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COMMISSION DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCEOVERVIEW

It is essential that the police service in Northern Ireland is professional, effective and efficient; free from partisan political control; accountable, both under the law for its actions and to the community it serves; and that it operates within a coherent and co-operative criminal justice system designed to:

- deliver a fair and impartial system of justice to the community;
- be responsive to the community's concerns, and arrange community involvement where appropriate;
- have the confidence of all parts of the community; and
- deliver justice economically, efficiently and effectively.

It must be capable of maintaining law and order including responding effectively to any terrorist threat, and to public order problems.

The Commission should inquire into the police service in Northern Ireland and, on the basis of its findings, bring forward proposals for future policing arrangements, including recommendations covering issues such as any training and severance arrangements which might be required in the transition from the current size of the police force. The Commission should focus on policing issues, but if it identifies other aspects of the criminal justice system relevant to its work on policing, then it should draw the attention of the Government to those matters. Its proposals on policing should be designed to ensure that:

- the police service is structured, managed and resourced so that it can be effective in discharging its full range of functions (including proposals on any necessary arrangements for the transition to policing a normal, peaceful society);
- that the legislative and constitutional framework is such that the police service maintains its impartiality in the discharge of police functions;
- the police operate within a clear framework of accountability to the law and to the community they serve, so:
 - ◆ they are constrained by, accountable to and act only within, the law;
 - ◆ their powers and procedures, like the law they enforce, are clearly established and publicly available;

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- ◆ there are open, accessible and independent means of investigating and adjudicating upon complaints against the police;
 - ◆ there are clear arrangements enabling local people, and their political representatives, to articulate concerns about policing and, (subject to safeguards to ensure police impartiality and freedom from partisan political control) to publicly establish policing priorities and influence policing policies;
 - ◆ there are arrangements for accountability for the effective, efficient and economic use of resources in achieving policing objectives;
 - ◆ there are means to ensure independent professional scrutiny and inspection of the police service to ensure that proper professional standards are maintained.
- policing arrangements, including culture, ethos, recruitment and training, must be such that the police are representative of, enjoy widespread support from and are seen as an integral part of the community as a whole.

TIMESCALE OF COMMISSION'S WORK

The Government proposes to establish the Commission as soon as possible, with the aim of it starting work quickly. The Commission would be invited to prepare emerging findings by Summer 1999 for the preliminary information of the political parties and other interested parties before publishing its final report.

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