

Meeting with Taoiseach

ANNEX C

Security Force Activity - Points to make

- Security forces have responded positively to the ceasefires and scaled down **significantly** the level of military support required by the RUC.
- Overall, military patrolling has been **reduced by about a third**, with varying proportions in different areas. In the city centres of Belfast and Londonderry, and in Newry, the police now patrol without **any** Army support. And in many nationalist areas - though not all - military activity has been virtually halved.
- Glad to be able to tell you that the security situation now permits the **removal of a Parachute battalion**, which will leave in the next few days - two months before its planned departure date. Unless the security situation worsens, it will **not be replaced**.
- This comes on top of other steps. **Barriers and roads** have been opened in many places (and **border crossings** re-opened during the first IRA ceasefire have never been reclosed). The **internment** powers are going. **Exclusion orders** have been lifted. A **review of counter-terrorist legislation** is being launched. Several security force **bases** were removed during the first ceasefire, and other steps are under review now. This **process will continue**, if the security situation allows.
- But we and the Chief Constable cannot achieve full normalisation while the **threat** from the CAC, INLA, and the LVF remains - not to mention the real tension within the IRA and doubts over its long-term direction. In the face of that threat, **many security measures** - including observation towers - must remain.
- I want to see a Northern Ireland where the paraphernalia of security is no longer necessary. We will continue to move in that direction as quickly as we safely can. But an **appropriate level of security** must be maintained while the terrorist threat continues.