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December 17, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CABINET COMMITTEE ON SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE

Current Threats to National Order and
Quebec Separatism

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I. Purpose

To consider such further action as might reasonably be taken by the federal government to understand and deal effectively with the disruptive forces at play in Canada, and particularly in Quebec, which threaten the order and integrity of Canada.

II. The Problem

The Cabinet recently agreed, on the recommendation of the Cabinet Committee on Priorities and Planning, that National Unity and Law and Order constitute the third highest priority problem facing the government at present.

The most pressing and immediate aspects of the joint problem of national unity and law and order are related to separatism in Quebec, together with an apparent deterioration of civil order, particularly in Montreal, as manifested in public demonstrations and acts of violence and terrorism. Although many of the difficulties appear to stem from a desire for independence on the part of a number of Quebecers, the problem is fundamentally related to, and exacerbated by, a host of economic, social, cultural and political problems with which the Province and the City of Montreal are beset. The resultant turmoil lends itself to exploitation by groups and individuals who can vaguely be categorized as "revolutionary", some of whom may be

allowed to go unchecked, the cumulative effect of these various forces could create near-chaos in Quebec. (15(1))

Numerous indicators point to the seriousness of the situation, with the following being only a few of the more significant:

- A high degree of labour unrest, especially in the essential services of the public sector.
- A high unemployment rate which may become higher and more serious owing to the low level of investment on the one hand and -
- large numbers of students coming into the market next June, both as graduates without permanent job prospects and as student workers without jobs to absorb their energies and provide financing for further studies.

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- Political difficulties of the Provincial Government: bare majority, internal splits, serious financial problems, widespread criticism of the Language Bill and a forthcoming election, probably in June.
- More "open" conversions to the Parti Québécois on the part of "respectable" middle class people, e.g., Société St. Jean Baptiste.
- Continued influence of outside mass demonstrations on Quebec groups' imitations, e.g., U.S. Moratoria, and possibly further university disruptions.

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- Continued financial strains in the community generally.

A few hopeful signs have appeared, such as Premier Bertrand's firm stand on Bill 63, a couple of labour agreements in the public sector, the arrangement reached at the Education Conference in Paris, and the absence of serious violence during Grey Cup weekend. Despite these rare positive signs, however, the number and seriousness of the negative ones would appear to command that immediate attention be given to the Quebec situation.

In light of these factors, it is clear that the problem cannot be dealt with entirely within the "security" context as it is usually understood. It is therefore my intention to have the whole matter brought before the Cabinet Committee on Priorities and Planning in the near future, in order to determine how the various aspects of the problem can be dealt with in an integrated and coordinated manner. In the meantime, however, it is essential that action be taken to improve the quantity and quality of information necessary as the basis on which the government might

- (a) anticipate serious difficulties;
- (b) plan and execute preventive and control measures; and
- (c) plan and execute long-term curative measures.

III. General Principles

In addition to the obvious necessity to gather more and better information and to coordinate it, analyse it and put it to effective use, it is desirable that certain general principles in relation to the larger problem be adopted and made known to those concerned, as a base for policy direction and for controlling and curative action. The two basic principles would appear to be these:

- (a) The thrust as well as the substance of policies and programmes intended to preserve the order, unity and integrity of the nation must be such as to command a widespread consensus in all parts of the country and must be in full accord with our legacy of freedom and responsibility within a Parliamentary democracy.

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- (b) There must be full agreement at all levels among the governments concerned as to the basic objectives, and complete understanding that they can only be fulfilled in a spirit of cooperation, not competition.

IV. Federal Policy in Relation to Separatism

The Royal Commission on Security, on the basis of its study of Quebec separatism, recommended as follows:

"Security policy concerning separatism should be made clear; the federal government should take (and be seen to take) steps to prevent its infiltration by persons who are clearly committed to the dissolution of Canada, or who are involved with elements of the separatist movement in which seditious activity or foreign involvement are factors; information concerning membership in or associations with extreme separatist groups should be reported on the same basis as information concerning other allegedly subversive movements, and the departmental decision process should be similar."

In order that a policy may be established and announced on this subject, it will be necessary to determine the public and private position which the government should adopt in relation to separatism, and questions such as the following will require to be answered:

- (a) Should all "revolutionary" separatist organizations be regarded as "subversive", in the sense that Communist and Fascist groups have been so regarded?
- (b) Should federal employment be denied to members of separatist organizations on security grounds? On other grounds?
- (c) What should the federal position be in regard to Parti Québécois?
- (d) If a harder line on separatism is to be adopted by the federal government in its employment and security policies, should these policies be spelled out publicly?
- (e) Are there serious risks to national order and unity in adopting a harder line on Quebec separatism, bearing in mind the faint rumblings of other kinds of separatism in other parts of Canada?

V. Information

(a) Present Sources

The major current source of federal intelligence concerning the separatist and other dissident groups and individuals in Quebec is the R.C.M.P. While the Force has devoted a good deal of attention and effort

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to the intelligence-gathering task, and has produced two useful reports on the problem, their efforts have been hampered by a number of factors. Jurisdictional arrangements necessitate their depending for much of their intelligence

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Although there are undoubtedly other actions which the Force could take to obtain more intelligence, particularly

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the risks are such that they would require specific governmental instructions to proceed along these lines. There is the further difficulty of

in a situation in which political loyalties are often uncertain and divided. In any event, even if these difficulties were met, it is probably beyond the capacity or functions of any security service to provide all of the information necessary for federal planning and action to deal with this problem in the larger context of National Unity and Order.

The other main sources of information are the mass media, "political intelligence" (that is, unpublished information available to the government through Members of Parliament and such mechanisms as party organizations, Regional Desks in the Prime Minister's Office, the Federal-Provincial Relations Secretariat, and our diplomatic posts abroad), and published literature based on research into some of the broad and basic problems.

(b) Need for Coordination and Analysis

Although it is probable that each of these sources of information could be considerably improved, the most immediate need is for the coordination and analysis of the information they currently provide, both in order to determine where the gaps are and how best to fill them, and also to form an integrated basis of information upon which initial control and long-term curative action might be taken.

(c) Need for Particular Kinds of Information

Some of the larger gaps referred to above are, of course, already apparent. For example, we do not appear to have information available to answer fully questions such as these:

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- 2) What motivations lie behind the various bombing and other violent incidents in the Montreal area? Are they interrelated? Is there a coordinated underlying strategy? If so, who is devising it?
- 3) What is the extent of "crypto-separatism" in the Quebec government, public service, political parties, universities, trade unions, professions, etc.?
- 4) Are there unique characteristics of riot behaviour in French Canada? If so, what are they?
- 5) What are the primary political, economic and social causes of increasing unrest and dissatisfaction in Quebec? How closely are they related to those in the rest of Canada, and in the western world generally?

While these are only a few of the pertinent questions that remain unanswered, they demonstrate an obvious need for fuller and better information in the areas of "security intelligence", "political intelligence" and mass psychology and behaviour, and for an effective central mechanism to analyse and coordinate such information.

(d) Possible Means of Expanding Current Sources of Information

There are several areas in which current information or intelligence-gathering methods and mechanisms might be expanded and/or reoriented to improve the quality of the government's "information base" in relation to this problem.

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- 7) expansion and re-direction of information-gathering functions of party organizations at all levels;
- 8) fostering research into the psychology of separatism, riot behaviour, and related subjects.

VI. Contingency Planning

In order to be prepared for events and combinations of events which could seriously jeopardize national order and unity, it will be essential to have plans to meet possible contingencies, such as these:

- (a) A Quebec referendum on separatism, either before or after the next Provincial election;
- (b) the next Provincial election resulting in no clear mandate for any party and the balance of power being held by the Parti Québécois; possibly leading to a further election in which the P.Q. won a majority;
- (c) the combined disintegration of legal, political economic and social institutions in Quebec, stemming from mass strikes; riots involving unemployed workers, students and teachers; police and military failure or revolt; physical attacks on federal institutions in and adjacent to Quebec;

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A re-examination of the statutes, regulations and procedures relating to aid to the civil power by the Canadian Armed Forces and assistance to Provincial and municipal police forces by the R.C.M. Police has already been undertaken, to determine whether there were correctable inadequacies in federal assistance provided during the recent strike of the Montreal City Police, and also to ensure that these procedures can be fully effective in any foreseeable eventuality. It is clear, however, even in light of the few contingencies listed above, that further planning and preparation are required in terms of possible political, legal, military and diplomatic action.

VII. Counter Action

It will be necessary to mount a consistent and integrated series of counter actions, calculated to persuade a sizeable majority of Quebecers that the best means of preserving their political, economic and cultural independence is as part of the Canadian nation. The positive use of information will be of immense importance, both in the short and in the long term. Federal policies and programmes which affect the situation in Quebec will have to be closely examined to ensure that they contribute to the overall objective, and are seen to do so by those affected. It will be of particular importance to identify "points of abrasion" (e.g., Murray Hill) and to act positively to

remove them. New programmes may have to be devised which will have the effect of reducing tensions and restoring a climate in which reason and cooperation can combine to serve objectives which are clearly common to all parts of the country.

If it is agreed that the immediate and urgent objective is to neutralize seditious and terroristic activities, the federal, provincial and municipal forces of law and order will have to work closely together to bring the full force of the law to bear upon those who engage in criminal activities. In addition, the words and actions of the "subversives" or "revolutionaries" who do not actually engage in criminal acts must be exposed for their inconsistency and their deleterious psychological effect. The "waverers" or "fence-sitters" must be persuaded of the value of commitment to the cause of national unity, and those already committed must be fully supported in their efforts.

While the necessary curative measures may well require significant expenditures, it is unlikely that a solution to the problem of national unity can simply be "bought" with massive federal funds (vide Expo '67). It is more likely that the solution will be found through strong and consistent leadership at all political levels, as well as within institutions and communities, together with the positive, honest and aggressive use of information as the primary force of persuasion. It will also be necessary to devise and implement, or assist in, programmes which will alleviate the basic problems of urban living from which so much of the current alienation and unrest undoubtedly stems.

VIII. Risks

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and its use eventually discovered, is capable of being satisfactorily explained in terms of the general public interest. Similar risks would be involved in the use of "psychological warfare" techniques, and in apparent attempts to encroach upon areas of provincial jurisdiction. In order to reduce these risks, as well as to achieve the desired objectives, it will be necessary to establish and maintain closer cooperation and collaboration with the provincial and municipal governments concerned. Perhaps the greatest risks of all would lie in an attempt to impose federal solutions in unilateral fashion.

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IX. CONCLUSIONS

In the light of these various factors, it would appear that the following conclusions should be drawn:

- (a) The present and foreseeable situation in Quebec poses a problem of some urgency which cannot be dealt with exclusively in the context of "national security" or "law and order", but must also be viewed in the light of long-term national objectives and in the larger framework of national plans and priorities.
- (b) There is immediate need to establish a central body to coordinate and analyse information on the problem from all sources, both overt and covert, to provide a cohesive information base for decisions as to policies and programmes.
- (c) The solution to the problem, both in the short and in the long-term, will require close Federal-Provincial cooperation and collaboration for purposes of contingency planning, the immediate reduction of tensions and the preparation of joint plans to remove the basic causes of present difficulties.
- (d) The risks involved in actions taken will have to be balanced against the probable positive effects of such actions.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS(a) General Principles

It is recommended that the basic principles set out in Section III above be adopted.

(b) Federal Policy in Relation to Separatism

It is recommended that a general policy in relation to separatism be formulated, taking into account the considerations dealt with in Section IV above.

(c) Information

It is recommended:

1. that a central body be established to coordinate and analyse information on the problem from all sources, both overt and covert, to provide a cohesive information base for decisions as to policies and programmes;
2. that the R.C.M. Police be asked to provide a detailed report on the present state of separatism in Quebec in terms of organization, numbers involved, organizational interrelationships, apparent strategy and tactics and outside influence;

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3. that an immediate review be made of Canadian intelligence resources other than the R.C.M.P. with a view to determining whether they are being used in accordance with recently established national objectives, and particularly the priority problems of national unity and law and order.

(d) Law Enforcement and Counter-Subversion

It is recommended that consideration be given to the formal establishment of a permanent Joint Security Operations Planning Staff to include representatives of the Attorney General's Office of Quebec, Quebec Provincial Police, Montreal City Police, the R.C.M. Police and the Department of National Defence to advise the various governments concerned on the criminal and subversive aspects of separatism, and aid to the civil power, and to conduct joint investigations and operations with a view to prosecuting criminal offenses and keeping the various levels of government informed on subversive or other disruptive activities in the Province of Quebec.

(e) Contingency Planning

It is recommended that the Cabinet Committee consider appropriate means of preparing plans for possible contingencies of the kind referred to in Section VI above.

(f) Counter Action

It is recommended that the Cabinet Committee on Priorities and Planning be asked to consider appropriate long-term means of removing the causes of current threats to the order, unity and integrity of the nation, including joint initiatives in cooperation with the other levels of government concerned.

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Prime Minister.

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