

# RESPONDING TO A CHANGING SECURITY SITUATION

Updated October 2003

## THE GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH

### Introduction

The Government wishes to see as early a return as possible to normal security arrangements in Northern Ireland. We want to see a full return to normal policing, with the Army resuming its normal peacetime role; the removal of military bases and barriers which are no longer needed; a reduction in the number of troops deployed in Northern Ireland to support the police and; an end to the need for emergency legislation. At the same time, it is a priority for Government to maintain security policies for Northern Ireland, supported by a sufficient capability for counter-terrorism and public order tasks and an appropriate legislative framework, which will be effective in countering any terrorist threat which exists and maintaining public safety. Very significant progress has been made. We want to do more. However, the speed of progress will be determined solely by the threat posed by terrorism, whether to the security forces or to the community at large.

### **Normalisation – What has been done so far**

Both the Government and the security forces have already demonstrated their commitment to the goal of a return to normal policing arrangements in their response to the ceasefires. Since the reinstatement of the IRA ceasefire on 20 July 1997, we have made real progress. A wide range of security measures have been relaxed and reduced.

- There are currently under 13,000 troops in NI – the lowest level since 1970.
- Since the cease-fire the Army has closed, demolished or vacated 50 of the 105 military bases and installations it occupied at that time.
- Almost half of the surveillance sites which were in existence at the time of the ceasefire have been demolished. This includes the 'Borucki Sangar' at Crossmaglen.
- Troop levels have decreased year on year since 1992 when there were approximately 18,200
- Castlereagh, Strand Road and Gough Holding Centres are closed.

- 102 cross-border roads have been re-opened.
- Since the IRA's decommissioning announcement on 23 October 2001, the following actions have been taken:

Magherafelt base closed - 25 October 2001

Newtownhamilton supersangar demolished – 26 October 2001

Camlough Mountain Tower (R13) demolished – 7 November 2001

Malone Army Base closed – 19 November 2001

The security barrier in Newry Street, Newtownhamilton re-opened 22 January 2002

Steeple Army base in Antrim Closed 9 February 2002

Sturgan Mountain Tower (R11) demolished 26 March 2002

Glassdrumman Tower demolished – 4 April 2002

Cloghoge Tower (R14) demolished – 21 June 2003

Tievecum Tower (R23) demolished – 27 June 2003

### **Future Steps**

On 22 January 2002 the Chief Constable announced that Ebrington Army Base would close in December 2003.

The Annex to the Joint Declaration published in May 2003 set out a programme for reaching a normalisation end-state by April 2005. The programme was conditional on the creation of an enabling environment which would be brought about by acts of completion by the IRA. The subsequent IRA statement was not sufficient to satisfy the two Governments and acts of completion did not take place.

The level of security deployments and measures has to be related to the threat, with reductions based firmly on professional security advice. The Government, and the Chief Constable have a duty to maintain law and order and to take the steps which they judge necessary to protect the community from terrorist attack.

That does not indicate any reluctance to take further normalising measures as rapidly as the security situation allows. But the speed at which that will be possible will depend on the level of violence and the extent of the threat of terrorist attack and public disorder prevailing at the time. In reducing the security force profile, the Government and the Chief

Constable will also need to be confident that reductions in the level of violence and the threat will endure.

<b>BASE DEMOLITION/CLOSURE</b>	<b>DATE</b>
▪ Demolition of Kilturk PVCP, Fermanagh	15 February 1995
▪ Demolition of Clady PVCP, Tyrone	30 June 1995
▪ Demolition of North Howard Street Mill, Belfast	10 October 1995
▪ Demolition of Bunrana PVCP, Londonderry	12 December 1995
▪ Demolition of St Angelo Base, Enniskillen	31 March 1996
▪ Demolition of R16 PVCP, Newry	23 December 1997
▪ Demolition of Rockwood Base, Castlederg	16 February 1998
▪ Demolition of Kilkeel Base	23 March 1998
▪ Demolition of Crumlin Road Sangar, Belfast	12 October 1998
▪ Demolition of R16 roadside sangar, Newry	21 October 1998
▪ Demolition of 3 Bessbrook PVCP's	23 November 1998
▪ Vacation of 6 Fermanagh Patrol Bases (Mullan Bridge, Rosscor Bridge, Wattle Bridge, Clonatty Bridge, Annaghmartin and Killyvilly)	January 1999
▪ Demolition of Aughnacloy PVCP	3 February 1999
▪ Demolition of Hump PVCP, Strabane	8 February 1999
▪ Demolition of Muff PVCP, Londonderry	12 February 1999
▪ Demolition of Letterkenny PVCP, Londonderry	26 February 1999
▪ Demolition of Fort Whiterock, Belfast	21 May 1999
▪ Demolition of Gortmullan Patrol Base, Fermanagh	4 August 1999
▪ Closure of Carrickfergus Base	5 September 1999
▪ Withdrawal of troops from RUC stations (RUC Corry Square, Warrenpoint, Castlederg, Carrickmore, Kesh, Rosemount, Andersonstown, Springfield Road)	Between April 1998 and April 1999
▪ Withdrawal of troops from RUC Pomeroy and RUC Coalisland	May 2000
▪ Templar House Observation Post, Belfast closed and handed back	16 June 2000
▪ Broadway Observation Post, Belfast closed and handed back	21 June 2000
▪ Demolition of "Borucki Sangar", Crossmaglen	4 August 2000

- Demolition of R16 Base Cloghoge, Newry completed 8 October 2000
- Cookstown Base closed and demolished 3 November 2000
- Demolition work at Fort George, Londonderry completed. 8 November 2000
- Demolition of Killyvilly Patrol Base completed 10 November 2000
- Demolition of Rosscor Bridge Patrol Base completed 28 November 2000
- Demolition of Wattle Bridge Patrol Base completed 1 December 2000
- Demolition of Long Kesh completed 16 March 2001
- Demolition of Mullan Bridge Patrol Base completed 3 April 2001
- Demolition of Clonatty Bridge Patrol Base completed 11 May 2001
- Demolition of Annagmartin Patrol base completed 18 May 2001
- Magherafelt Base closed 25 October 2001
- Newtownhamilton Supersangar demolished 26 October 2001
- Camlough Mountain Tower demolished 7 November 2001
- Malone Base closed 19 November 2001
- Steeple Base closed 9 February 2002
- Sturgan Mountain Tower demolished 26 March 2002
- Glassdrumman Tower demolished 4 April 2002
- Cloghoge Tower (R14) – demolished 21 June 2003
- Tievecrum Tower (R23) – demolished 27 June 2003

#### **Internal Links:**

- **The Government's Security Policy (attached with this document)**
- **The Governments Security Strategy Document**
- **Security Statistics: 1968-2001**
- **Counter Terrorism Legislation**
- **Policing in Northern Ireland (link to document provided by Police Division)**
- **NIO Home Page**

#### **External Links:**

- **Northern Ireland Related websites**
- **Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) website**
- **British Army Website**