

PAB/5161/AG

THEMES

The attached documents, prepared under the aegis of ISG, are designed to be of assistance to Ministers and others likely to come into contact with the media or other opinion-formers. They consist of a set of themes covering the whole range of the Government's activities in Northern Ireland, together with a number of annexes containing more factual material for background and support. In order not to make the package too bulky, only the themes covering technical and detailed matters, or those where it is important to quote facts in support, are provided with such annexes.

It is the intention to update this material on a regular basis, say every six weeks; this will be done by ISG. Any comments from users on the material or its presentation would be more than welcome.

AG 3726

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POLITICAL AFFAIRS

The Government's duty is to govern, and to improve conditions of life in Northern Ireland. It will involve local people to the maximum. Devolution offers real responsibility and influence to local people but if it is to be stable it needs to encompass both traditions. A devolved government, accepted widely in the community, offers the best chance of bringing about peace in Northern Ireland. Until that happens the Government will continue to act fairly and firmly.

The vast majority of people in Northern Ireland want dialogue not deadlock.

PIRA's "armed struggle" makes life worse for everyone, including those they claim to represent; it is a smart name for a policy of ruin.

ROLE OF RUC AND ARMY (ANNEX A)

The RUC and Army are impartial and committed to combatting terrorist violence and crime. There have been substantial seizures of arms and explosives against republican and loyalist organisations and arrests and convictions against both sides.

The RUC and Army are guardians and protectors of all people in Northern Ireland. They play a critical role in saving life and preventing large-scale destruction.

Notwithstanding impediments caused by terrorism and preoccupation in dealing with terrorism the RUC detection rate (43%) is highly creditable set against performance in the rest of the UK.

The RUC play an important community relations role. They provide a thousand-and-one 'ordinary' services week in and week out to all law-abiding people.

Let us not forget the heroism and sacrifice of the RUC and Army in defending the community against terrorism.

We are all in this together - whatever democratic political differences may exist, there is an absolute need for a united stand against terrorism and crime.

All allegations of harassment by the security forces are looked into very carefully - they do not go unchecked.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

We shall continue to uphold democracy and the rule of law.

Terrorist methods will not be allowed to win.

Confidence in the system of justice must be fostered; it must be seen to be both fair and effective.

We are always looking at ways which will lead to reducing crime. Legislation is being introduced to allow more witnesses to give evidence without fear of intimidation and to crack down on those who carry knives and other offensive weapons.

We will continue to fight against those who profit from crime/drug trafficking.

PRISONS (ANNEX B)

Northern Ireland prisons are both secure and humane and conditions in them are good - there are more cells than prisoners.

The prison service treats all prisoners humanely - all can have daily exercise and association, weekly family visits and letters.

Defensive

No-one is in prison because of political views: most have been convicted of serious, violent offences.

'Pleasure' cases are dealt with sympathetically in view of their youth, but they have all committed murder.

The life review system is fair: it balances the protection of the community against the interests of the prisoner. Strip-searching is kept to a minimum but is a necessary and common practice in prisons throughout the UK, Europe and America.

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS

A relation of equals; the Government's aim is to have a normal modern relationship - old suspicions must be recognised and overcome.

There are two traditions and both are legitimate. But constitutional arrangements at the end of the day must rest on the principle of consent.

Both countries are threatened by violence. We must work together to ensure that terrorism can never win.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ANNEX C

We are working to create conditions for enterprise to flourish, and for self-sustaining growth in the Northern Ireland economy.

We shall continue our efforts to develop new jobs by attracting new investment, from within Northern Ireland and outside.

We give high priority to developing a fair and equitable labour market, protecting the rights of individuals and allowing employers to develop their business with minimum interference from bureaucracy.

We will develop and maximise the talents and skills of the Northern Ireland labour force through training and preparation for work.

Privatisation is necessary: only industries which can respond rapidly to the demands of the market will survive against increasing international competition.

GOVERNMENT AND THE ECONOMY (ANNEX D)

Per capita public expenditure per head is substantially higher in Northern Ireland than in the UK as a whole (43% in 1987/88).

In 1989/90 public expenditure in the NI Block is planned approximately 7.5% higher than in 1988/89, excluding social security benefits and the special payment of £390m, in 1988/89 for the recapitalisation of Short Brothers.

[DEFENSIVE: The additionality question makes this dangerous ground]. We are Committed to maximising Northern Ireland's receipts from European Community.

EDUCATION (ANNEX E)

We are committed to raising educational standards for all pupils and in all types of schools.

Our reforms recognise the fundamental responsibility of parents for their children's education.

The reforms will make schools more accountable to the community they serve.

Parents must decide for themselves about integrated education: we shall not impose, but will facilitate and encourage.

ENVIRONMENT (ANNEX F)

Our main priority in the environment field is the promotion of urban renewal, largely by encouragement of private-sector-led development.

We aim to improve the quality of the environment by maintaining and developing physical infrastructure throughout Northern Ireland.

We are committed to conserving, enhancing and protecting the natural and built environment, and influencing land use and development in a creative way.

AGRICULTURE (ANNEX G)

(Including horticulture, forestry and fisheries). We aim to create the conditions for efficient production, processing and marketing of agricultural products.

We aim to maximise the agriculture's contribution to the economy, and protect and improve the environment.

In CAP and other agricultural and fisheries support negotiations we shall ensure the special position and needs of the local industry are taken into account fully.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES (ANNEX H)

We have and will maintain a well-staffed, well equipped health service.

We maintain full parity in social security with Great Britain.

PUBLIC SERVICE (ANNEX I)

As an employer, we are committed to equal opportunity for all staff. Monitoring ensures that fair practice is achieved and maintained.

Civil Service efficiency is being improved through greater use of information technology, manpower and management reviews and efficiency scrutinies.

The NICS is taking action to implement the 'Next Steps' initiative in Northern Ireland. Potential agencies are being identified.

Public purchasing is being improved with the NI Central Unit on Purchasing in the lead.

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PRISONS

Northern Ireland prisons are both secure and humane and conditions in them are good - there are more cells than prisoners.

Prisoners are treated as individuals regardless of their religious beliefs or political opinions - all can have daily exercise and association and are given the opportunity to engage in constructive activities such as work, education and sport.

Families are important: all prisoners can have weekly visits and letters and are encouraged to maintain close family links.

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No-one is in prison because of political views: most have been convicted of serious, violent offences.

'Pleasure' cases are dealt with sympathetically in view of their youth, but they have all committed murder.

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SOME PRISON STATISTICS (AT 1.5.89)

| 1. <u>Establishment</u> | <u>Total population</u> | <u>Lifers</u> | <u>SOSPs</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Belfast | 478 | 29 | 5 |
| Maze | 573 | 223 | 16 |
| Magilligan | 303 | - | - |
| Maghaberry (M) | 258 | 146 | 7 |
| Maghaberry (F) | 21 | 6 | - |
| YOC | 171 | - | 2 |
| | — | — | — |
| GRAND TOTALS | 1,804 | 404 | 30 |
| | — | — | — |

2. No of Prison Officers: 3,163
3. 1989/90 Prisons Budget: £120,000,000 (approx)
4. Annual cost per prisoner: £50,000 - £60,000
5. Releases of Lifers and SOSPs since January 1984:

| | <u>Loyalist</u> | <u>Republican</u> | <u>Non-Terrorist</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|--|-----------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Given release dates | 77 | 47 | 8 | 132 |
| Included in above who have been released | 47 | 36 | 7 | 90 |
| Under active consideration | 22 | 29 | 4 | 55 |

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