensively damaged the Greenan Lodge Hotel. On 8 Dec 71 an IRA gunman killed a soldier of 7 UDR and wounded his 9-year-old daughter in their own house.
3. In Londonderry there has been an increase in shooting incidents and the reaction to search operations has become more intense, especially in the Creggan, where a vicious and well prepared crowd violently opposed the action of the security forces. On 6 Dec 71 five gunmen were seen among a crowd of 200 who resisted a security force search operation. On the same day three gunmen and a petrol bomber were shot, and five carbines and a rifle were recovered from one house. On 5 Dec 71 a soldier was seriously injured by a nail bomb during rioting in the Rossville Street area. The home of the Lord Lieutenant of Londonderry was badly damaged by a bomb on 3 Dec 71. Hooligans continue to play their part in Londonderry and are active almost every day.
4. In the country districts the majority of incidents have occurred in the border areas. The closure of border roads continues to tempt gunmen to shoot at the security forces. During the week there have been 9 such incidents.

Explosive attacks have been carried out in Downpatrick, Newry and Strabane. On 7 Dec 71 three gunmen entered the house of a soldier of 6 UDR near Caledon, killed him in his bed and stole his SLR. A mobile patrol was ambushed in Newry on 8 Dec 71 and one soldier and four women in a bus were wounded.

Republicans (General)

5. Morale. Both factions of the hard pressed for men and material throughout Ulster. Public support in both the North and South is said to have decreased recently. The morale of the IRA low and untrained men are being used in terrorist operations. youths are being increasingly used in both bomb and shooting incidents. There are indications that both factions of the IRA are experiencing considerable difficulty in controlling individuals, who often operate on their own initiative. While the IRA is acknowledged to command great support in Belfast and Londonderry, in other towns and in the rural areas support for the group to be stronger.

6. McGurk's Bar. The responsibility for the explosion at McGurk's bar on 4 Dec 71 cannot yet be allocated with any certainty. Both wings of the IRA have denied responsibility and have blamed the UVF and the security forces for the attack. However, telephone calls to the Irish News and the Daily Express purporting to be from the League of Empire Loyalists, and claiming responsibility for the explosion, have been publicised. This organisation ceased to exist in about 1968. Forensic and EOD reports tend to indicate that the explosion was caused accidentally inside the public house by premature detonation, amongst a group which contained an identified IRA victim. This is not conclusive, however, and investigations continue.

7. Catholic Ex-Servicemen's Association (CESA). A recent press report claims that CESA has at present 11,000 members in Ulster (including 1,000 in Newry), 4,000 in the South and about 400 in Britain.

8. Internees. The advisory committee set up to consider the cases of men interned under the Special Powers Act had examined 202 cases by 6 Dec 71. They recommended the release of 18 internees, of whom 16 have already been released and two have refused to give an undertaking of "good behaviour" required by the committee.

9. Arms Raid - Eire. On 7 Dec 71, 10 masked men armed with sub-machine guns raided an Irish FCA centre in Drogheda, Co Moath, and escaped with 15 rifles, two sub-machine guns and a quantity of ammunition.

Republicans

10. Strabane. Recent increased IRA activities in the Strabane/Lifford area have gained further support for the IRA.

11. Arms Searches - Eire. On 4 Dec 71, following Gardai searches in the Dundalk area, a well known member of the IRA, was charged with possessing a quantity of arms, ammunition and explosives. He was remanded in custody at a special court on 5 Dec 71.

critically short of arms although plenty of money is available. This coup by the Gardai, than statements in the must be a set back to the as the weapons were positioned conveniently close to Ulster for cross-border operations.