

## POLICING AND JUSTICE

1. The Participants recognise that policing is a central issue in any society. They equally recognise that Northern Ireland's history of deep divisions have made it highly emotive, with great hurt suffered and sacrifices made by many individuals, including police officers. They believe that this Agreement offers a unique opportunity to bring about a new political dispensation which will recognise the full and equal legitimacy and worth of the identities, senses of allegiance and ethos of all sections of the community in Northern Ireland. They consider that this opportunity should inform and underpin the development of a police service representative in terms of the make-up of the community as a whole and which, in the absence of threats which require otherwise, should be routinely unarmed.
2. The Participants believe it essential that policing structures and arrangements should be such that the police service is professional, effective and efficient, fair and impartial, free from partisan political control, accountable (both under law for its actions and to the community it serves), representative of the society it serves, and operates within a coherent and cooperative criminal justice system. The Participants also believe that those structures and arrangements must be capable of maintaining law and order, responding effectively to crime, including any terrorist threat, and to public order problems. A police service which cannot do this will fail to win public confidence and acceptance. They believe that any such structures and arrangements should be capable of delivering a police service, in constructive and inclusive partnerships with the community at all levels. These arrangements should be based on principles of protection of human rights and professional integrity and should be unambiguously accepted and actively supported by the entire community.
3. The ending of the terrorist threat would permit substantial reform and development in policing in Northern Ireland. This would include:
  - Greater autonomy for regional and local units to promote better relationships and closer identification with particular localities in Northern Ireland;
  - A new emphasis on community focussed structures and strategies including the development of partnerships with the statutory and voluntary sectors both regionally and locally;
  - New structures for accountability and consultation which could involve:
    - an expanded and enhanced role for Community Liaison Committees;
    - a Province-wide body representing local Police Liaison Committees with a significant advisory role in the establishment of police priorities;
    - a significant role in the development of policing plans for a Department of Justice and/or the relevant Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly;
  - The development of province-wide specialist units in respect of the policing of terrorism, organised crime and drug-trafficking;



- The development of a small cross-border unit which would be staffed by seconded officers from the RUC and the Garda Síochána and which would have an Ireland-wide remit to deal with terrorism, organised crime and drug-trafficking, the officers having freedom of movement throughout Ireland but with the power of arrest restricted to officers of the relevant jurisdiction;
- Substantial reduction in the establishment of the RUC;
- The exploration of strategies for recruitment, retention and promotion with a view to achieving a police service more reflective of the wider community;
- New emphasis on training and retraining to properly equip members of the police service for policing in a society free from a terrorist threat;
- Generous severance arrangements for those who have served the community in the RUC, often at great risk and sacrifice, but whose services are no longer required in the new context.

4. The Participants believe that the criminal justice system should be designed to:

- Deliver a fair and impartial system of justice to the community;
- Be responsive to the community's concerns;
- Have the confidence of all parts of the community;
- Deliver justice efficiently and effectively.

5. There will be a wide-ranging review of policing and criminal justice, taking into account the above points, to be carried out by the British Government through a mechanism with an independent element in consultation with the political parties and others. The review will commence as soon as possible, will include wide consultation, and a report will be made to the Secretary of State no later than Autumn 1999. Terms of Reference are attached at Annex A [*this is the current Annex B, pp 56 - 58, of Draft Paper*].

6. Implementation of the recommendations arising from the review will be discussed with the political parties and with the Irish Government.

7. The Participants also note that the British Government remains ready in principle, with the broad support of the political parties, and after consultation, as appropriate, with the Irish Government, in the context of ongoing implementation of the relevant recommendations, to devolve responsibility for policing and justice issues to the Northern Ireland Assembly.