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cc: Mr Watkins*
Ms McAlister

(*with draft)

From: Mr T McCusker

10 March 1992

To: Mr J Ledlie

**NORTHERN IRELAND COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL - SECURITY
POLICY**

1. You are due to join a meeting of the Council's ad hoc committee on security policy to discuss their draft security policy report; I am assuming that you have received a copy of the latest draft.
2. You will also be interested in seeing my letter to Mari Fitzduff about the first draft and also a copy of John Walker's comments which he very kindly completed following his move from CCRU.
3. When you have had a chance to consider the papers perhaps we might have a discussion including Mr Watkins, before the proposed meeting.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Community Relations Council is an independent body which was set up, with the assistance of government, in January 1990, to promote better community relations and the recognition of cultural diversity. Recognising that its work can only be useful as part of a concerted strategy designed to address the multi-layered problems that face Northern Ireland, the Council has been working to stimulate activity needs to be stimulated.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND THE SECURITY FORCES

1.2 Policies and attitudes to community relations among the security forces are a key issue. A draft report by the COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL on a consultation process with the security forces, within and outside the security forces to introduce the work of the council, was published in April - September 1991. The report identified about the problems the security forces face in dealing with the community at large. Arising from this exercise the Council wishes to make some constructive suggestions to encourage the security forces to take more account of the community relations implications as they plan future activities and to offer practical assistance in implementing such measures to help foster ever greater public confidence in them as they carry out their exacting and often dangerous work.

1.3 The Council recognises that there is a significant degree of alienation towards the security forces among certain communities in Northern Ireland. A recent survey provides evidence that such distrust is not confined to nationalists. The researchers noted that confidence in the police was notably lacking in a Protestant community they studied. Large numbers of nationalists (45 per cent) still believe that they are discriminated against by the police and even more (70 per cent) regard the UDR as biased. The same report shows that many Protestants also regard the security forces as biased against Catholics. Some 45 per cent of Protestant opinion believed that the UDR was biased against Catholics.

At the same time other attitude surveys have shown a desire for improved and more conventional policing, a sentiment that needs to be explored and exploited to best effect.

1.4 The evident need to improve relationships between the security forces and all sections of the community was also recognised by the Anglo-Irish Agreement which identified the need for a programme of confidence building measures in Northern Ireland to improve relations between the security forces and the people they serve.

1.5 The group also acknowledges the first ever statement on security policy, published by the Northern Ireland Office in

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Community Relations Council is an independent body which was set up, with the assistance of government, in January 1990, to promote better community relations and the recognition of cultural diversity. Recognising that its work can only be useful as part of a concerted strategy designed to address the multi-layered problems that face Northern Ireland, it identified a variety of areas where parallel activity needs to be stimulated.

1.2 Policies and attitudes to community relations among the Security Forces is one such area and the Council appointed a working group to undertake a consultation with bodies, within and related to, the security forces to introduce the work of the council and to learn first hand about the problems the security forces face in dealing with the community at large. Arising from this exercise the Council wishes to make some constructive suggestions to encourage the security forces to take more account of the community relations implications as they plan future activities and to offer practical assistance in implementing such measures to help foster ever greater public confidence in them as they carry out their exacting and often dangerous work.

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November 1990, as providing a suitable framework for the community relations initiatives we suggest.

2. AGENDA AND PROCESS

2.1 AGENDA

In undertaking the consultation, by way of an informal exchange of views, the working group defined its aim as being:

"to help increase understanding, respect and cooperation between the security forces and the communities in Northern Ireland".

In particular the group explored the needs outlined below:

- a) KNOWLEDGE: The possibility of providing more adequate and accurate information to communities about the role, powers and accountability of the different arms of the security forces.
- b) COMMUNICATION: Creating more effective structures for liaison between communities and the security forces, particularly the RUC, to define and address issues of mutual concern.
- c) RESPECT: Finding ways to foster and enhance a mutually trusting relationship that is clearly impartial and respectful between all sections of the security forces and the community.
- d) ACCOUNTABILITY: Developing improved mechanisms of accountability which are understood and respected by the communities, including procedures for handling complaints which are easily understood, accessible and effective.

In all of the above, the Working Group of the Council believe there is room for considerable development. They were therefore interested in talking through perceived / acknowledged needs in these areas, and the possible role for the Council co-operating in measures designed to address them.

2.2 GROUPS CONSULTED.

The Security working group of the Council had meetings with the following groups between April and September 1991.

Northern Ireland Office.

The Royal Ulster Constabulary.

The Army, including the Ulster Defence Regiment.

*Working Group
Chairman
Political*

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The Police Authority for Northern Ireland
The Independent Commission for Police Complaints.
The Northern Ireland Police Federation.

3. ISSUES ARISING

The following concerns were noted by the working group, as a result of the consultation exercise:

3.1 Balance between security and community relations needs.

There appeared to be a lack of consistent commitment at all levels to ongoing contacts through which the necessary balance between security policy and community relations needs could be addressed. While it is acknowledged that the Police and Army undertake some liaison work with community leaders, particularly if extensive disruptions are planned, this would appear to be largely crisis orientated. It is suggested that more structured, regular contacts about day-to-day issues would create lasting benefit.

The group also believes that greater contact between NIO, CCRU, the security forces and other bodies, to discuss the balance between security policy and its implications for developing better community relations would be beneficial.

Now under way
While security considerations are always cited and rarely questioned, no independent research appears to have been carried out on the impact or effectiveness of practices which often aggravate community feelings. Border closures, watch towers, inner city/town fortifications appear to be suitable subjects for study so that such future decisions may be better informed and understood.

3.2 TRAINING.

Police:

The group would suggest that during the initial selection process for recruits, in which the possibility of bigotry is explored, more rigorous methods of attitude testing should be introduced. Such attitudes need not necessarily be a bar to recruitment but should particularly inform the assessment of the performance of the recruit during training and probation.

Police training appeared to be lacking in most of the type of skills training which the Council would see as constituting community relations training.

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The group was encouraged that the RUC, the Police Federation and the ICPC agreed that there was room for far more outside influences to be brought in to the initial and continuity training of the police at all levels and looks forward to this open-mindedness resulting in further consideration of appropriate measures.

Army (including the UDR)

The Army said that because of the time scale of their presence and the time allocated for training, CR education of necessity was limited. What there was consisted mostly of historical briefings from the RUC, and lectures and exhortation, with occasional roleplay. Such training appeared to be lacking in most of the type of skills training which the Council would see as necessary community relations training for the difficult circumstances encountered in Northern Ireland.

The Army and the UDR both said they were willing to consider suggestions about improvements in the field of training and the group suggests this should be tackled at two levels.

a) There should be an appropriate CR module designed and built into the extensive pre-Northern Ireland training provided for members of the Regular Army.

b) A similar, but more comprehensive, module should also be specifically created to meet the particular community relations training needs of the Royal Irish Regiment who are both locally recruited and serve permanently in Northern Ireland.

3.3 COMPLAINTS

Police:

The present system allows for complaints to be made in differing ways: that is at a local RUC station; directly to the Chief Constable; or the ICPC. While this flexibility is welcome, it does appear to introduce some confusion into the process of making a complaint and calls into question just how comprehensive is the recording of such complaints.

The group was particularly concerned that making a complaint to the local police station was often an intimidating process. It might involve gaining access to a highly fortified police station followed by procedures that were very formalised and often felt to be intimidating.

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In assessing the effectiveness of the procedures for handling complaints, the group would like to see independent research being commissioned as to why 55 per cent of complaints are withdrawn.

The group also thinks that the apparently conflicting responsibility for the handling of complaints between the ICPC and PANI should be clarified.

Allegations of ill-treatment by detainees in Castlereagh were current during the consultation process and CRC was concerned about their damaging effect on confidence between the security forces and the communities.

Army (including UDR)

Although the Army thought that the existing complaints procedures were adequate, pointing to a complaints leaflet, and the pending appointment of an independent monitor for army complaints, the group is concerned about the lack of public knowledge about the existing procedures and difficult access to the system.

The present system of complaints being made at a local level through the police could be both cumbersome and off putting, as it could, for example, take determination to persuade a police station to release an army telephone number for contact.

The group is also concerned that the Army should redefine what it counts as an official complaint and require officers at operational level to formally record and report upwards all instances of complaint, verbal or written, so that the independent monitor will have a fuller picture of military behaviour towards the public.

3.4 Role of Police and Army in Community Relations Work:

The group believes that the RUC and Army both need to study and understand the difference between public relations and community relations.

Raising funds for local charities, rescuing cows trapped in a bog or taking part in sporting events is essentially public relations.

Community relations is more concerned with the very different techniques of overcoming difficulties in the relationship between the community and police or soldiers.

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So good community relations practice includes acting with civility, impartiality and sensitivity when dealing with the public and pursuing structured training and policies designed to consciously build confidence between the communities and the security forces.

Police:

The group thinks that the role of the Community Relations Branch of the police should be reviewed because of the number of agencies now involved in inter-community work. They should be freed to undertake the regular liaison work, which is normal in any society between police and community, and relieved of the extra burden of fostering inter-community relations, a necessary task they shouldered in the past when others shirked it.

The group would like to see the role and workload of the Community Relations Branch co-ordinated more fully with that of the PLC's.

Army (including UDR)

What the Army means by community relations work also needs to be clarified - particularly in the way they view the Wilkinson Sword award to the UDR, which was current at the time of the consultation. Unclear use of the term CR, by both the RUC and Army confuses and possibly diminishes the work that needs to happen.

3.5 Community Police Liaison Committees:

The paucity of information available to the public about these committees was a cause of some concern. The group would like to see information being more widely disseminated about their composition, contact numbers and addresses, and in particular their remit. Confusion exists about whether they are to deal exclusively with ordinary local law and order issues, or also with wider security issues. This confusion appears to be shared by the public and some of the security agencies themselves.

More information about the range of representation on these committees and their activities, would, the group suggests, enhance their effectiveness and credibility.

The group would also like to see alliances being fostered with existing informal community coalitions such as those in Londonderry and Portadown (Drumcree Faith and Justice group).

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3.6 Cultural Traditions work.

The group is concerned that for understandable reasons of personal security, police and soldiers and their families, could be said to form a third divided community in Northern Ireland which makes it all the more difficult to forge an integrated relationship. While sympathising with the perceived reticence within the RUC (and to a significantly lesser extent in the UDR) about acknowledging the differing cultural background of their members and the protection such reticence gives, the group is concerned that this does not echo developments in the community at large. There encouragement is being given to people from differing cultural and religious backgrounds to openly recognise and respect their cultural differences.

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with
Training*

Consistent with the needs of personal security therefore, the group would like to see members of the forces, and their families, encouraged to more fully participate in the life of the community.

The group also wishes the police to carefully choose neutral venues for public events so that they will be equally amenable to all who wish to participate.

3.7 Accountability/responsibility.

The Council's concern about the withdrawal of public funds from Glor na Gael on undisclosed security grounds is already on record. This decision was counterproductive in community relations terms, undermined the work of the Cultural Traditions Group and threatened efforts to foster confidence between the minority community and the instruments of law and order.

The group shares a more general concern about the community relations implications of the imbalance in the mechanisms of public accountability by the security forces when compared with the tough emergency powers they have at their disposal. All too often, in the group's view, so-called operational independence or unspecified security considerations are cited as reasons rather than the detailed, considered explanation of events, to which the community is entitled.

The group was also made very aware of the impotence accounting bodies often feel about their capacity to influence change within the forces.

The group shares an anxiety that the work of such reputable bodies as SACHR, Lord Colville and CAJ, who had made many apparently useful suggestions for improvements in the legal

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and operational framework of the police and army, had not been implemented. While there may have been good reasons for this, disclosure and discussion would undoubtedly encourage a greater climate of confidence.

While respect for differing identities and cultures, including differing political aspirations, is encouraged at policy levels performance appears to fall short at street level. Overall awareness about the community relations implications of such bad practice sometimes appears to be absent or is not adequately pursued by supervisors.

Note was taken of apparent inconsistencies by the security forces in their handling of sensitive issues, such as difficult funerals or at road blocks and the group was interested how policy and command decisions were issued and interpreted at operational level.

3.8 Information

All bodies seemed to be unaware of the confusion that surrounds their respective roles e.g. Northern Ireland Office, the Police Authority for Northern Ireland, the Independent Commission for Police Complaints.

In addition the RUC and the Army (including the UDR) were often regarded as an allied body by the public i.e. as the "Security Forces." This carries the danger that responsibility for any misbehaviour by one body will damage others.

3.9 Consensus on Law and Order needs.

There continue to be many areas in which normal policing is absent because of the particular exigencies of Northern Ireland. Addressing the question of establishing community-police relationships in these areas and the ways in which cooperation with police is possible is vital.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS.

4.1 ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY

(1) POLICE LIAISON WORK.

In order to increase the effectiveness of an improvement in the interface between police and community the group suggests the following:

A) Police Liaison Committees:

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The role of the Police Liaison Committees needs to be understood throughout the community. Clear information about their existence should be made widely available and an extensive public education programme (perhaps based on some initial research to establish existing ignorance/confusion) on policing issues, such as lay visitors and accountability, would seem to be warranted.

Contact names (or at least the telephone numbers/address of a local contact point) for liaison committees should be widely accessible.

The scope of what the committees can discuss in terms of local security issues as well as ordinary Law and Order issues needs to be clarified. This needs to be done not only throughout the community but within the security forces themselves, and the bodies responsible for them. It would seem most desirable that they should not become bogged down in trying to define or debate security policy but should concentrate on ensuring that it is implemented sensitively at their local level in the light of local circumstances.

Broadening the composition of these committees, possibly through co-option, should be urgently considered, as their present representative capacity may be too narrow and limited.

There is also a need to publicise their activities with the aim of demonstrating that the police are sensitive, reactive and accountable to public opinion. Members should encourage suggestions for improving police liaison and act as a conduit to other bodies where necessary, for instance, in assisting someone to make a formal complaint.

These committees should not just be reactive, but should be engaged in forward thinking and consultation on issues likely to create problems between the RUC and the community. Checkpoints, funerals, parade routes would seem to be subjects which could usefully be tackled.

b) Informal Liaison Work:

Where Committees continue to be inhibited by local conditions it is important that alternative mechanisms should be considered to supplement the necessary interaction between the police and the community. It is recognised that useful contacts are already in play but the police should be urged to strike up such relationships more vigorously and consciously.

(2) SELECTION AND TRAINING

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Informal committees, such as that functioning in Londonderry, or developing through the Drumcree Faith and Justice Group, which include community representatives, should be welcomed as additional listening/challenging mechanisms in liaison work.

Consideration should be given to the encouragement of contact persons within communities (and agreed by communities) who could help to bridge the gap between the police and the community. Such contact persons, who would be seen to be independent of the police, could perhaps help decrease response times by checking the authenticity of calls. They could possibly act in cooperation with the PLC's, or any informal liaison groups that are established. Despite the risks of paramilitary influence, the practicality of creating a system of community wardens should be researched, perhaps by pilot schemes in some areas.

Neighbourhood Watch schemes should be widely introduced and developed to increase the overall prevention of crime. Care should be taken to ensure that such schemes are community driven, with cooperation appropriately tailored to concerns of both the community and the police, including care being taken to reassure the community that the Watch schemes would not be abused for intelligence purposes. Equally care will be necessary to thwart any involvement by paramilitary organisations.

c) RUC Community Relations Branch:

The RUC should consider refocusing the activity of the Community Relations Branch on work designed to improve relations between the RUC and the community, rather than facilitating intercommunity relationships. It might be useful to rename it the Community Contact Branch to underline its function.

The branch should work closely with the Police Liaison Committees, and their strategic role in assisting them should be clearly outlined.

The work of the branch should be accorded adequate priority and importance within the command framework of the RUC. The importance attached to its work should be reflected in the quality of its officers and the extent of specialist training they receive. Their advice and input to force policy making should represent a greater consideration of the community relations implications during force policy evolution.

(2) SELECTION AND TRAINING

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In order to improve the quality of the performance of the police in carrying out their task of effectively maintaining law and order within a mutually respectful relationship with the public, the group suggests the following:

a) Selection:

The selection process for RUC recruits should include some of the many intensive techniques available which are designed to detect bias and prejudice, if it does not already do so. While the detection of these may not rule out selection, it should determine the depth and length of individual training that may need to be undertaken.

b) Training:

The RUC should consider broadening their training processes, both at the initial and continuity stages, to bring in some of the community relations training provided to a wide range of groups by the CRC. Modules relating to Prejudice Reduction, Anti-Sectarianism, Cultural Traditions, Human Rights Education and associated areas are available. A specific module to meet the precise training needs of the force at every level could be designed, used, evaluated and modified by experience.

Training personnel should not continue to be drawn almost totally from within the police force itself, but should be broadened to include expertise from without the force with relevant skills and to expose police officers to a broader spectrum of values, thinking and opinion.

Training should include discussions with community representatives, particularly from areas where normal policing is difficult to maintain. These could be drawn from the PLC's or from any informal liaison organisations that exist. Organisations who are frequently used to record complaints about the security forces e.g. the ICPC or the Committee on the Administration of Justice could also be useful in such briefings, especially at higher levels.

(3) COMPLAINTS.

There is a need for an overall review, to be done in conjunction with the ICPC, of how best to facilitate complaints procedures that are accessible, less intimidating than at present, comprehensively record complaints, and have widespread public credibility.

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It is not equitable, given the permanent role of the Army in maintaining law and order and the high incidence of direct contact of soldiers with the community, that there are differing standards of accountability. A single body handling all complaints against the security forces would seem to be desirable by every yardstick.

Pending such a review, the group thinks the following points should be seriously considered:

There needs to be more extensive dissemination of information about how complaints can be made as well as reassuring complainants of their right to make a complaint without comeback. More explanation of how complaints/concerns are taken forward and dealt with and how feedback can be obtained on the progress of the complaint, is also needed.

Consideration should also be given as to where first line responsibility for the receipt of complaints is located. If this is to continue to be the local police station, then thought should be given as to how to make the process less intimidating. Research among people who have experienced difficulties or are discouraged from using the present system should be considered.

Strong consideration should be given to creating a two-stage procedure. Each complaint could initially be channeled to and Informal Resolution Officer, say a Chief Inspector with one in, at least, each Division. As a high proportion of complaints are "one to one" conflicts of evidence between an officer and a member of the public and an equally high proportion relate to incivility, it would appear that the chances of a positive informal resolution initiative working at this level would be high. Most complainants would settle if they are persuaded a determined effort has been made to meet their grievance and that the officer concerned has been spoken to about the matter, even if not disciplined for lack of conclusive evidence. More vigorous reliance on informal resolution at local level carries with it benefits for both the security forces and the community and would go a long way to reducing problems. Only if informal resolution was not achieved should a complaint become a formal one for official investigation. Even in serious cases, with criminal culpability on the part of the security force member, the informal procedure should be applied to keep the complainant satisfied and informed. It is very likely that a standard local informal resolutions procedure would reduce the number of official complaints and that manpower could be switched from the Complaints and Discipline Branch to Divisional level to operate such a procedure.

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In developing this, consideration should be given to training people in mediation techniques available and in use in many other professions, as well as in some police forces. These can be particularly useful where there is an absence of independent or corroborating evidence to validate claims.

Where disputes are resolved informally, these should still constitute part of the statistics of complaints made, and records should show evidence of the satisfaction of the complainant with the process.

The role of the Police Liaison Committees in handling complaints should be clarified. It is probably more appropriate that they only consider complaints of a general, rather than a particular nature.

In Holding Centres, interviews should be recorded in at least vision only, but preferably with sound. The tapes should remain in police hands and be available only on a controlled basis to the judge and counsel at trials where ill-treatment is alleged. Such a record would instantly deter and discount malicious or unfounded allegations.

In addition, the Lay visiting scheme should be extended to holding centres. Lay visitors should be allowed to view the screening of interviews, and be permitted access to persons being held if they are willing to see the visitors. Their activities should be formally recorded, along with the other relevant data already collected, by the custody officers. If the prisoner subsequently makes a complaint and did not avail of the opportunity to tell the Lay visitor, who would read him his rights, as it were, then the trial would be entitled to explore the failure and draw an adverse inference. Adoption of both these procedures would ultimately provide conclusive protection for the police and complainant alike.

(4) COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY FOR LAW AND ORDER

Discussion about the need for and the use of a policing system in a community should be facilitated. This could be done in the following ways:

A continuance and extension of Police 'Open Days.' Consideration should be given to holding seminars and public police forums, subject to the protection of personal security, with invitations to community leaders to discuss relevant policing issues and community values for the group understands that satisfactory police-community relations is, and must be, a two way process.

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Police involvement is desirable in community led discussions, particularly in those areas where police acceptability is problematic. Such community debate should be stimulated by PANI or PLC's, perhaps using the expertise of an agency, such as NIACRO/EXTERN, who have developed community credibility. These discussions could initially, where it seems appropriate, take place without the police present.

4.2 ARMY (INCLUDING ROYAL IRISH REGIMENT)

(1) ARMY LIAISON WORK

The objective of eventually relieving the Army of its internal security duties in Northern Ireland must not be forgotten. It might be considered valuable to set an intermediate goal, staged area by area according to available police strengths and workloads, to remove the Army from direct contact with the public in all but emergency circumstances by having full police accompaniment for all Army patrols. Therefore RUC primacy needs to be more thoroughly asserted. Pending achievement of that goal and to enhance the quality of Army performance in maintaining and developing productive relationships with the community the Council suggests that the Civil Adviser and Civil Representatives should adopt a more proactive role in Army liaison with the community. Relations between the RIR and the community are also vital and special attention to this problem is called for.

(2) SELECTION AND TRAINING

So that ^{the Army} can develop productive relationships with the public, the Council suggests the following:

a) Selection

The selection training process for the RIR, should, because of the local origins of its members and the major under-representation of members of the minority community, include some of the many intensive techniques available which are designed to detect bias and prejudice. While the detection of these may not rule out selection, it should determine the scope of individual attitude training that may need to be undertaken and should inform whether or not a recruit is judged fit to pass out from basic training and undertake operational duty. While such selection should also constitute part of the selection processes of the regular army, it is particularly important for the RIR given the problems it will inherit from the UDR/Royal Irish Rangers merger.

b) Training

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The Army (and in particular the RIR) should consider broadening their training processes, both at the initial and continuity stages, to include some of the community relations work undertaken by the CRC such as Prejudice Reduction, Anti-Sectarianism, Cultural Traditions and Human Rights Education.

Instructors and lecturers should not continue to be drawn almost totally from within the Army or the police, and the range should be broadened to benefit from challenge arising from the experience and expertise of appropriate outside organisations.

NITAT training for the Regular Army, which takes place before a tour of duty in Northern Ireland, should include preliminary discussions with community representatives such as clergy, councillors from the tour area. This is most important where soldiers are to serve in the difficult areas where normal policing is difficult to maintain. Such discussions could also usefully involve the PLC's or informal liaison organisations as well as those used to record complaints like the Committee on the Administration of Justice.

The underlying Community relations principles and their implications for security policy should be stressed and tested during training, and in all operational briefings. Performance indices for better community relations practice should be developed and regularly monitored. CRC stands ready to help and advise in preparing suitable training modules, providing people for debate and discussion or in any way that would emerge from constructive study of the need for more vigorous community relations practice. The Army, like the police, needs to more fully understand and make the distinction between public and community relations.

(3) COMPLAINTS

The process of making and receiving complaints against the Army needs to be simplified and to include appropriate follow-up contact with complainants to ensure satisfaction.

The Army most of all needs to fundamentally redefine what it regards as an official complaint, institute better and broader arrangements for recording all complaints and reporting them upwards. Analysing them and ensuring that the results are effectively carried back into operational practice is also a major priority.

The difference in approach between regiments, such as the Royal Hampshires, and the Parachute Regiment or Royal Marines, deserves greater attention. Officers should consid

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er and address the reasons why greater numbers of people complain about the attitudes of Marines or Paras. The group understands that highly professional regiments like these are necessary to carry out vital military tasks but the elitist attitudes they display, even to other regiments, has long been exceptionally counter-productive in community relations terms and the whereabouts of their future deployment here should be most carefully examined.

Consideration needs to be given to more extensive dissemination of information about how complaints can be made with confidence and how feedback can be obtained on the progress of the complaint.

Consideration should also be given as to where first line responsibility for the hearing of complaints is located. The present system of complaints being made at a local level through the police needs to be addressed. More immediate access could be provided through making the telephone numbers of Civil Representatives/local Army posts more widely available. A Freephone or 0800 telephone number could be set up and advertised to facilitate the central reception of complaints. Where there is a possibility that an offence is a breach of the Criminal Law, the Army should refer it to the police immediately, and the complainant be made aware of the fact.

It may be useful to consider allocating the responsibility for the handling of complaints with the proposed RUC In formal Resolution Officers or with a Community Contact Army officer, appointed in each locality.

Where disputes are resolved informally, these should still constitute part of the statistics of complaints made, and records should show evidence of the satisfaction of the complainant with the process.

Suitable recording of all such complaints made directly with the Civil Representatives/local Army units should be made to ensure accurate knowledge of patterns and numbers of complaints.

It is plainly inconsistent and unsatisfactory that while police officers wear numbers on their uniforms that soldiers do not. A similar numbering system should be introduced for soldiers uniforms to ease identification in case of complaints. Vehicles should likewise be more visibly numbered.

While the introduction of an Independent Assessor of Military Complaints Procedures is to be welcomed, consideration should also be given to the creation of an independent body

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to consider complaints against the Army (including the RIR) and could be modelled on the ICPC if the concept of a single body is not accepted. Clearly it would be expected that two such bodies would engage in close cooperation.

The group considers that an RIR Council, with a public profile, including the publication of an annual report modelled on that of the Chief Constable, would go a long way to developing the relationship between the RIR and the community to the benefit of both.

4.3 POLICE AUTHORITY FOR NORTHERN IRELAND.

(1) THE EDUCATIVE ROLE OF PANI

The Police Authority for Northern Ireland should initiate an education campaign about policing issues through the further production and dissemination of publications and videos about police work in Northern Ireland.

In parallel it should build upon the progress it has made through providing occasions for communities to participate in debate about policing issues. It should be seen to be open to suggestions for improvement and non-defensive in discussing criticisms.

It should more demonstrably exhibit its independence by making the community more aware of initiatives undertaken to make the police accountable and improve their quality of service. There should be at least press access to some meetings or parts of meetings and the Authority needs to seriously raise its public profile by involving the community in its work by holding public meetings and discussions.

(2) POLICY REMIT

After some twenty years existence, perhaps the time has come for an independent review of the work and future role of PANI. The group believes that PANI's principal responsibility to act as a link between the police and the community is being overshadowed by its extensive administrative remit. Government should consider therefore how satisfactorily these roles could be separated so that PANI's energy can be more beneficially focused. Administration could be taken over by the RUC itself or possibly by a separate body, with appropriate financial accountability to parliament. This would enable the Authority to concentrate more fully on issues of police policy, accountability and community liaison.

(3) COMPLAINTS

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PANI's role in dealing with complaints, overlapping that of the ICPC, should be more clearly articulated as should the arrangements for handling complaints against or disciplining officers of ACPO rank - is the Authority the best agency for this or should the ICPC handle them?

(4) COMMUNITY LAW AND ORDER

PANI should stimulate and support a process through which credible bodies can foster dialogue with communities about responsibility for law and order issues, to address the situation in many difficult areas where the very presence of the police exposes them to hostility and danger and the absence of a conventional police service is creating serious difficulties for the community.

(5) PUBLIC PROFILE OF PANI.

While recognising the potential implications of publicising the names of members of the Authority, it is clearly problematic that a body of "anonymous" people should represent the views of the community to the RUC. Leadership is important in making progress on the important issues involved and it is therefore vital that appointees should recognise their responsibility to give a public lead. Serious consideration should be given to creating a context in which members would feel able to give a public lead and speak out on policing issues. Such a context could be assisted through more open acknowledgement by PANI of its independence and a willingness to listen to critics of the force, as well as explaining and defending it in the many areas where progress has been made.

4.4 INDEPENDENT COMMISSION FOR POLICE COMPLAINTS.

(1) EDUCATION ABOUT THE ROLE OF ICPC.

The ICPC should extend its education campaign about its work through publications and the use of videos. In parallel, it should provide further and on-going occasions for communities to participate in a debate about its work. It should be seen to be open to suggestions for improvement, non-defensive to criticism and willing to demonstrate its seriousness by implementing structured reforms where shortcomings are properly identified.

The ICPC should more vigorously publicise its work through bulletins and making much more research, analysis and information available to demonstrate progress in the develop-

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ment and effectiveness of the complaints handling procedures.

(2) INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMPLAINTS SYSTEM

The Commission should take steps to increase public awareness of the complaints system, how to use it and the stages that will follow making a complaint. Particular emphasis should be given to how the complainant can be kept informed about the progress and outcome of the complaint. Complainants should be given information about any appeals mechanism or other avenues of redress available to them.

(3) COMPLAINTS PROCESSES

The ICPC should initiate research into the potential value of creating a two-tier complaints procedure with the emphasis on informal resolution at the first stage as outlined earlier. It should co-operate with the police in running a pilot scheme. More generally, the Commission should demonstrate a willing pragmatism in keeping the entire complaints system under review and implementing improvements to the complaints process for the mutual benefit of the police and the community.

(4) COMPLAINTS MONITORING

Complaints should be regularly monitored to ensure that patterns of allegations identifying particular persons, units or stations be recognised as early as possible and investigated.

(5) PUBLIC PROFILE

By demonstrating its willingness to consult publicly and listen to suggestions for the improvement of its work, it should be easier for Commission members to give a more public lead in enhancing community knowledge and confidence in their work.

(6) INITIATIVE

The Commission should be given a stronger role in initiating investigations and research projects into matters of general concern or into issues which arise from a series of individual complaints. In some cases such projects could be jointly initiated with PANI.

The Commission should closely liaise with PANI about development procedures for greater accessibility to the community.

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plaints process which would enjoy the support of the police and complainants alike.

(7) TRAINING

The Commission should be encouraged into taking a more active role in liaising with police about its work, particularly through a strong involvement in training and by participating in regular briefings for all sections of the Force.

(8) AREAS FOR RESEARCH

Research should be initiated by the ICPC into:

- the large number of complaints withdrawn after initial lodgement.
- the advantages/disadvantages of formal v informal resolution of complaints.
- the satisfaction of complainants/police about complaints already processed.
- the possibility of introducing further independent element into the actual investigation of complaints.
- the advantages/disadvantages of having a single complaints body for the police and army providing common standards and consistency in the handling of complaints.

4.5 NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE.

1) SECURITY POLICY

The group acknowledges the statement of security policy, published in November 1990, as the framework for progress but thinks that subsidiary policy and discussion papers, codes of practice and regulations are necessary to give it full effect and achieve the goals and objectives outlined.

The group is aware that some of this work is in hand but urges the NIO to consider, in conjunction with PANI and the ICPC, the publication of a set of material designed to increase public understanding and stimulate discussion of the many fundamental security and law and order issues.

There are some concerns identified by members of the group, which need to be addressed. It must be recognised by the NIO, and taken into account in all of its programmes, that improvement in the credibility of any one section of the security forces must be connected to an allied improvement in all sections. Such is the public perception of the "Security Forces" in some communities that the insensitivity or misbehaviour of one tends to discredit all.

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The role of "special forces" for intelligence gathering and contact operations continues to be a source of ill-informed and frequently hysterical propaganda which causes counter-productive confusion in communities. Unless there is a significant degree of demystification and a drive to generate confidence that competent control is exercised over them, there is a danger that advances by other sections of the security forces, in winning community credibility, could be undermined.

2) ACCOUNTABILITY.

NIO should ensure that the development of policing policy should more firmly and publicly involve PANI. While the operational implementation of these policies should be the independent responsibility of the RUC, subject to the law, the chief constable and the force need to be seen to be more visibly amenable to the authority and responsive to views expressed within it.

A clear and agreed definition of the relationship between the authority and the force should be contemplated, balancing the necessary independence the chief constable should enjoy against the interests of the community. No police force should be given a blank cheque and there must be mechanisms to ensure that the wishes of the community are effectively taken into account by the police in their day to day duties. The community is also entitled to question police operational policy and expect an effective response where concern is evident. In the final analysis the balance determining the boundaries of the police/public relationship should be tilted in favour of the community reflecting the fact that the police exist to serve the community and that the community interest is the paramount one.

Challenge bodies such as CRC or SACHR, or persons such as Lord Colville, carrying out statutory or official reviews, often make recommendations about the changing the policies or practice of the security forces, which are ignored by government or the forces. Normally there is no explanation for this and the group urges that responses should be published explaining, as far as is possible, what are often very strong and proper reasons for ignoring the advice. Such a course would assist enhance confidence in the role and remit of the Security Forces.

5. COOPERATION WITH CRC

The CRC were highly encouraged from the responses of all bodies consulted by their willingness to more thoroughly con

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sider means of receiving assistance and cooperation from the CRC. All expressed interest in continuing contact with CRC and receiving suggestions for improving relationships between the security forces and the community. In particular:

The RUC are keen to continue liaison with the CRC, and to enlist their support in dealing with the Police Liaison Committees.

The Police Federation said they were happy to carry articles on CR subjects and affairs in Police Beat, their monthly magazine, and to have seminars and conferences on Community Relations with CRC speakers at Police Federation meetings. They were also interested in the possibility of the CRC dealing with security issues in its magazine as part of the work of the Council.

The Army said that they would welcome any advice that the Council might have to give about community relations issues and training, while not undertaking to necessarily accept such advice. They also said they would welcome a chance to talk to more community leaders and would be happy for CRC help to arrange this.

The Police Authority is happy to co-operate on training, seminars, and shared consultative work.

The Independent Commission for Police Complaints is also happy to discuss shared concerns, to cooperate in training, and to hear suggestions for further research from the CRC.

Although the Northern Ireland Prison Service was not part of the consultation, it is suggested that prison officers equally need to be aware of their share in the general responsibility for developing better community relations. Consequently consideration should be given to producing a suitable module to include in their training.

POSTSCRIPT: This paper reflects the impressions and ideas of the Council Working Group. It has been prepared to facilitate further internal discussion by members of Council with a view to formulating advice and suggestions for practical help from the Council to encourage greater consideration of the community relations implications of security policy among those who plan and implement it.

February 1992