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Annex B to J/IR/30/2/NO4
dated 10 January 1972

OPERATIONAL SUMMARY

1. The pattern of operations has been similar to last month, with the Security Forces maintaining their high level of operations throughout the Province. The forecast that the IRA would continue to attack soft targets has been realised. In Londonderry opposition to search and arrest operations in the Bogside and Creggan areas has been violent.

2. On 2 December 1971 2 prominent IRA officers - Dutch Docherty and Martin Meehan, accompanied by another member of the IRA, escaped from Crumlin Road Prison. The men eventually reached Dublin where they gave a Press Conference alleging brutality by the Army. Their allegations were subsequently discredited. On 4 December 1971 McGurks Bar in the Glonravel area of Belfast was destroyed by an explosion in which 15 people died and 13 were injured. In the subsequent rioting Major SNOW of 2 RRF was fatally wounded. IRA propaganda tried to blame the SAS and Empire Loyalists. It is fairly certain that the bomb was being handed over by the "makers" to the "planters".

3. On 7,8 and 10 December 1971, 3 off-duty UDR soldiers were murdered. On 12 December 1971 Senator Jack BARNHILL was shot in his home, which was then blown up. On 14 December 1971, during the Home Secretary's visit, the houses of 5 JPs in the Malone Road area were attacked by armed men who attempted to blow them up.

4. On 11 December 1971 a furniture shop in the Protestant Shankill Road was blown up killing 4 people, including 2 babies. The area was crowded with shoppers at the time.

5. On 14 December 1971 a 16 year old youth was shot dead in Coalisland by 42 Cdo RM. He was armed at the time but the crowd which gathered replaced the weapon with a toy one before the Security Forces could reach the body. There was considerable reaction, including IRA propaganda which tried to blame the UDR!

6. The predicted pre-Christmas bombing campaign came on 20 December 1971. In Belfast there were 15 attacks against commercial premises, and the following day there were 7. However, the IRA failed in their stated intention to close the city centre by Christmas.

7. The Christmas period passed relatively peacefully. The IRA declared a 48 hour truce which was not observed by all their members. The anti-internment march was contained on the M1 motorway. The march was illegal and the RUC intend to press charges against those ringleaders who were identified.

8. On 29 December 1971 the house of the Northern Ireland Spoker, near Warrenpoint was blown up and destroyed by fire, and a soldier was shot dead in Londonderry.

9. On the border there have been fewer incidents than in November.

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