

McGuinness's comments: negotiations without preconditions;  
a timeframe for negotiations;  
confidence building measures

- we have said that there are no preconditions to these negotiations.
- on entry to these talks, all participants must make clear their commitment to the Mitchell principles as well as addressing its proposals on decommissioning.
- this is the agreed position of HMG and the Irish Government and is vital if the talks are to take place in an atmosphere of trust and confidence.
- timeframe: HMG is committed to successful negotiations, and to making real progress in the negotiations, as quickly as possible.
- not possible for HMG to impose a timeframe on the talks participants, but HMG would support any timeframe which is agreed by the participants.
- confidence building measures: HMG committed to raising confidence - through talks and a range of other measures.
- HMG took steps to raise confidence in response to ceasefires of August 1994 - on prisoners, security force redeployments, for example. Would look for further steps if the threat reduced.
- But confidence building is two-way: an end to punishment beatings and targeting would create confidence and help to build trust.
- Mitchell report itself proposes confidence building measures.



## Boycott of businesses

### Protests outside Catholic churches

- such behaviour is wrong, unjust and must stop: it only serves to make the situation worse and undermines the efforts of all those who are working to promote dialogue and reconciliation in the community.
- the minority who are pursuing these damaging tactics must stop and listen to the vast majority of the people of Northern Ireland who want to work together to build a stable future.

### Legislation

#### Lines to take

- Under the current legislation, the police are not empowered to take decisions on whether to allow parades to take place. Legislation does, however, allow the RUC to place conditions on a parade and order its re-routing, on grounds of public order implications.
- In reaching their decisions on the routing of particular parades the police priority must be the maintenance of public order and safety and they look at each case on its individual merits before deciding on the operational needs.

### Background

Legislation governing parades is laid down in the Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1997.



**RIGHT TO PARADE**Lines to take

- This Government firmly believes that, in a democracy, the right of any group of people to demonstrate and to express their views publicly is fundamental and must be protected by law. Provided that serious public disorder, damage to property, disruption to the life of the community, or the parade is not intended to intimidate others, a parade in Northern Ireland, just as elsewhere in the United Kingdom, is lawful. In the same way, people who wish to oppose parades should have the right to peacefully protest.

**Legislation**Lines to take

- Under the current legislation, the police are not empowered to take decisions on whether to allow parades to take place. Legislation does, however, allow the RUC to place conditions on a parade and order its re-routing, on grounds of public order implications.
- In reaching their decisions on the routing of particular parades the police priority must be the maintenance of public order and safety and they look at each case on its individual merits before deciding on the operational needs.

Background

Legislation governing parades is laid down in the Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987.



## PARADES REVIEW (NORTH REVIEW BODY)

Lines to take

- The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has announced a review of the current arrangements for handling public processions and associated public order issues in Northern Ireland. This will be a wide-ranging and fundamental review which it is hoped will point the way forward in relation to this difficult matter.

## PARADES Review Team

- HMG hopes the review will produce a solution to which both communities can give their support. HMG has no preconceived ideas of the outcome and encourages all those with an interest in solving this problem to make their views known to the review team.

## PARADES REVIEW - Terms of Reference

To review, in the light of evidence received from any interested party and having regard to the particular experience of 1996, the current arrangements for handling public processions and open-air public meetings and associated public order issues in Northern Ireland, including

- the adequacy of the current legal provisions, and in particular the adequacy of the statutory criteria used in making decisions on public processions and open-air public meetings;
- the powers and responsibilities of the Secretary of State, police and others;



- the possible need for new machinery, both formal and informal, to play a part in determining whether and how certain public processions and open-air public meetings should take place;
- the possible role for, and composition of Codes of Practice for organisers of and participants in public processions and open-air public meetings;

and to make recommendations by the end of January 1997.

#### **PARADES Review Team**

#### **Background**

The independent review is being chaired by Dr Peter North QC CBE, Vice Chancellor of Oxford University assisted by eminent clergymen from Northern Ireland, Rev Fr Oliver Crilly (RC) and Rev Dr John Dunlop (Prot/Presbyterian).

As part of the follow-up to the Mitchell Report which included a recommendation that a review be undertaken into the use of plastic baton rounds, the RUC's Chief Constable agreed to invite him to conduct a review of the RUC's handling of public order issues, including those of plastic baton rounds, as part of this year's annual inspection. The review was publicly announced in July by means of a Parliamentary Answer.



CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES  
(PLASTIC BATON ROUNDS)

REVIEW OF PLASTIC BATON ROUNDS

Lines to take

- HM Inspector of Constabulary as part of this year's formal inspection will conduct a review of the RUC's procedures and training for handling public order situations including those relating to the use of plastic baton rounds.
  - This review will take account of disorders associated with recent marches along with the need to ensure the RUC have adequate protection when faced with determined assaults or petrol bombs.
- (IF ASKED)
- HMIC report will be available later this year.

Background

As part of the follow-up to the Mitchell Report which included a recommendation that a review be undertaken into the use of plastic baton rounds, the RUC's Chief Constable agreed to invite HMIC to conduct a review of the RUC's handling of public order issues, including those of plastic baton rounds, as part of this year's annual inspection. The review was publicly announced in July by means of a Parliamentary Answer.

BACKGROUND

1. The inaugural meeting of the Forum took place on 14 June 1994, under the Chairmanship of Mr John Gorman (USP). Forum business was conducted in accordance with initial rules of procedure provided by the Secretary of State, and many of the early meetings were taken up by determination of the Forum's own rules of procedure.



## FORUM

### Line to Take:

- Good progress has been made by the Forum to date, with some useful debates on issues such as health care, the education administration review and BSE. Committees have also been established to look at a range of issues, and all the signs are that the Forum is now embarking on some constructive and meaningful business.
- The absence from the Forum of any parties representing nationalist views is very much regretted.

### [IF ASKED]

- There is no consideration being given at present to the future of the Forum. Given the progress made to date, it is considered appropriate to allow time for the Forum to develop before any consideration might be given to its future.
- The total investment cost of the accommodation for the Forum is estimated at some £3m-£3.5m. The accommodation will of course represent a valuable asset to Government even after the Forum has run its course.

### BACKGROUND

1. The inaugural meeting of the Forum took place on 14 June 1996, under the Chairmanship of Mr John Gorman (UUP). Forum business was conducted in accordance with initial rules of procedure provided by the Secretary of State, and many of the early meetings were taken up by determination of the Forum's own rules of procedure.



2. In addition to agreeing rules of procedure, the Forum is now showing signs of engaging in some constructive work, including the debate of issues such as health care, the education administration review and BSE. Committees have also been established on agriculture, health, education and parades.
3. The lack of participation by the SDLP and Sinn Fein delegates has resulted in there being no party at the Forum representing the nationalist view point. This in turn has cast some doubt upon the continued participation of the Alliance Party, the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition and Labour, all of whom have expressed concern that the Forum may not now be capable of fulfilling its statutory remit as a Forum "for the discussion of issues relevant to promoting dialogue and understanding within Northern Ireland" (Section 3(1) of the 1996 Act). While the withdrawal of the SDLP members in particular has undoubtedly harmed the Forum's credibility in this regard, it does not necessarily follow that the Forum, as currently constituted, is incapable of discharging this remit. It is too soon therefore to draw any firm conclusions regarding the future viability of the Forum. Under Section 7 of the Northern Ireland (Entry to Negotiations, etc) Act 1996 the Forum will cease to have effect at the end of May 1997 unless extended by the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State does, however, have power to bring the Forum to an end before then if this becomes necessary. In the circumstances, it is considered appropriate to hold off any review of the Forum's viability until early November.
4. From 6 September, the Forum has operated from its permanent, purpose built site in Belfast city centre. This accommodation was provided at an estimated investment cost of some £3m-£3.5m. The cost of the project has attracted some criticism, but in addition to providing accommodation for the Forum (a statutory obligation), the facilities will represent a valuable asset to Government during the course of the 10 year lease.



## IRISH-MEDIUM EDUCATION

### Line to Take

- The Government recognises the wishes of a growing number of parents to have their children taught through the medium of Irish, and Government policy is one of responding to parental demand.
- Government funds Irish-Medium Schools where it is satisfied they are viable; can provide effective education; meet the requirements of the statutory Curriculum; and do not involve unreasonable public expenditure. Similar criteria are applied to the establishment of any new schools.

[Caution: Integrated schools receive more favourable revenue funding than Irish-Medium Schools, reflecting the Government's policy of actively facilitating integrated education]

- In 1996/97, an estimated £1.75m recurrent expenditure will be provided by the Government to support Irish-medium education.
- Four primary schools and one secondary school currently receive 100% grant-aid for recurrent expenditure and a further primary school development proposal is being considered. In addition there are 4 independent primary schools and one independent secondary school. In practice this means that over 90% of the 1,100 pupils being educated through the medium of Irish are in schools in receipt of 100% recurrent grant-aid.
- Comparisons with Scotland and Wales are not valid. Unlike Northern Ireland, both countries still have large areas where Welsh and Gaelic remain the language of the home and community, and Wales is officially bilingual.



## Background

- Irish-Medium Schools have to be able to demonstrate viability. The viability requirements were in fact halved for these schools in 1992, taking account of dispersed enrolments, from enrolments of 200 to 100 for primary schools and 600 to 300 for secondary schools. These criteria are currently under review and it is proposed to increase them to 150-175 for primary and 500 for secondary schools, bringing them into line with recently revised criteria for integrated schools.
- Schools do not have to reach these viability figures to receive funding; rather, they have to show, usually over 2/3 years, that their annual intakes will eventually generate those levels of total enrolment.
- Funding is not given to Irish-Medium Nursery Schools, on the grounds that provision of nursery education of any type is not a statutory requirement and the building of any sort of nursery school is not a priority at a time of public expenditure constraint.
- Integrated schools do receive preferential treatment (something which the Irish-medium lobby resents) in that they can receive conditional 100% revenue funding from day one on the basis of their projected first year intake which, if sustained, would generate viable enrolment.