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J.A.(64)3

CABINET

JOINT ACTION COMMITTEE

DIRECTIVE TO SPECIAL OPERATIONS

(Previous reference: J.A.(64)2nd Meeting, Item 5)

A statement is attached on "The M.I.6 Role and Relationships with Departments of State and the Armed Services in the Conduct of Deniable Operations in Conditions Short of War", and is circulated for consideration at your meeting on 21st October, 1964.

2. M.I.6 have the following comments about the attached statement:-

- m/imp
- 6 Sunday
- (1) In paragraph 6 it is pointed out that the existing Directive from the Chiefs of Staff (C.O.S.(57)186) on preparations for limited and general war does not specifically refer to the type of deniable operations in "peacetime" dealt with in this paper. M.I.6, while envisaging a new Directive to 'C' to cover deniable operations, has not made proposals as to the source of the new Directive. It may be that the Committee will wish to consider whether there should in future be two Directives to 'C', one from the Chiefs of Staff on preparations for general and limited war and one from another source on deniable operations in peacetime.
- (2) M.I.6 had the advantage of an informal discussion with Mr. Arthur of the Foreign Office and members of the Defence Planning Staff at one stage in the drafting of the paper. Paragraph 24 reflects an important point made by Mr. Arthur in the course of this discussion, while paragraphs 28, 29(a) to (d) and 30 owe a great deal to suggestions made by the Defence Planning Staff, but M.I.6 does not assume that either Mr. Arthur or the Defence Planning Staff is formally committed to these paragraphs as drafted. The responsibility for the paper as a whole rests with M.I.6.

(Signed) J.M.C. VIVIAN

Joint Secretaries
Joint Action Committee

Cabinet Office, S.W.1

1st October, 1964

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The M.I.6 Role and Relationships with Departments of State and the Armed Services in the conduct of Deniable Operations in Conditions Short of War

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Revised "Directive to Special Operations" [C.O.S.(46)50(0)] issued on 18th February 1946 instructed 'C' that special operations with secret intelligence were to form a unified Secret Service administered by him. In time of peace all permitted activities would be subject to the approval and control of the Foreign Office; planning and preparation for special operations in war would be carried out under the control of the Chiefs of Staff.

2. In the years immediately following the issue of this Directive M.I.6 undertook extensive war planning measures designed to create "stay-behind" networks, clandestine communications systems and supply depots overseas against the possibility that a third world war might break out by 1954. As the danger of general war receded these preparations were scaled down but a framework of "war-planning" still exists. In making these preparations M.I.6 was carrying out responsibilities it inherited from S.O.E. when the two services were fused in 1946: they were preparations for S.O. operations in war.

3. New problems, not envisaged by the 1946 Directive, have arisen during the past few years from the political conditions of "co-existence", de-colonisation and newly emergent nationalism. While general war has been avoided conflicts have occurred, and are occurring, without the declaration of war. Some involve territories already within the Commonwealth or moving from Colonial to Commonwealth status and, as a result, political departments other than the Foreign Office have been concerned in decisions about the action to be taken. At the same time requirements have been placed upon M.I.6 to undertake operations in support of our allies in these conflicts which, while intended to damage our opponents, cannot be denounced as palpable acts of hostility committed by H.M.G.

4. The operational problems posed by these new requirements are for the most part different from those which faced S.O.E. during the war or M.I.6 after the war in its preparations to meet the threat of a third global conflict. In war there is no need to deny that a hostile act has been committed in enemy territory (although activities in neutral states must be deniable); in conditions short of war it is a political condition of planning and executing operations that H.M.G. should be able to deny that it was, of intent, responsible for a hostile act against another state with which it is formally at peace.

5. M.I.6 has received from the Armed Services on many occasions within the past decade assistance in

/ operations

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operations which needed to be kept politically deniable. The range of this assistance, as authorised by C.O.S.(59) 81, is wide; in effect the operations have, within limits, been carried out jointly. The area of co-operation between M.I.6 and other departments especially the Armed Services is growing and is likely to grow still more if the requirements for secret action, especially continue to expand.

6. M.I.6 considers that in view of the circumstances with which H.M.G. is now confronted the relationship between M.I.6 and other departments, especially the Armed Services, in the execution of "deniable" operations needs clarification in certain respects. The existing directive to 'C' from the Chiefs of Staff [C.O.S.(57)186] being concerned only with preparation for limited and general war appears to need revision and amplification. The present paper makes certain proposals towards redefining the M.I.6 role in such a way as to form a basis for a revised directive to 'C'.

II. TYPES OF SECRET ACTION

7. Action is only "secret" in the sense that evidence about its authorship is either unobtainable or too weak to be politically effective if produced by an enemy.

8. A distinction needs to be drawn between secret action which is untraceable and that which is deniable.

9. An untraceable operation is one in which the hand of H.M.G. at best will not even be suspected and at worst cannot be proved. (See footnote).

10. An operation is deniable if, in spite of the probability that H.M.G. connived in its execution and in spite of some tenuous or arguable evidence that H.M.G. was officially involved, H.M.G. considers it politically feasible to deny complicity in public statements, e.g. in the House of Commons or the United Nations or in answer to official representations.

11. All untraceable actions are deniable but deniable actions are not necessarily untraceable.

12. If, on political grounds, it is judged that an operation should be untraceable M.I.6 should be responsible for the whole conduct of the operation.

13. If, on political grounds, the somewhat less rigorous condition of deniability is judged acceptable the operation may be carried out by M.I.6 alone, by M.I.6 in collaboration with other departments or by other departments without the assistance of M.I.6.

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Footnote: The word "unattributable" is often used in this sense but has other meanings also. To clarify terminology, in the context of special operations only, the new expression "untraceable" is used in this paper in the sense given it in this paragraph.

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14. It is the opinion of M.I.6 that the department of state responsible for giving political clearance to an operation should make it clear at the outset, before planning has begun, whether it is to be untraceable or deniable and further that if, when planning has been completed or the operation launched, it is considered operationally necessary to change its basis from untraceable to deniable the agreement of the department of state should be sought.

III. THE SCALE OF SECRET OPERATIONS

15. It is the considered opinion of M.I.6 that if an operation is to be made untraceable throughout it must be planned and executed by small staffs of officers and operators and not require logistic support on a large scale.

16. A large effect may, of course, be produced by small-scale planning and logistic support, e.g. the transmission of funds to a resistance group or an act of sabotage by one man or a small group of men acting unobserved. Untraceable operations need not necessarily be "small-scale" operations as regards their effect, but in the view of M.I.6 they must be small-scale in the sense that the number of fully "conscious" persons and the quantities of material required for their execution are small.

17. An operation requiring considerable numbers of men and quantities of material may be considered deniable (this is a political judgement): for technical reasons it is improbable that such an operation can be made untraceable.

IV. M.I.6 CAPABILITY FOR SECRET OPERATIONS

18. M.I.6 is adequately equipped to undertake untraceable operations. It is of the nature of such operations that they require the secure recruitment, administration and control of a few agents or operators to carry them out in the field.

19. M.I.6 is also equipped to carry out small-scale deniable operations on its own or to make a significant specialist contribution to larger scale deniable joint operations.

20. In peace time M.I.6 is not equipped to carry out large scale deniable operations on its own, nor is it practicable so to equip the Service that it will be capable of carrying out a wide range of large scale deniable operations. This is due to the nature of the operations and the limited applicability of contingency planning to their execution.

21. "Large-scale" and "small scale" are imprecise terms but the orders of magnitude are roughly indicated in the Appendix to this paper. The M.I.6 capability described in the Appendix has been built up in the main to meet requirements for small scale untraceable operations and indicates very roughly the present upper limit of such operations. Should the numbers of small-scale

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untraceable operations required significantly increase M.I.6 capability can of course be expanded, although some time will be needed to bring about the necessary adjustment of establishments, etc.

V. THE LIMITATIONS OF CONTINGENCY PLANNING

22. It has been pointed out in the Introduction that there is a considerable difference between contingency planning for war and planning deniable operations in conditions short of war. Whereas in the former case it is relatively simple to construct in friendly countries in peace time a framework of "stay-behind" agents and equipment to be used undeniably in a general war, it is immensely more difficult to plan in advance for operations which must be conducted deniably under political conditions which cannot be precisely foreseen.

23. Although it may be possible to forecast in which area a contingency is likely to arise (i.e. to forecast "trouble spots") the exact nature of the contingency, in its topographical, military and political aspects, is subject to many possible variations. Thus it may well be prudent to preposition communications equipment and deniable stores in the general area of a potential "trouble spot" but it is very unlikely that individuals or groups of people exactly fitted to carry out untraceable or deniable operations under all foreseeable political conditions could, or should, be recruited on a contingency basis. To attempt to create organisations on the ground designed to meet contingencies the exact nature of which cannot be accurately foreseen would be immensely costly, wasteful and insecure.

24. It is the view of M.I.6 that, given the need to shape both untraceable and deniable operations to the exact nature of the contingency, the planning for such operations must, for the most part, be short term. It is however accepted by M.I.6 that in a limited number of cases where H.M.G.'s political or economic interests are directly at stake and where it is possible for the J.I.C. to make a reasonably confident forecast of the type of contingency likely to arise, there would be a case for the Joint Action Committee to recommend that M.I.6, in consultation with the department of state concerned, plan untraceable operations designed to meet the contingency foreseen or even to bring them to a state of readiness.

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VI. ARRANGEMENTS FOR OPERATIONAL PLANNING AND CONTROL

(a) Untraceable Operations

25. M.I.6 should be informed at the outset by the responsible department of state if an operation is to be conducted untraceably. Thereafter M.I.6, in consultation with the political department, will draw up the plan, give an estimate of its probable effectiveness and inform the political department should the operation need to be developed from an untraceable to a deniable joint operation in order to secure the effect desired.

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26. The negotiation of clearances will be conducted between M.I.6 and the political department. 'C' will, as a general rule, inform the Joint Action Committee of the operation. Untraceable operations will be under 'C's direction, subject to the terms of the political clearance given and the strategic or tactical requirements of theatre commanders.

(b) Deniable Joint Operations

27. It is the view of M.I.6 that when extensive co-operation by the Armed Services is required in operations, especially those which involve, or may involve, serious political risk, the operations should from the outset be jointly planned by M.I.6 and the Ministry of Defence in consultation with the political department concerned. M.I.6 should have the right and the responsibility to invoke this procedure whenever the scale of an operation or the method to be adopted seems to them to demand it. This proposal would not affect arrangements that now exist between M.I.6 and the individual Services but would supplement them.

28. It is proposed that use should be made of the existing Defence Planning Staff machinery, modified to take account of:-

- (a) The demands of security: papers would be given a very limited distribution.
- (b) The necessity for the political department concerned to retain the right of veto. The political departments would therefore have to sign the papers.
- (c) The necessity for the very detailed examination in London of all aspects of plans for special operations to ensure that the degree of political risk involved may be fully assessed by the political departments on the basis of M.I.6's estimate of the continuing deniability of the operation.

29. It is proposed that the full cycle of planning would take the following form:-

- (a) Formulation of outline concept by M.I.6 for discussion at Directors of Plans level in conjunction with representatives of the political departments concerned.
- (b) Preparation of the detailed plan, in the theatre concerned, by the theatre representative of M.I.6 with the theatre commander's planning staff in conjunction with his Political Adviser (or other political authorities as appropriate).
- (c) Detailed examination of the theatre plan. This would be carried out in London by the appropriate Defence Planning team with representatives of the political departments concerned and M.I.6.

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- (d) Finalization of the plan by M.I.6 with the Directors of Defence Plans in conjunction with representatives of the political departments concerned.
- (e) The plan will be communicated finally to the Joint Action Committee who will decide upon its subsequent submission to the D.O.P.C. and/or the Chiefs of Staff.

30. The above full procedure could be shortened as appropriate in order to obtain Ministerial clearance for a relatively minor tactical operation conceived in a theatre, or to cope with an emergency requirement. The time taken by the full procedure cannot be accurately determined since it will vary with each plan. It will not however be less than some six weeks and may be very much longer.

} day plan input

31. The principal role of M.I.6 in joint operations is the identification of targets, obtaining clearances, the maintenance of the objective, the recruitment and handling of clandestine operators, the secure administration of finance and stores - in brief the provision of the specialised man-power and services required to ensure that the operation is carried out successfully and deniably. Responsibility for safeguarding the deniability of joint operations must remain with 'C'. This does not affect the command of services' units taking part in the operation.

32. M.I.6 will be responsible for liaison where required with foreign and Commonwealth Intelligence Services, in particular C.I.A., on all matters relating to operations of this type.

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J.A.(64)1st Meeting

CABINET

JOINT ACTION COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a Meeting held in Room 215,
Cabinet Office, Whitehall, London, S.W.1
on TUESDAY, 8TH SEPTEMBER, 1964 at 4 p.m.

PRESENT:

Sir Bernard Burrows,
Foreign Office
(In the Chair)

Major-General C.R. Price,
Commonwealth Relations Office

Mr. J.D. Higham,
Colonial Office

Major-General Sir Kenneth Strong,
Director-General of Intelligence,
Ministry of Defence

Major-General D.S. Gordon,
(Representing the Vice-
Chief of the Defence Staff),
Ministry of Defence

M.I.6

Mr. J.S.H. Shattock,
Secretary, Counter-
Subversion Committee

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. C.S. Roberts,
Colonial Office

SECRETARIAT:

Mr. J.C.A. Roper

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C O N T E N T S

<u>ITEM NO:</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>PAGE NO:</u>
1.	COMMITTEE PROCEDURE	1
2.	ø	

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Annex

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1. COMMITTEE PROCEDURE

THE CHAIRMAN referred to J.A.(64)1, a note by the Secretary of the Cabinet setting out the composition and terms of reference of the Committee. In the past, Sir Dick White or he himself had been called on to attend meetings about clandestine operations without being in a position to know the views of other Departments on the subject under discussion. The new Committee had now been set up as a forum for interdepartmental discussion of such matters at the official level before they were considered by Ministers and by the Chiefs of Staff. It would cover operations which did not fall within the responsibilities of the Counter Subversion Committee.

The present meeting had been called at short notice on the instructions of the Defence and Overseas Policy Committee the day before and was therefore unfortunately being held in the absence of Sir Dick White. It would be desirable, as soon as he could be present, to hold a further meeting to inform the members of the Committee generally of the categories and nature of the operations which might be of concern to it. These were likely at present to be mainly. Thereafter, it seemed appropriate to hold meetings once a fortnight and additional ad hoc meetings as required.

In discussion it was agreed that the most convenient time for meetings would be on Wednesday mornings or Monday afternoons.

The Committee:-

- (1) Agreed to meet the week after next on a date to be agreed by the Chairman with Sir Dick White, and thereafter fortnightly and ad hoc as needed.

The Committee went on to consider the distribution of Minutes and other papers, and agreed that this distribution should be limited to the Secretary of the Cabinet and members of the Committee and its Secretariat. Members would be responsible for showing their copies to other persons in their Departments as necessary.

The Committee:-

- (2) Instructed the Secretary to limit distribution of Minutes and papers of the Committee to the Secretary of the Cabinet and the members of the Committee and its Secretariat.

CONFIDENTIAL

2.

Recorded as a Confidential Annex.

Cabinet Office, S.W.1

9th September, 1964

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CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

MAIN BUILDING, WHITEHALL, LONDON, S.W.1

TELEPHONE WHITEHALL 7022

31st August 1964

WSZ 2/11

My dear General,

Burke Trend wrote to you on the 13th August 1964 about the new interdepartmental committee and said that he thought that I would wish to nominate two representatives, one from the Operational Staff and one from the Intelligence Staff.

I confirm I should like to do this and my nominations would be my VCDS, Air Chief Marshal Sir Alfred Earle and the Director General Intelligence, Major-General Sir Kenneth Strong.

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you are
Mr Westlake



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Commonwealth Relations Office,
Downing Street,
London, S.W.1.

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18th August, 1964.

Sir B. Burrows

Sir Bernard,

19/8

I received a copy of Burke Trend's letter to you of 13th August about the establishment of the Joint Action Committee.

We shall be glad to take part in the Committee, but in view of imminent staff changes here I should prefer to wait a little before letting you have the name of our representative.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Burke Trend.

Yours sincerely
Sir Bernard

Sir Bernard Burrows, K.C.M.G.,
Foreign Office,
London, S.W.1.



COLONIAL OFFICE,
THE CHURCH HOUSE,
GREAT SMITH STREET, S.W.1.

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& PERSONAL

17th August, 1964.

WSZ 2/9
Dear Bernard,

With reference to Trend's letter of 13th August about the composition and terms of reference of the Joint Action Committee, the Colonial Office will be represented on this Committee by J. D. Higham.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Trend.

Yours ever,

John Martin

SIR BERNARD BURROWS, K.C.M.G.

Sir B. Burrows
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The enclosure to the attached letter from Sir B. Trend sets up the new Committee which I mentioned to you and you will see that he has adopted more or less the wording of the Terms of Reference which you suggested.

2. The Committee will not meet until my return from leave.

3. You will see that the Counter Subversion Committee is invited to nominate a representative. It would no doubt be convenient if this was Mr. Shattock since he already sits on the J.I.C. ^{with} which the new Committee will be very closely related.

4. I shall be grateful if this paper might be returned to Mr. Arthur in my absence.

B.A.B. Burrows

B.A.B. Burrows.

August 14, 1964.

Sir J. Nicholls

Mr Barclay to see

Mr Shattock on return (Aug)

Mr G. Jones " " (Sept 1) 17/8.

Mr. C. G. Armitage, C.I.D.

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WHITEHALL 5422

WSZ 2/7
CABINET OFFICE

LONDON S.W.1

13th August, 1964

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Dear Bernard,

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I enclose a copy of a notice constituting a new interdepartmental Committee, which I am issuing on the Prime Minister's instructions. I am sending copies to Garner, Poynton, Mottershead, the C.D.S., and 'C'; and the notice will have no other circulation (apart from the Committee's Secretariat and within the Cabinet Office itself). I should be glad if you would arrange, within the Foreign Office, for the nomination of an appropriate representative of the Counter Subversion Committee; and perhaps the other recipients of this letter would inform you - with a copy to me - of the names of their representatives. I think it will be convenient if, other things being equal, they are the same as their representatives on the J.I.C., since the two Committees will clearly have to work in very close co-operation. I think that the C.D.S. will wish to nominate two representatives, one from the Operational Staff and one from the Intelligence Staff.

Thereafter, perhaps you would arrange to summon the Committee when you judge it necessary.

Yours truly,
Ruskin Lloyd

Sir Bernard Burrows, K.C.M.G.

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13th August, 1964

CABINET

JOINT ACTION COMMITTEE

COMPOSITION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Note by the Secretary of the Cabinet

By direction of the Prime Minister, a Committee has been set up with the following composition and terms of reference -

Composition

Sir Bernard Burrows, Foreign Office (In the Chair)

One representative each of -

Commonwealth Relations Office

Colonial Office

Ministry of Defence

Sir Dick White

Counter Subversion Committee

The Defence Staff will also be represented

Terms of Reference

"To co-ordinate interdepartmental plans for clandestine operations in areas or situations overseas in which there is or is likely to be intervention by United Kingdom forces."

The Secretaries will be Mr. J.M.C. Vivian, Cabinet Office,
and M.L.G.

(Signed) BURKE TREND

Cabinet Office, S.W.1.

13th August, 1964

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In case you intended to give actual Terms of Reference for the Joint Action Committee to the Permanent Secretaries this afternoon, you may like to know that Sir J. Nicholls, who is in general fully satisfied about the proposals for this Committee, would prefer that the Terms of Reference should be re-worded as follows in order to reduce the apparent area of overlap with the Counter Subversion Committee:-

"To coordinate interdepartmental plans for clandestine operations in areas or situations in which there is or is likely to be intervention by U.K. forces."

*CSC covered
down today*

B.A.B. Burrows

B.A.B. Burrows

August 12, 1964.

Nir B. Trend -

Telephoned to Mr McIndoe

Rij

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Sir Bernard Burrows, K.C.M.G.

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LONDON,

24th June, 1964.

I have discussed with Sir D. Burrows his paper headed "Additional Term of Reference for the J.I.C." sent to you on the 17th June. He has asked me to send you my comments direct.

I feel there is some danger that the issue of a new directive to the J.I.C. on the lines suggested may create confusion as to the division of responsibilities between the J.I.C. and the existing Counter-Subversion Committee. It seems to me that the new term of reference for the J.I.C. will in effect create a second Counter-Subversion Committee, and that if this is to be done it will certainly also be necessary to define very precisely the respective responsibilities for counter-subversion work of each Committee.

I should further like to suggest that consideration be given to two alternative methods of approach.

- (a) To avoid the difficulty of having two Committees in the same field, the J.I.C. might take over the present responsibilities of the Counter-Subversion Committee, including the responsibility for the fourteen odd planning sub-committees which now work to the C.S.C.

/ (b)

- (b) The C.S.C. could remain the central counter-subversion committee with perhaps some raising of the level of its composition and strengthening of its permanent secretariat, while the J.I.C. is brought into the counter-subversion field to provide intelligence support - i.e. to make assessments and appreciations relevant to major counter-subversion projects.

My personal preference would be for the second of these alternatives.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Sir E. Brooke.

Sir Burke Trend, K.C.S.I., J.V.O.

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AIR MARSHAL SIR ALFRED EARLE,
VICE CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF

Copy No 6

THE CONDUCT OF DENIABLE OPERATIONS IN CONDITIONS
SHORT OF WAR

At its third meeting on 21st October, the Joint Action Committee considered and revised an M.I.6 report (J.A.(64) 5), "The M.I.6 Role and Relationships with Departments of State and the Armed Services in the Conduct of Deniable Operations in Conditions Short of War".

2. The Revised Report is attached at Appendix A.
3. The Joint Action Committee further reports as follows -
4. The Revised "Directive to Special Operations" (C.O.S.(46) 50(0)) was issued to 'C' on 18th February, 1946. In 1957 the Chiefs of Staff issued a further directive to 'C', "M.I.6 Preparations for War" (C.O.S.(57) 186) in which preparations were authorised for Stay-Behind activities in conditions of limited or global war. Paragraph 3 of this latter directive stated -

"Without jeopardising good relations with SHAPE, C.I.A. and the third countries concerned every effort should be made to bring Stay-Behind preparations for global war down to (a) skeleton and flexible coverage".

5. The Joint Action Committee notes that changes in the international scene in the past few years and the forecast of the "Nature of Military Operations 1968/80" both indicate that special operations by M.I.6 as described in the enclosed report are likely to continue to be called for and to be on such a scale that M.I.6 cannot conduct them with its own resources but must call on the Armed Services for support.

6. The Joint Action Committee recommends that the Chiefs of Staff directive, "M.I.6 Preparations for War" should again be reviewed to see whether any further scaling down of "War Planning" preparations is possible taking into account both military factors and the political considerations quoted in paragraph 4 above.

7. Such a review might, in the opinion of the Joint Action Committee, lead to -

- (a) A revised directive to 'C' on preparations for war, and
- (b) Readjustment of the degree of Armed Services support available to M.I.6 in the respective fields of preparations for war and of special operations in peace.

8. The support for M.I.6 special operations in conditions short of war is currently covered in C.O.S.(59) 81 of 7th April, 1959. M.I.6 proposed, and the Joint Action Committee agreed, that in the light of the enclosed report M.I.6 should at an early date review with the Services Departments its requirements for supply, storage and maintenance of deniable arms and equipment.

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9. The Joint Action Committee also agrees that there is a need, as demonstrated in the enclosed report, for a revised terminology for special operations. *Memorandum*

10. In order to illustrate the nature of M.I.6 special operations in current conditions and the interdepartmental machinery available to Ministers for the planning, political clearance and execution of such operations, the Joint Action Committee has prepared a memorandum, enclosed as Appendix B, summarising the major points of principle which, it is recommended, be submitted to the Secretary of the Cabinet for presentation to Ministers of the Departments concerned.

11. The Joint Action Committee invites the Chiefs of Staff to -

- (a) Approve the memorandum at Appendix A.
- (b) Comment on the memorandum at Appendix B.
- (c) Consider, in the light of the foregoing, whether any revision is called for of -
 - (i) "M.I.6 preparations for war" (C.O.S.(57)186).
 - (ii) The existing inter-departmental machinery available to M.I.6 and the Ministry of Defence for consultation on, support to, and direction of "Special Operations".

(Signed) J.M.C. VIVIAN

Secretary,
for Chairman,
Joint Action Committee

2nd November, 1964

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Copy No. 6

J.A.(64) 3 (Final)

2nd November, 1964

CABINET

JOINT ACTION COMMITTEE

THE M.I.6 ROLE AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH
DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND THE ARMED SERVICES IN
THE CONDUCT OF DENIABLE OPERATIONS IN CONDITIONS
SHORT OF WAR

Report by the Joint Action Committee

INTRODUCTION

The Revised "Directive to Special Operations" C.O.S.(46) 50 (0) issued on 18th February, 1946 instructed 'C' that special operations with secret intelligence were to form a unified Secret Service administered by him. In time of peace all permitted activities would be subject to the approval and control of the Foreign Office; planning and preparation for special operations in war would be carried out under the control of the Chiefs of Staff.

2. The terms of reference of the Joint Action Committee given in J.A.(64) 1 of 13th August, 1964 are "To co-ordinate inter-departmental plans for clandestine operations in areas or situations overseas in which there is or is likely to be intervention by United Kingdom Forces". Accordingly this report is not concerned with the activities of M.I.6 in -

- (a) the collection of secret intelligence;
- (b) clandestine operations in the field of counter-subversion.

3. In the years immediately following the issue of the "Directive to Special Operations" M.I.6 undertook extensive "war planning" measures designed to create "Stay-Behind" networks, clandestine communications systems and supply depots overseas against the possibility that a third world

for "war planning" still exists. Paragraph 5 of the Annex to C.O.S.(57) 186 states "Without jeopardising good relations with SHANB, C.I.A. and the third countries concerned, every effort should be made to bring Stay-Behind preparations for Global War down to the skeleton and flexible coverage mentioned above as quickly as possible".

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Notwithstanding this it is the view of M.I.6 that continuation even on the present reduced scale of these war planning measures imposes an undue strain on the resources of that Service in man-power, money and material. The Joint Action Committee, recognising that political as well as defence considerations are involved, nevertheless recommends early reconsideration of the present level of M.I.6 activities pursuant to C.O.S.(57) 185.

4. New problems, not envisaged by the 1946 Directive, have arisen during the past few years from the political conditions of "co-existence", de-colonisation and newly emergent nationalism. While general war has been avoided, conflicts have occurred, and are occurring, without the declaration of war. Some involve territories already within the Commonwealth or moving from Colonial to Commonwealth status and, as a result, political departments other than the Foreign Office have been concerned in decisions about the action to be taken. At the same time requirements have been placed upon M.I.6 to undertake operations in support of our allies in these conflicts which, while intended to damage our opponents, cannot be denounced as palpable acts of hostility committed by Her Majesty's Government.

5. The operational problems posed by these new requirements are for the most part different from those which faced S.O.E. during the war or M.I.6 after the war in its preparations to meet the threat of a third global conflict. In war there is no need to deny that a hostile act has been committed in enemy territory (although activities in neutral states must be deniable); in conditions short of war it is a political condition of planning and executing operations that Her Majesty's Government should be able to deny that it was, of intent, responsible for a hostile act against another state with which it is formally at peace.

6. M.I.6 has received from the Armed Services on many occasions within the past decade assistance in operations which needed to be kept politically deniable. The range of this assistance, as authorised by C.O.S.(59) 81, is wide; in effect the operations have, within limits, been carried out jointly. Nevertheless the Joint Action Committee considers and has so advised 'C' that early discussions should take place between M.I.6 and the Ministry of Defence on the scale of support to "Special Operations" bearing in mind particularly -

- (i) The frequently conflicting demands on available resources of the execution of "war planning" measures on the one hand and on the other of the contingency operations which M.I.6 have planned and executed on the lines described in paragraphs 1 and 6 above.

1. The Joint Action Committee notes that the area of co-operation between M.I.6 and other departments especially the Armed Services is growing and is likely to grow still more if the requirements for special operations continue to expand.

7. The Joint Action Committee considers that in view of the circumstances with which Her Majesty's Government is now confronted the relationship between M.I.6 and other departments, especially the Armed Services, in the execution of "deniable" operations needs clarification in certain respects. In effect, the existing direction to 'C' from the Chiefs of Staff (C.O.S.(57) 186) being concerned only with preparation for limited and general war appears to need revision and amplification. The present paper makes certain proposals towards redefining the M.I.6 role in special operations in peacetime.

terminology

Types of Special Operation

8. A Special Operation is only "secret" in the sense that evidence about its authorship is either unobtainable or too weak to be politically effective if produced by an enemy.

9. A distinction needs to be drawn between a "Special Operation" which is untraceable and one which is deniable. *3 so as untracable term*

10. An untraceable operation is one in which the hand of Her Majesty's Government at best will not even be suspected and at worst cannot be proved. (See footnote).

lies!

11. An operation is deniable if, in spite of the probability that Her Majesty's Government connived in its execution and in spite of some tenuous or arguable evidence that Her Majesty's Government was officially involved, Her Majesty's Government considers it politically feasible to deny complicity in public statements, e.g. in the House of Commons or the United Nations or in answer to official representations.

12. All untraceable Operations are deniable but deniable Operations are not necessarily untraceable.

13. If, on political grounds, it is judged that an operation should be untraceable M.I.6 should be responsible for the whole execution of the Operation.

14. If, on political grounds, the somewhat less rigorous condition of deniability is judged acceptable, the Operation may be carried out by M.I.6 alone, by M.I.6 in collaboration with other departments or by other departments without the assistance of M.I.6. *10 only for deniable but not untraceable so*

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15. It is the opinion of the Joint Action Committee that the Department of State responsible for giving political clearance to an operation should make clear at the outset and before planning begins whether the operation is to be untraceable or deniable and further, that if either when planning has been completed or when the operation has been launched, it is considered necessary for operational reasons to change its basis from untraceable to deniable, the Department of State concerned should formally notify its agreement to this.

Footnote

The word "unattributable" is often used in this sense but has other meanings also. To clarify terminology in the context of special operations only, the new expression "untraceable" is used in this report in the sense given in paragraph 10.

The Scale of Special Operations

16. It is the considered opinion of the Joint Action Committee that if an operation is to be made untraceable throughout, it must be planned and executed by small staffs of officers and operators and not require logistic support on a large scale.

untraceable: M16
(small)

17. A large effect may, of course, be produced by small-scale planning and logistic support, e.g. the transmission of funds to a resistance group or an act of sabotage by one man or a small group of men (acting unobserved). Untraceable operations need not necessarily be "small-scale" in their effect, but in the view of the Joint Action Committee they must be small-scale in the sense that the number of fully "conscious" persons and the quantities of material required for their execution are small.

18. An operation requiring considerable numbers of men and quantities of material may be considered deniable (this is a political judgment): for technical reasons it is improbable that such an operation can be made untraceable.

scale determined
deniability

M.I.6 Capability for Special Operations

19. M.I.6 is adequately equipped to undertake untraceable operations. (See Annex.) It is of the nature of such operations that they require the secure recruitment, administration and control of a few agents or operators to carry them out in the field.

M16

20. M.I.6 is also equipped to carry out small-scale deniable operations on its own or to make a significant specialist contribution to larger scale deniable joint operations.

21. In peace-time, M.I.6 is not equipped to carry out large scale deniable operations on its own nor is it practicable because of the nature of the operations and the limited applicability of contingency planning to their execution so to equip the Service that it will be capable of carrying out a wide range of large scale deniable operations.

M16 does small
stuff

22. "Large-scale" and "small-scale" are imprecise terms but the orders of magnitude are roughly indicated in the Annex to this paper. The M.I.6 capability described in the Annex has been built up in the main to meet requirements for small scale untraceable operations and indicates very roughly the present upper limit of such operations. Should the numbers of small-scale untraceable operations required significantly increase, M.I.6 capability can of course be expanded, although some time will be needed to bring about the necessary adjustments.

The Limitations of Contingency Planning

23. It has been pointed out in the Introduction that there is a considerable difference between contingency planning for war and planning deniable operations in conditions short of war. Whereas in the former case it is relatively simple to construct in friendly countries in peace-time a framework of "Stay-Behind" agents and equipment to be used undeniably in a general war, it is immensely more difficult to plan in advance for operations which must be conducted deniably under political conditions which cannot be precisely foreseen.

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24. Although it may be possible to forecast in which area a contingency is likely to arise (i.e. to forecast "trouble spots") the exact nature of the contingency, in its topographical, military and political aspects, is subject to many possible variations. Thus it may well be prudent to pre-position communications equipment and deniable stores in the general area of a potential "trouble spot" but it is very unlikely that individuals or groups of people exactly fitted to carry out untraceable or deniable operations under all foreseeable political conditions could, or should, be recruited on a contingency basis. To attempt to create organisations on the ground designed to meet contingencies the exact nature of which cannot be accurately foreseen would be immensely costly, wasteful and insecure.

25. Given the need to shape both untraceable and deniable operations to the exact nature of the contingency, the planning for such operations must, for the most part, be short-term. It is however accepted that in a limited number of cases where Her Majesty's Government's political or economic interests are directly at stake and where it is possible for the Joint Intelligence Committee and/or the Counter-Subversion Committee to make a reasonably confident forecast of the type of contingency likely to arise, then the Joint Action Committee might recommend that M.I.6, in consultation with the Department(s) of State concerned should prepare longer term plans for untraceable operations to meet the contingency foreseen or should even make preparations in advance to bring such plans to a state of readiness.

Procedure for Operational Planning and Control

(a) Untraceable Operations

26. It is the responsibility of the political department(s) concerned to inform M.I.6 at the outset if an operation is to be untraceable. M.I.6 will then in consultation with the department(s) draw up the plan and give an estimate of its probable effectiveness. If, in the opinion of M.I.6, the operation subsequently, in order to secure the desired effect, needs to be developed from an untraceable to a deniable joint operation, then M.I.6 will seek endorsement of this from the political department(s).

procedure

27. The negotiation of clearances will be conducted between M.I.6 and the political department(s). 'G' will, as a general rule, inform the Joint Action Committee of the operation. Untraceable operations will be under 'G's direction, subject to the terms of the political clearance given and where appropriate the strategic or tactical requirements of theatre commanders subject to the endorsement of the Chiefs of Staff.

M.I.6 in charge

(b) Deniable Joint Operations

28. The principal role of M.I.6 in joint operations is the identification of targets, obtaining clearances, the maintenance of the objective, the recruitment and handling of clandestine operators, the secure administration of finance and stores - in brief the provision of the specialised manpower and services required to ensure that the operation is carried out successfully and deniably. Responsibility for safeguarding the deniability of joint operations must remain with 'G'. This does not affect the command of military forces taking part in the operation.

M.I.6 Sec - deniable

29. M.I.6 will be responsible for liaison where required with foreign and Commonwealth Intelligence Services, in particular C.I.A., on all matters relating to operations of this type.

M.I.6 role

30. It is the view of the Joint Action Committee that when, to meet a particular requirement extensive co-operation with M.I.6 by the Armed Services is required in operations, especially those which involve, or may involve, serious political risk, that such operations should from the outset be planned jointly by M.I.6 and the Ministry of Defence in consultation with the political department(s) concerned. The Joint Action Committee considers that it is both the right and the responsibility of M.I.6 to invoke this procedure whenever the scale of an operation or the method of carrying it out seems to them to demand it. This procedure would not affect the arrangements currently obtaining between M.I.6 and the individual Armed Services but would supplement them.

M.I.6 role

31. The Joint Action Committee proposes that use should be made of the existing Defence Planning Staff machinery modified to take account of the following factors -

/ machinery

- (a) The demands of security.
- (b) The need for very detailed examination in London of all aspects of plans for "Special Operations" in order to ensure that, on the basis of M.I.6's estimate of the continuing deniability of an operation, the degree of risks both political and military may be fully assessed by the department(s) concerned.
- (c) The necessity for the political department(s) concerned to retain the right of veto. The political department(s) would therefore have to sign the papers.

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32. The full cycle of planning would take the following form -

- (a) Formulation by M.I.6 of the outline plan.
- (b) Discussion of this plan at Directors of Plans level and in conjunction with the political department(s) concerned.
- (c) Preparation of the detailed plan in the theatre concerned by the theatre representative of M.I.6 with the theatre commander's planning staff in conjunction with his Political Adviser (or other political authorities as appropriate).
- (d) Detailed examination of the theatre plan. This would be carried out in London by the appropriate Defence Planning team with representatives of the political department(s) concerned and M.I.6.
- (e) Finalisation of the plan by M.I.6 with the Directors of Defence Plans in conjunction with representatives of the political department(s) concerned.

problem

- (f) Finally, communication of the plan to the Joint Action Committee which will determine as necessary its subsequent submission to the Chiefs of Staff and/or Ministers (through the Secretary of the Cabinet).

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33. The above full procedure may be shortened as appropriate and with a view to obtaining ministerial clearance in the case of an emergency requirement or a relatively minor tactical operation conceived in a theatre.

(Signed) BERNARD BURROWS

Chairman, on behalf of the
Joint Action Committee

Cabinet Office, S.W.1.

2nd November, 1964.

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NOTES

DP Note 29/64

1. It is requested that approval or comments be notified by telephone to the Secretary Chiefs of Staff Committee by 1700 hrs Friday 13th November 1964.

2. Distribution of this document has been specially restricted to:

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D of DP
D of DP, Navy
D of DP, Army
D of DP, Air
Captain A.B. Webb, RN, SCDS

Mr. Westlake.

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again for the time being
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The circulation of this paper has been strictly limited.

It is issued for the personal use of *J.R.S.D. (in (Attache))*

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Copy No. 18

CIRCULATED FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE CHIEFS OF STAFF

DP Note 29/64

11th November 1964

SPECIALLY
RESTRICTED
CIRCULATION

THE M16 ROLE AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH DEPARTMENTS OF
STATE AND THE ARMED SERVICES IN THE CONDUCT OF
DENIABLE OPERATIONS IN CONDITIONS SHORT OF WAR

Note by the Directors of Defence Plans

The Cabinet Joint Action Committee has recently been set up with terms of reference "to co-ordinate inter-departmental plans for clandestine operations in the areas or situations overseas in which there is or is likely to be intervention by United Kingdom forces". This committee is designed to produce co-ordinated inter-departmental views at the official level on clandestine operations of multiple interest, especially those closely connected with military operations or plans, before they are considered by the Chiefs of Staff and by Ministers.

2. The composition of the Joint Action Committee is as follows:

Sir Bernard Burrows, Foreign Office (In the Chair)

One representative each of:

Commonwealth Relations Office
Colonial Office
Sir Dick White
Counter Subversion Committee

Three representatives of the:

Ministry of Defence (Vice Chief of the Defence Staff
Director General of Intelligence
Assistant Under Secretary of
State (Policy)

3. At their meeting on 21st October 1964 the Joint Action Committee considered a report on "The M.I.6 role and relationships with Departments of State and the Armed Services in the conduct of deniable operations in conditions short of war". A note (1) by the Chairman of the Committee covering this report is at Annex. We have no comments on this paper. The Director of Defence Plans was consulted at each stage in its preparation.

Note:

1. JA(64)7

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Recommendation

4. With regard to the requirement of the Joint Action Committee, outlined in paragraph 11 of the note (1) by their Chairman, we recommend that the Chiefs of Staff should:

- a. Agree the report by the Joint Action Committee at Appendix A.
- b. Agree the memorandum by the Joint Action Committee at Appendix B.
- c. Agree that the directive to C, "M.I.6 Preparations for War" (2) should be revised by M.I.6 in conjunction with the Ministry of Defence (Directors of Defence Plans).
- d. Agree that M.I.6, in consultation with the Ministry of Defence (Directors of Defence Plans and Service Departments), should consider the necessity to modify the machinery for supporting "Special Operations".

(Signed) J.A. GIBBON
D.A. DUNBAR-NASMITH
R.E. COAKER
A.H. HUMPHREY

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, SW1

Notes:

- 1. JA(64)7
- 2. COS(57)186

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(THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT)

J.A.(64) 5

COPY NO. 1

CABINET

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JOINT ACTION COMMITTEE

SPECIAL OPERATIONS BY M.I.6

(Previous Reference: J.A.(64) 3rd Meeting, Item 1)

As instructed at your meeting of 21st October, the following draft papers at Annex are circulated for your consideration -

A Minute to the Chiefs of Staff, covering -

(a) A report by the Joint Action Committee on The M.I.6 Role and Relationships with Departments of State and the Armed Services in the Conduct of Deniable Operations in Conditions Short of War.

(b) A memorandum for Ministers on Special Operations by M.I.6.

2. Unless I am instructed to the contrary by 5.00 p.m. on FRIDAY, 30th OCTOBER, 1964 (Cabinet Office Ext. 149) the papers will be forwarded to the Chiefs of Staff.

(Signed) J.M.C. VIVIAN

Secretary

Cabinet Office, S.W.1.

28th October, 1964.

DISTRIBUTION

J.A.

Mr Arthur Lee
Mr Whiteley
(R)

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Annex to J.A.(64) 5Draft Minute to the Chiefs of StaffTHE CONDUCT OF DENIABLE OPERATIONS IN CONDITIONS
SHORT OF WAR

At its third meeting on 21st October, the Joint Action Committee considered and revised an M.I.6 report (J.A.(64) 3), "The M.I.6 Role and Relationships with Departments of State and the Armed Services in the Conduct of Deniable Operations in Conditions Short of War".

2. The Revised Report is attached at Appendix A.
3. The Joint Action Committee further reports as follows -
4. The Revised "Directive to Special Operations" (C.O.S.(46) 50(0)) was issued to 'C' on 18th February, 1946. In 1957 the Chiefs of Staff issued a further directive to 'C', "M.I.6 Preparations for War" (C.O.S.(57) 186) in which preparations were authorised for Stay-Behind activities in conditions of limited or global war. Paragraph 3 of this latter directive stated -

"Without jeopardising good relations with SHAPE, C.I.A. and the third countries concerned every effort should be made to bring Stay-Behind preparations for global war down to (a) skeleton and flexible coverage".

5. The Joint Action Committee notes that changes in the international scene in the past few years and the forecast of the "Nature of Military Operations 1968/80" both indicate that special operations by M.I.6 as described in the enclosed report are likely to continue to be called for and to be on such a scale that M.I.6 cannot conduct them with its own resources but must call on the Armed Services for support.
6. The Joint Action Committee recommends that the Chiefs of Staff directive, "M.I.6 Preparations for War" should again be reviewed to see whether any further scaling down of "War Planning" preparations is possible taking into account both military factors and the political considerations quoted in paragraph 3 above.
7. Such a review might, in the opinion of the Joint Action Committee, lead to -
 - (a) A revised directive to 'C' on preparations for war, and
 - (b) Readjustment of the degree of Armed Services support available to M.I.6 in the respective fields of preparations for war and of special operations in peace.
8. The support for M.I.6 special operations in conditions short of war is currently covered in C.O.S.(59) 81 of 7th April, 1959. M.I.6 proposed, and the Joint Action Committee agreed, that in the light of the enclosed report M.I.6 should at an early date review with the Services Departments its requirements for supply, storage and maintenance of deniable arms and equipment.

9. The Joint Action Committee also agrees that there is a need, as demonstrated in the enclosed report, for a revised terminology for special operations.

10. In order to illustrate the nature of M.I.6 special operations in current conditions and the interdepartmental machinery available to Ministers for the planning, political clearance and execution of such operations, the Joint Action Committee has prepared a memorandum, enclosed as Appendix B, summarising the major points of principle which, it is recommended, be submitted to the Secretary of the Cabinet for presentation to Ministers of the Departments concerned.

11. The Joint Action Committee invites the Chiefs of Staff to -

- (a) Approve the memorandum at Appendix A.
- (b) Comment on the memorandum at Appendix B.
- (c) Consider, in the light of the foregoing, whether any revision is called for of -
 - (i) "M.I.6 preparations for war" (C.O.S.(57)186).
 - (ii) The existing inter-departmental machinery available to M.I.6 and the Ministry of Defence for consultation on, support to, and direction of "Special Operations".

27th October, 1964

Appendix A to Annex to
J.A.(64) 5

J.A.(64) 3 (Revised)

28th October, 1964

CABINET

JOINT ACTION COMMITTEE

THE M.I.6 ROLE AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH
DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND THE ARMED SERVICES IN
THE CONDUCT OF DENIABLE OPERATIONS IN CONDITIONS
SHORT OF WAR

Report by the Joint Action Committee

INTRODUCTION

The Revised "Directive to Special Operations" G.O.S.(46) 50 (0) issued on 18th February, 1946 instructed 'C' that special operations with secret intelligence were to form a unified Secret Service administered by him. In time of peace all permitted activities would be subject to the approval and control of the Foreign Office; planning and preparation for special operations in war would be carried out under the control of the Chiefs of Staff.

2. The terms of reference of the Joint Action Committee given in J.A.(64) 1 of 13th August, 1964 are "To co-ordinate inter-departmental plans for clandestine operations in areas or situations overseas in which there is or is likely to be intervention by United Kingdom Forces". Accordingly this report is not concerned with the activities of M.I.6 in -

- (a) the collection of secret intelligence;
- (b) clandestine operations in the field of counter-subversion.

3. In the years immediately following the issue of the "Directive to Special Operations" M.I.6 undertook extensive "war planning" measures designed to create "Stay-Behind" networks, clandestine communications systems and supply depots overseas against the possibility that a third world war might break out by 1954. As the danger of general war receded these preparations were scaled down, but a framework for "war planning" still exists. Paragraph 3 of the Annex to G.O.S.(57) 186 states "Without jeopardising good relations with SHAPE, C.I.A. and the third countries concerned, every effort should be made to bring Stay-Behind preparations for Global War down to the skeleton and flexible coverage mentioned above as quickly as possible".

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Notwithstanding this it is the view of M.I.6 that continuation even on the present reduced scale of these war planning measures imposes an undue strain on the resources of that Service in man-power, money and material. The Joint Action Committee, recognising that political as well as defence considerations are involved, nevertheless recommends early reconsideration of the present level of M.I.6 activities pursuant to C.O.S.(57) 185.

4. New problems, not envisaged by the 1946 Directive, have arisen during the past few years from the political conditions of "co-existence", de-colonisation and newly emergent nationalism. While general war has been avoided, conflicts have occurred, and are occurring, without the declaration of war. Some involve territories already within the Commonwealth or moving from Colonial to Commonwealth status and, as a result, political departments other than the Foreign Office have been concerned in decisions about the action to be taken. At the same time requirements have been placed upon M.I.6 to undertake operations in support of our allies in these conflicts which, while intended to damage our opponents, cannot be denounced as palpable acts of hostility committed by Her Majesty's Government.

5. The operational problems posed by these new requirements are for the most part different from those which faced S.O.E. during the war or M.I.6 after the war in its preparations to meet the threat of a third global conflict. In war there is no need to deny that a hostile act has been committed in enemy territory (although activities in neutral states must be deniable); in conditions short of war it is a political condition of planning and executing operations that Her Majesty's Government should be able to deny that it was, of intent, responsible for a hostile act against another state with which it is formally at peace.

6. M.I.6 has received from the Armed Services on many occasions within the past decade assistance in operations which needed to be kept politically deniable. The range of this assistance, as authorised by C.O.S.(59) 81, is wide; in effect the operations have, within limits, been carried out jointly. Nevertheless the Joint Action Committee considers and has so advised 'C' that early discussions should take place between M.I.6 and the Ministry of Defence on the scale of support to "Special Operations" bearing in mind particularly -

- (i) The frequently conflicting demands on available resources of the execution of "war planning" measures on the one hand and on the other of the contingency operations which M.I.6 have planned and executed on the lines described in paragraphs 4 and 6 above.
- (ii) The level of supply of "deniable" arms and equipment likely to be available for M.I.6 from Services stocks.

The Joint Action Committee notes that the area of co-operation between M.I.6 and other departments especially the Armed Services is growing and is likely to grow still more if the requirements for special operations continue to expand.

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7. The Joint Action Committee considers that in view of the circumstances with which Her Majesty's Government is now confronted the relationship between M.I.6 and other departments, especially the Armed Services, in the execution of "deniable" operations needs clarification in certain respects. In effect, the existing direction to 'C' from the Chiefs of Staff (C.O.S.(57) 186) being concerned only with preparation for limited and general war appears to need revision and amplification. The present paper makes certain proposals towards redefining the M.I.6 role in special operations in peacetime.

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10. An untraceable operation is one in which the hand of Her Majesty's Government at best will not even be suspected and at worst cannot be proved. (See footnote).

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12. All untraceable Operations are deniable but deniable Operations are not necessarily untraceable.

13. If, on political grounds, it is judged that an operation should be untraceable M.I.6 should be responsible for the whole execution of the Operation.

14. If, on political grounds, the somewhat less rigorous condition of deniability is judged acceptable, the Operation may be carried out by M.I.6 alone, by M.I.6 in collaboration with other departments or by other departments without the assistance of M.I.6.

15. It is the opinion of the Joint Action Committee that the Department of State responsible for giving political clearance to an operation should make clear at the outset and before planning begins whether the operation is to be untraceable or deniable and further, that if either when planning has been completed or when the operation has been launched, it is considered necessary for operational reasons to change its basis from untraceable to deniable, the Department of State concerned should formally notify its agreement to this.

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17. A large effect may, of course, be produced by small-scale planning and logistic support, e.g. the transmission of funds to a resistance group or an act of sabotage by one man or a small group of men (acting unobserved). Untraceable operations need not necessarily be "small-scale" in their effect, but in the view of the Joint Action Committee they must be small-scale in the sense that the number of fully "conscious" persons and the quantities of material required for their execution are small.

18. An operation requiring considerable numbers of men and quantities of material may be considered deniable (this is a political judgment): for technical reasons it is improbable that such an operation can be made untraceable.

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19. M.I.6 is adequately equipped to undertake untraceable operations. (See Annex A). It is of the nature of such operations that they require the secure recruitment, administration and control of a few agents or operators to carry them out in the field.

20. M.I.6 is also equipped to carry out small-scale deniable operations on its own or to make a significant specialist contribution to larger scale deniable joint operations.

21. In peace-time, M.I.6 is not equipped to carry out large scale deniable operations on its own nor is it practicable because of the nature of the operations and the limited applicability of contingency planning to their execution so to equip the Service that it will be capable of carrying out a wide range of large scale deniable operations.

22. "Large-scale" and "small-scale" are imprecise terms but the orders of magnitude are roughly indicated in the Annex to this paper. The M.I.6 capability described in the Annex has been built up in the main to meet requirements for small scale untraceable operations and indicates very roughly the present upper limit of such operations. Should the numbers of small-scale untraceable operations required significantly increase, M.I.6 capability can of course be expanded, although some time will be needed to bring about the necessary adjustments.

The Limitations of Contingency Planning

23. It has been pointed out in the Introduction that there is a considerable difference between contingency planning for war and planning deniable operations in conditions short of war. Whereas in the former case it is relatively simple to construct in friendly countries in peace-time a framework of "Stay-Behind" agents and equipment to be used undeniably in a general war, it is immensely more difficult to plan in advance for operations which must be conducted deniably under political conditions which cannot be precisely foreseen.

24. Although it may be possible to forecast in which area a contingency is likely to arise (i.e. to forecast "trouble spots") the exact nature of the contingency, in its topographical, military and political aspects, is subject to many possible variations. Thus it may well be prudent to pre-position communications equipment and deniable stores in the general area of a potential "trouble spot" but it is very unlikely that individuals or groups of people exactly fitted to carry out untraceable or deniable operations under all foreseeable political conditions could, or should, be recruited on a contingency basis. To attempt to create organisations on the ground designed to meet contingencies the exact nature of which cannot be accurately foreseen would be immensely costly, wasteful and insecure.

25. Given the need to shape both untraceable and deniable operations to the exact nature of the contingency, the planning for such operations must, for the most part, be short-term. It is however accepted that in a limited number of cases where Her Majesty's Government's political or economic interests are directly at stake and where it is possible for the Joint Intelligence Committee and/or the Counter-Subversion Committee to make a reasonably confident forecast of the type of contingency likely to arise, then the Joint Action Committee might recommend that M.I.6, in consultation with the Department(s) of State concerned should prepare longer term plans for untraceable operations to meet the contingency foreseen or should even make preparations in advance to bring such plans to a state of readiness.

Procedure for Operational Planning and Control

(a) Untraceable Operations

26. It is the responsibility of the political department(s) concerned to inform M.I.6 at the outset if an operation is to be untraceable. M.I.6 will then in consultation with the department(s) draw up the plan and give an estimate of its probable effectiveness. If, in the opinion of M.I.6, the operation subsequently, in order to secure the desired effect, needs to be developed from an untraceable to a deniable joint operation, then M.I.6 will seek endorsement of this from the political department(s).

27. The negotiation of clearances will be conducted between M.I.6 and the political department(s). 'C' will, as a general rule, inform the Joint Action Committee of the operation. Untraceable operations will be under 'C's' direction, subject to the terms of the political clearance given and the strategic or tactical requirements of theatre commanders.

(b) Deniable Joint Operations

28. The principal role of M.I.6 in joint operations is the identification of targets, obtaining clearances, the maintenance of the objective, the recruitment and handling of clandestine operators, the secure administration of finance and stores - in brief the provision of the specialised manpower and services required to ensure that the operation is carried out successfully and deniably. Responsibility for safeguarding the deniability of joint operations must remain with 'C'. This does not affect the command of military forces taking part in the operation.

29. M.I.6 will be responsible for liaison where required with foreign and Commonwealth Intelligence Services, in particular C.I.A., on all matters relating to operations of this type.

30. It is the view of the Joint Action Committee that when, to meet a particular requirement extensive co-operation with M.I.6 by the Armed Services is required in operations, especially those which involve, or may involve, serious political risk, that such operations should from the outset be planned jointly by M.I.6 and the Ministry of Defence in consultation with the political department(s) concerned. The Joint Action Committee considers that it is both the right and the responsibility of M.I.6 to invoke this procedure whenever the scale of an operation or the method of carrying it out seems to them to demand it. This procedure would not affect the arrangements currently obtaining between M.I.6 and the individual Armed Services but would supplement them.

31. The Joint Action Committee proposes that use should be made of the existing Defence Planning Staff machinery modified to take account of the following factors -

- (a) The demands of security.
- (b) The need for very detailed examination in London of all aspects of plans for "Special Operations" in order to ensure that, on the basis of M.I.6's estimate of the continuing deniability of an operation, the degree of risks both political and military may be fully assessed by the department(s) concerned.
- (c) The necessity for the political department(s) concerned to retain the right of veto. The political department(s) would therefore have to sign the papers.

32. The full cycle of planning would take the following form -

- (a) Formulation by M.I.6 of the outline plan.
- (b) Discussion of this plan at Directors of Plans level and in conjunction with the political department(s) concerned.
- (c) Preparation of the detailed plan in the theatre concerned by the theatre representative of M.I.6 with the theatre commander's planning staff in conjunction with his Political Adviser (or other political authorities as appropriate).
- (d) Detailed examination of the theatre plan. This would be carried out in London by the appropriate Defence Planning team with representatives of the political department(s) concerned and M.I.6.
- (e) Finalisation of the plan by M.I.6 with the Directors of Defence Plans in conjunction with representatives of the political department(s) concerned.

(f) Finally, communication of the plan to the Joint Action Committee which will determine as necessary its subsequent submission to the Chiefs of Staff and/or Ministers (through the Secretary of the Cabinet).

33. The above full procedure may be shortened as appropriate and with a view to obtaining ministerial clearance in the case of an emergency requirement or a relatively minor tactical operation conceived in a theatre.

Cabinet Office, S.W.1.

28th October, 1964.

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J.A.(64)3rd Meeting

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CABINET

JOINT ACTION COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a Meeting held in Room 215,
Cabinet Office, Whitehall, London, S.W.1
on WEDNESDAY, 21ST OCTOBER, 1964 at 10.30 a.m.

PRESENT:

Sir Bernard Burrows,
Foreign Office
(In the Chair)

Sir Neil Pritchard,
Commonwealth Relations Office

Major-General D.S. Gordon,
Assistant Chief of the
Defence Staff (General),
Ministry of Defence

Major-General Sir Kenneth Strong,
Director-General of Intelligence,
Ministry of Defence

Mr. C.W. Wright,
Ministry of Defence

Mr. L.C. Glass,
Foreign Office

Sir Dick White,
M.I.6

Mr. J.D. Higham,
Colonial Office

SECRETARIAT

Mr. J.M.C. Vivian

-1-

M. Westlake
To Keep

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C O N T E N T S

<u>ITEM NO:</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>PAGE NO:</u>
1.	DIRECTIVE TO SPECIAL OPERATIONS	1
2.		
3.	NEXT MEETING	2

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1. DIRECTIVE TO SPECIAL OPERATIONS

(Previous reference: J.A.(64)2nd Meeting, Item 5)

The Committee had before them a memorandum by M.I.6 on "The M.I.6 Role and Relationships with Departments of State and the Armed Services in the Conduct of Deniable Operations in Conditions Short of War" (J.A.(64)3).

SIR DICK WHITE said that the object of the paper was to clarify the role of M.I.6 in special operations, and to consider the procedure necessary to ensure that the requirements of the Chiefs of Staff and other Departments for special operations were properly planned and coordinated. M.I.6 was a small Service which could not operate on the same scale as did S.O.E. during the war: if M.I.6's views expressed in the paper were broadly acceptable, the Committee would wish to consider whether a new directive was required, not only to bring up to date C.O.S.(46)50(0) and C.O.S.(57)186 which covered only the needs for general war, but also to reflect the new philosophy of current requirements in conditions short of open war.

M16 limitations

The following points were made in discussion:-

- (a) The Chiefs of Staff would, no doubt, wish to review their directive C.O.S.(57)186 on M.I.6 preparations for war, but it was not necessary to prepare a new directive to cover peacetime operations by M.I.6. It was sufficient that a shortened version of M.I.6's paper should be submitted to the appropriate Ministers through the Secretary of the Cabinet (who would require the full paper also) for approval, as a basis for handling future operations of this kind. The full paper should, however, first be forwarded to the Chiefs of Staff for their general agreement.
- (b) Ideally, the effort expended by M.I.6 on preparations for general war should be scaled down, but these preparations would have to continue for special reasons. Nevertheless, priorities for operations in peacetime were much higher than those in general war.
- (c) Only the para-military part of M.I.6 operations were mentioned in the memorandum and a reference should be made to the existence of other activities, such as those in the field of counter subversion.

M16 does para-mil

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/
para-mil *C-S*

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- (d) Only small quantities of special equipment were held by M.I.6, largely owing to limitations of storage capacity.

*Imitation a
need for party*

The Committee:-

- (1) Approved the paper as amended in discussion and instructed the Secretariat, in consultation with the Chairman, to prepare -
 - (a) a revised draft of the memorandum with a cover note for the Chiefs of Staff, and also
 - (b) a shortened version of the paper (but not the Appendix),and circulate both to the Committee for telephone clearance early next week.
- (2) Invited the Chairman to forward the above papers to the Chiefs of Staff for comment.
- (3) Invited the Chairman to forward the papers, amended by the Chiefs of Staff's comments as appropriate, to the Secretary of the Cabinet with a recommendation that he should submit the shortened version to Ministers for approval.
- (4) Invited M.I.6 to examine the possibility of increasing their holdings of special stores and to discuss with the Army Department the earmarking of certain types of equipment required for special operations.

*increase
M.I.6*

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3. NEXT MEETING

The Committee agreed to hold its next meeting on Wednesday, 4th November, at 10.30 a.m.

Cabinet Office, S.W.1

22nd October, 1964

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Col Vivian
would like to
know if you
want him to go
ahead with
Item 4 or do
you want to
discuss it
with Mr. Youde

Col Paul

25/9

I would like him
to do it please.

message
given
Col Paul
26/9 28/9

PAH

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J.A.(64)2nd Meeting

CABINET

JOINT ACTION COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a Meeting held in Room 215,
Cabinet Office, Whitehall, London, S.W.1
on WEDNESDAY, 23RD SEPTEMBER, 1964 at 10.30 a.m.

PRESENT:

Sir Bernard Burrows,
Foreign Office
(In the Chair)

Major-General C.R. Price,
Commonwealth Relations Office

Air Marshal Sir Alfred Earle,
Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff,
Ministry of Defence

Major-General Sir Kenneth Strong, Mr. C.W. Wright,
Director-General of Intelligence, Assistant Under-Secretary of
Ministry of Defence State (Policy)
Ministry of Defence

Mr. L.C. Glass,
Foreign Office

Sir Dick White,
M.I.6

Mr. D.W. Russell,
Colonial Office

SECRETARIAT

Mr. J.M.C. Vivian

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J.H.H.

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C O N T E N T S

<u>ITEM NO:</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>PAGE NO:</u>
1.	COMMITTEE PROCEDURE	1
2.	STATEMENT BY M.I.6 ON OPERATIONS IN PROGRESS	1
5.	SPECIAL OPERATIONS DIRECTIVE FOR M.I.6	2
6.	NEXT MEETING	3

Further
1. COMMITTEE PROCEDURE

The Committee were informed that the first meeting on 8th September, 1964 had been convened at short notice at the request of Ministers to consider a specific item. For the information of those who had not been able to attend that meeting, THE CHAIRMAN outlined again the terms of reference and procedure of the Committee. It was not intended that the Committee should replace the need for individual departmental clearance, but rather that it should produce coordinated interdepartmental views on clandestine operations of multiple interest, specifically those closely connected with military operations or plans. *108*

The Committee:-

Took note.

2. STATEMENT BY M.I.6 ON OPERATIONS IN PROGRESS

(Previous reference: J.A.(64)1st Meeting, Item 1)

SIR DICK WHITE gave the Committee an oral brief on clandestine operations already authorised and currently under way in the ... *Yema!*

The Committee:-

Took note.

5. SPECIAL OPERATIONS DIRECTIVE FOR M.I.6

SIR DICK WHITE said that he would like to provide the Committee with a statement on the role of M.I.6 in Special Operations and on the relations of M.I.6 with the Service Departments in this field. This statement would provide background for redrafting of the present directive from the Chiefs of Staff to M.I.6 on Special Operations which was somewhat out of date and took little or no cognizance of the type of operations under discussion.

The Committee:-

Took note and invited M.I.6 to circulate a note to members of the Joint Action Committee setting out details of the problem for consideration at the next meeting.

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6. NEXT MEETING

The Committee:-

Agreed to hold the next meeting on
Wednesday, 21st October, 1964, or
earlier if special reasons made it
necessary.

met monthly

Cabinet Office, S.W.1

23rd September, 1964

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