

VII Conclusion

- 7.1 This paper did not set out to answer questions, but rather to pose them. In particular, the paper has attempted to identify areas in which government policies have not worked together towards the common aims of peace, prosperity and reconciliation.
- 7.2 The most serious questions concern the juxtaposition of current security policy with the other major policy aims of the Government, in particular, confidence-building measures and social and economic regeneration. It is inescapable that whilst confidence and security are conceptually complementary, or perhaps even symbiotic, the short term policies will always have a tendency to be in conflict, as the firmer the security policy, the greater the alienation and loss of confidence that results. One possible response to the difficulties faced by the HMG in this crucial area would be the establishment of an official standing group, with representatives drawn from the NIO, NI Departments, RUC, Army, Housing Executive and area boards to discuss issues of mutual concern within West Belfast and iron out any difficulties caused by existing policy with the aim of making the government machine more "user-friendly" but no less effective.
- 7.3 The issues of confidence in the legitimacy, and in the effectiveness, of Government are intertwined. The difficulty is deciding where to strike the balance so as to maximise both types of confidence. The importance of this is magnified by the extensive role of the paramilitaries within CWB. Action is needed to counter the influence of the Republican movement. This action will not work if it is purely propaganda-based; it requires specific action directed at removing grievances and inequalities. Efforts such as Making Belfast Work are recognised to be first

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steps, but it is all too easy to lose any credit for imaginative initiatives such as this when security incidents (major or otherwise) are perceived to reflect a insensitive attitude on the part of the security forces towards the community in which they are operating. There is a continued need to ensure that the security forces are as aware as possible of the sensitivities in the community. Professionalism and discipline must be seen to include fairness as well as effectiveness. Additionally HMG should consider taking greater steps to impinge on the economic territory of the paramilitaries in CWB, stopping them from having such a free run in their activities, by offering economic alternatives as well as clamping down on the businesses that fund PIRA.

7.4 HMG needs to recognise that the intermediate objectives of security policy do not always match those of other policies and to decide how it is going to overcome this dichotomy. Individual areas in which the authors of this paper have found apparently strong dichotomies have been in the house search/confidence in the security forces, the community grants/economic regeneration and the removal of paramilitary influence/economic regeneration areas. These are considered in some detail earlier in the paper. There are doubtless others, and research on a wider basis to include non-civil service contacts, would make the list of examples quoted above more comprehensive.

7.5 Community alienation in CWB cannot be resolved by government policy alone - but it will only diminish if the Government concentrates on the need for equity of treatment as an end-product of its policies whether it be in West Belfast, Strabane or other areas, depressed or not. But it is almost certainly West Belfast that poses the greatest challenge, and perhaps offers the greatest rewards if the

community there comprehensively rejected republican terrorism.

The following have been visited:

PAB

Prisons Department

Police Division

Making Belfast Work

Central Secretariat

Compensation

Security Policy and Operations Division

Central Community Relations Unit

Policy Planning and Research Unit (DFP)

Anti-Racketeering Unit

Civil Representatives

Fair Employment (DED)

Belfast Action Team

Liaison Staff

*No NIO Stats Branch!*

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