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Billy Gamble
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To: Mary Bunting/OFMDFM/DFP@DFP
Subject: Loyalist Paper

Mary and John, I attach a revise of the paper for your consideration. If you and copy recipients are content I am happy to draft a joint covering note for you to send to Ministers



Loyalism Paper Draft 2-WH changes-06.10.03

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ISSUES WITHIN LOYALISM: DIFFICULTIES FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Objective

To provide an overview of the current engagement with loyalist groupings and clarify the rationale for that engagement in wider policy development terms such that it will: -

- (a) assist loyalists to transform and contribute positively to the needs of their community, and*
- (b) encourage genuine political dialogue aimed at building better relations within a more peaceful society.*

And in taking into account of developments since the establishment of the Community Action Group this paper attempts to:

- (c) identify the broader political context that must be taken into account when addressing difficulties within the Protestant/Loyalist areas;*
- (d) point to ongoing work that must be considered as part of a wider strategic approach; and*
- (e) make some tentative conclusions about possible future actions.*

Background

2 Over recent months both the British and Irish Governments have made concerted efforts to engage positively with representatives of loyalist groupings (and their sponsors) in an attempt to address demonstrable need within that community and to create a climate conducive to political dialogue. Financial support has been provided to

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develop weak community infrastructure in working class unionist areas and engender confidence in the organisations representing those areas to articulate the needs of their community.

3 Transforming loyalism represents a complex political and societal conundrum. It is about two *change* processes that, at face value, appear to be mutually inclusive. In reality, however, the processes potentially represent unstable forces that can pull that community apart. The needs of loyalist groupings vary and may not be easily differentiated from explicit wants. These include a wish to create new and elaborate structures to replace existing funding arrangements in neighbourhoods; to be gatekeepers of, and for, those neighbourhoods; to create the room within which political expression can be articulated as part of a broader electoral strategy. At this stage the groups' approach is not entirely clear and is best characterised as very much one of 'pick and mix', essentially seeking to maximise their current position, particularly given the attention they (the UPRG) are receiving from Uachtarán na hÉireann (President) and Martin McAleese

4 Second, there is the issue of meeting the needs of those working class loyalist/unionist communities some of which have (and continue to suffer) acute levels of multiple deprivation, compounded by the very actions of those whose previous role had been to defend them. It will be exceptionally difficult (if not untenable) to prosecute an overt approach to the loyalist groupings absent an unequivocal approach by those same organisations to clean up their act in relation to drugs, racketeering and gangsterism. This however may be a very tall order to deliver: at best one might only achieve a management of the problem and a reduced level of such activity! This difference needs to be explicitly addressed.

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5 Given that there also continues to be contact by the Irish Government (which is aware of the Martin McAleese interventions) it is important for both governments to be clear about the collective and individual rules of engagement with loyalists, a shared understanding of the agenda being prosecuted and the rewards and the risks involved.

Policy Context

6 The Community Action Group established in December 2002 was focused on rapidly improving co-ordination across departments in response to communities experiencing sectarianism and interface violence. In the initial stages there was not a particular focus on loyalist areas although it was clear that those areas would clearly benefit from such a development

7 Following contacts with loyalist politicians early in 2003 a decision was taken to establish the Local Community Fund. When the programme was announced a specific reference was made to targeting working class loyalist communities. As a result of that announcement a number of developments have occurred. First, within unionism and loyalism, expectations have been raised that government will deliver programmes tailored to the needs of those communities. The announcement in April 2003 of a package of measures totalling £7.4 million was, in part, a response to those expectations. The work proposed on community conventions reflected a specific proposal that emanated from within loyalism.

8 Second, because of the absence of a clearly thought out rationale for the delivery of the Local Community Fund, much effort has been applied to creating a framework for the programme that is fair and equitable. Catholic and republican community representatives have raised concerns in general about the Fund and

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specifically in relation to the work on community conventions and the allocation of resources specifically targeted on the loyalist community: in their view the allocation is perceived as inequitable. Elected republican representatives continue to raise these concerns.

9 The fast pace of developments has hindered a clearly thought out approach to this work. Strategy and policy have been in reaction to political developments rather than providing a framework and guide to steer such developments. Some analysis of this work together with consideration of future policy development and strategy is, therefore, timely.

10 The difficulties within Protestant/Loyalist working class areas have the potential, perhaps more than any other current political development, to destabilise the Northern Ireland community and dramatically to increase the likelihood of violence both within and between sections of the community. The ongoing situation developing in North Belfast (and in other parts of Northern Ireland), where there is very public and crude intimidation of Catholics and tit for tat attacks on schools and property, together with the recent reluctance by Protestant/Loyalist groups to engage fully with the work of the North Belfast Community Action Unit gives cause for concern.

11 The forces that produce such behaviour are complex; the shifting leadership and power-plays within loyalism are difficult to predict and may not even be clearly understood by some of the key participants. And of course the difficulties and fragmentation within that part of the community is paralleled by similar difficulties and fragmentation within the Ulster Unionist Party.

12 Any interventions must focus on enabling loyalism to transform and to encourage genuine political dialogue aimed at building better relations within a more peaceful society. However, there is a real

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danger that by focusing explicitly on loyalists we encourage and reinforce behaviours that lead to greater disengagement from the overall political process leading to **politics of separation**, rather than sharing.

13 Furthermore, the problem is not just within loyalism; unionism as a whole is fragmented with little indication that a new more focused unionism with a clear vision for the future will emerge. This poses policy makers with very serious difficulties in terms of the level and type of interventions that may be considered appropriate.

14 It should be remembered that Northern Ireland was established with unionism and the state being almost inseparable.¹ That close linkage has now gone; efforts must enable unionism to find a different way forward, not reinforce old relationships that were based on sectarianism and unequal access to power. In the same way that good community development practice facilitates rather than directs, so our efforts must encourage and support, but not collude with old relationships that will no longer work

15 Should we have a strategic approach to unionism/loyalism? Whilst encouragement through policy and practice to achieve a more peaceful society based on open dialogue is appropriate, interventions that are seen as supporting one particular faction within unionism, over another, could be interpreted as inappropriate manipulation of the political process. We may be able to create an environment in which unionism can independently regroup, reorganise and find it's

1

The 1998 report for the Fermanagh Partnership noted "The Protestant community has not taken advantage of the opportunities created for the community sector largely because of a philosophical anathema to collective activity... The fact that Protestantism is not homogenous, combined with the strength of the commitment to their individual churches, reduces the potential for community development in the Protestant community." The rural based Protestant Unionist Loyalist Network; in its 2002/05 Strategic plan noted "Community action has been limited in Protestant areas by a number of cultural barriers. As well as the individualism of their doctrine and the fragmentation of the churches, there was also the perception that the increase in community activity was associated with the political and social events of the time. This was viewed by some sections of the Protestant community as anti establishment and a **threat to their government and their Britishness**.(my emphasis)"

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way. We might also seek to provide loyalist groups with the pathways out of the maze of conflict and confusion, but we cannot direct that reorganisation and move it along such paths.

16 Our approach must also be earthed in the wider government agenda. We must ensure that the policies and practice we put in place are focused on building good relations, not reinforcing division. Also we must be clear about our commitment to improving relations and creating a more peaceful society. We must create an environment where political dialogue is in the ascendant and political violence, from whichever source, is seen as increasingly dysfunctional. We need to reinforce efforts within unionism as a whole to co-ordinate and control all elements of unionism/loyalism and to focus on their own vision. But this must be prosecuted within the context of a clear vision, from government.

17 As a starting point we must examine all current policy initiatives in this context – whether in relation to urban regeneration, rural development, employment, housing, crime, community safety, education or health. Clearly programmes should address the needs of all communities, but they need to be open and realistic about the differences within parts of the community that have to be addressed. It is important to consider these differences; understand how they manifest themselves and explore (and measure) how current application of government policies and practices serve to enhance the wider agenda or work against the achievement of progress in particular sections of the community

THE NEEDS OF LOYALIST COMMUNITY

18 It is important that we identify the particular factors within the loyalist (and republican) sections of the community that are to be the

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focus of **all** policies. The loyalist section of the community that is the focus of our concerns exhibit the following characteristics,

- a) A high level of paramilitary activity involving, intimidation, violence and criminal; activity.
- b) Decreasing populations where it would appear that the most able and mobile within these communities vote with their feet and move out. It is reasonable, therefore, to assume that we are dealing with populations where the leadership cadre is gradually haemorrhaging.
- c) A residual population where social need is increasing and skills and capacity for generating income is decreasing.
- d) Increasing numbers of individuals moving into these communities who exhibit antisocial behaviour
- e) Poorer performance in all measures of social need; education, crime, and health for example.

19 Duncan Morrow, the Chief Executive of the Community Relations Council, in looking at how the voluntary and community sector can contribute to 'quality of life' issues identifies a clear difference in Protestant and Catholic communities²,

"Forms of organisation have varied with many factors, among them social class, urban or rural location or the nature of the issue being addressed. There is also a marked difference along the religio-political division where traditionally Catholic communities have been organised in notably different ways to those of a Protestant tradition. While the Life and Times Survey has shown that members of both communities are equally likely to participate in voluntary activities, the nature and structure of those activities varies sharply. At the risk of over-generalisation, there is a tendency for community development to have

² Paper available on website of the Task Force on Resourcing the Voluntary and Community Sector- www.taskforcevcsni.gov.uk

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stronger roots in traditionally Catholic communities and for issue-based voluntary groups to have Protestant origins. Failure to take these differing structures and experiences into account can lead to unintended and differential consequences."

20 Morrow argues that we must be careful to invest in the right kind of development:

"Voluntary and community activity which strengthens existing bonds within groups without reference to, or as an alternative to, other important bridging and linking relationships may actually undermine wider levels of trust and reciprocity. Progressive community development is dependent on improved community relations not an alternative to it".

And

"Equality cannot be delivered without reference to diversity of context, culture and structure. Diversity and equity are not always opposed but are sometimes elements of the same policy mix."

21 Our approach, therefore, should certainly analyse the real differences between communities and target our efforts appropriately, but this is not a strategy for dealing with loyalism. Rather it is an approach, which focuses on the overarching government policy (good relations and a peaceful society) that identifies the needs of particular communities. It is important to remember and reinforce such an approach. Failure to do so will allow us to slip into activities that reinforce division, sectarianism and violence in the same way that much community development activity has done in the past. In Robert Putnam's terms *"building bonding capital at the expense of bridging and linking capital"*

The Government Planning Environment

22 The Programme for Government identified "growing as a community" as a key priority for this planning period. This agenda was further developed through the publication of the Joint Declaration, in April 2003, which recognised the need to change the economic and social profile of disadvantaged communities in both loyalist and nationalist areas if the reality of a fully peaceful and healthy society is to be achieved.

23 Acknowledging the range of initiatives already in play the Programme provided a commitment to bring forward a strategic and integrated approach to the progressive regeneration of those areas of greatest disadvantage consistent with New Targeting Social Need. Since the publication of the Joint Declaration discussions at the British Irish Inter Governmental Conference and at official level between the two Governments have sharpened the focus on the need for both Governments to work together to help build trust and confidence between the two communities.

24 In moving to transform the position of these communities it is necessary to re-examine the appropriateness and relevance of current policies and initiatives to the needs of both communities. We must determine how current approaches should be tailored to address the well documented differences in capacity reflected in culture, confidence, leadership and social disorganisation: the latter seen most clearly in the linkage between loyalist paramilitaries and crime. Without such an approach it is unlikely that the wider government objectives in relation to growing as a community can be achieved.

25 Second, there are a number of other initiatives that should be considered in the context of addressing difficulties within Protestant communities. For example:

Interventions by Government

25 Since suspension there have been a significant number of initiatives and actions aimed at building trust and confidence between and within communities. These initiatives have included specific action, directly and indirectly, to arrest the sense of powerlessness (and haemorrhaging of confidence in the Agreement) within Protestant communities. The initiatives include promoting participation in community involvement and development, and attempting to tackle the deeply-rooted causes of disadvantage and deprivation.

26 The most recent direct interventions that have had some focus on difficulties within protestant areas, include the work of the Community Action Group, the Community Conventions Initiative, the Outreach Programme, the Local Community Fund, the SEUPB Outreach, The Active Community Initiative and support of the Churches Community Work Alliance. Details of these are attached as an annex to this paper.

27 There are two key issues to be made with regard to this list of interventions. First, many of these interventions were never intended to focus only on Protestant communities. The Outreach Programme for example focuses on public services in areas of weak community infrastructure. Whilst it would appear that Protestant communities figure significantly in this programme it is not exclusively focused on such communities. The same applies to the Local Community Fund, the Active Community Initiative, work of the Community Action Group and support for the Churches Community Work Alliance.

28 Second, there are a number of other initiatives that should be considered in the context of addressing difficulties within Protestant communities. For example:

- (e) **The North Belfast Community Action Unit.** Whilst this initiative is deliberately focused on building good relations between all communities in North Belfast there is no doubt that the programme has to focus on the particular needs and difficulties in protestant communities. Again recent events in North Belfast indicate how central this programme is to addressing difficulties within loyalism. It should also be recognised that in implementing the programme a key difficulty, which we certainly have not yet solved, is about how we take forward work that does not further reinforce division and separation, let alone achieve better relations.
- (f) **Work by the Rural Community Network (RCN)** RCN is currently working on a programme with more than 20 Orange Lodges to help them establish structures that can enable their participation in community development activities. Lodges are being helped to establish community development associations that are independent, overcoming the difficulties the Orange Order has in directly controlling such work.
- (g) **Other Independent Work.** There are other activities ongoing in the community that are independently led that should be considered. For example the work of Diversity Challenges led by Will Glendenning and funded through Atlantic Philanthropies.³
- (h) **Other Work.** There is a wide range of initiatives that are again not specifically targeted on loyalism, but that are already having a significant impact on working class loyalist areas. They would include for example the Health Action Zones, the work of the Housing Executive, the West Belfast and Shankill Taskforces

³ It should be noted that Atlantic Philanthropies has recently changed its strategic priorities but will still focus on reconciliation and human rights

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and the Employability Task Force. The latter initiatives for example should have a focus on the particular difficulties experienced in protestant areas related to the leakage of skilled people identified above.

Elements of a Future Approach: Some Suggestions

29 There are real dangers in a focus on loyalism that is taken forward separate from mainstream government initiatives. If we are to be successful in addressing the specific difficulties of working class Protestant communities, all government programmes that impact on those communities must be both sensitive of their particular needs and approach those communities in the context of delivering overarching government policies focused on achieving a peaceful society and good relations. The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy might be one context within which such work should be considered.

30 We should avoid trying to identify the 'best' or the 'most representative' of the loyalist umbrella bodies. Given the divisions and antagonisms within unionism/loyalism; this could lead to perceptions of manipulation and covert agendas that could result in greater fragmentation. At a recent meeting with the PUP former Minister, Des Browne made it very clear that the development of greater co-ordination and focus within unionism/loyalism had to be taken forward by the organisations themselves. Therefore, we should be encouraging initiatives (such as the Community Conventions) that may lead to greater communication, integration and accountability within the unionist/loyalist community, not picking what could be perceived as our favourites! We should make it clear that we want to negotiate and communicate with a united unionism/loyalism, but the creation of such unity has to come from the political leadership within that community.

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31 Some analysis and benchmarking of the performance of public services in Catholic/ Protestant areas need to take place to direct future interventions. We should be open about differences and difficulties and we should participate in such openness with both communities. The work we are trying to take forward through the Local Community Fund in identifying areas of weak community infrastructure sits easily with this and we need to do more to identify those elements within particular communities that can help us achieve our objectives. For example, within Protestant/loyalist communities the contribution and role of the Churches and women may be particularly important.

32 We must have an open dialogue, within government, with the Irish Government, with political representatives and their communities. This will be a long and slow process; we cannot achieve a quick fix. Whilst direct parallels may not be helpful, it may be useful to consider the time it took for republicanism to move from a largely military to a largely political strategy. In this context we should be planning and developing initiatives now that could see results in ten to twenty years. Some long term scanning and scenario planning might be helpful

33 Community development practice must be considered in the context of the needs of particular communities and the potential to support the transformation from inter-community violence and separation to peaceful and healthy communities. The results of the *Shared Future* consultation process should involve an in-depth examination of how we deliver good relations work and community development practice.

Conclusion

34 Policy formulation that is reactive and rushed could undermine the positive work since the establishment of the Community Action Group. Our work in loyalist/protestant communities should be delivered in the context of working to address disadvantage, to build capacity and confidence and to achieve good relations. This will be a long-term project. Time spent now working through the policy options in this most difficult of areas could provide a framework and stimulus for positive actions that benefit the community as a whole.

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- Improving communication at interfaces;
- supporting and assisting local communities in dealing with sectarianism, for example through local environmental improvements;
- underpinning community development; identifying and promoting good practice throughout Government and the voluntary and community sector; and

Annex

Interventions by UK Government

Community Action Group

Over recent months the Community Action Group, established by Des Browne in December 2002, has been in the forefront of a range of short-term measures across health, education, physical and community regeneration. CAG is made up of representatives from OFMDFM, DSD, NIO, DRD, PSNI, NIHE, officials from a number of district councils, the Community Relations Council and Community Foundation for NI. CAG works closely with OFMDFM's North Belfast Community Unit.

The various CAG measures were announced as part of a £7.4million community action package in April 2003. While not directed exclusively at Protestant/Loyalist areas the measures have a large number of positive benefits for these communities. This package has been very specifically focused on the following areas:

- improving communication at interfaces;
- supporting and assisting local communities in dealing with sectarianism, for example through local environmental improvements;
- underpinning community development; identifying and promoting good practice throughout Government and the voluntary and community sector; and

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comm - developing more effective intervention programmes for
communi young people.

In addressing the poor physical appearance of local areas, CAG allocated £350,000, to support further local environment schemes. The additional funds have been targeted at communities in both urban and rural settings across Northern Ireland to develop and implement a sustainable vision for the regeneration of their areas. The implementation of DSD's longer-term strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal will seek to build on this important work. Of its eight target areas four are loyalist areas, (Dervock in Ballymoney; Springmartin in west Belfast; Waterside, Londonderry and inner east Belfast.

CAG has also actively sought to explore better ways to encourage communities to participate in a range of actions such as cleaning up kerbstones and walls; removing flags; or landscaping and developing open spaces. The aim being to empower local communities to replace the symbols of fear and hatred with an environment that promotes trust and confidence, and in which people can take pride. East Belfast, for example, has benefited significantly from this initiative.

Community Conventions

The Think Tank, which includes a UPRG representative as well CAG has also sought to respond to approaches from loyalist groupings to create practical ways to stimulate communities to tackle disadvantage, work in partnership with government departments and statutory agencies, and build stronger

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communities. This work has focused on the development of the community convention concept.

A tender exercise has been completed and consultants have been appointed to provide the Department for Social Development and the Community Convention and Development Steering Group with a framework specifying the infrastructure and resource requirements to deliver four pilot community conventions, this will be available by the end of September.

Current planning by the Community Convention and Development Steering Group suggests these will be held in Shankill, east Belfast, Craigavon and West of the Bann over a timescale of approximately two years.

The Community Conventions, modelled on the Shankill Convention held last year, are seen by the Loyalist Think Tank who have sponsored and developed this initiative, as the first step in the process to develop and empower local communities and tackle issues in Protestant working class communities which are more sharply expressed than in Catholic areas. These include educational underachievement, paramilitarism, feelings of alienation and stigmatisation and a general sense of loss.

The Think Tank, which includes a UPRG representative as well as senior and credible representatives of the loyalist communities in Belfast such as Jackie Redpath (Greater Shankill), Sammy Douglas (East Belfast), David McNarry, Andy Tyrie and others have now formed a Community Convention and Steering Group to oversee the process.

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A round table will be developed, involving the Steering Group, Government departments and appropriate statutory agencies, to consider recommendations arising from the conventions and in particular, what forms of intervention are likely to be the most effective, how these might be delivered, developed and resourced. The former Minister, Des Browne announced government support for the pilot conventions during a Shared Future workshop in Armagh earlier this year.

Outreach Programme

In addition an outreach programme (again not exclusively directed at loyalist communities) provides financial assistance (£2.9m) to public sector organisations to help them change their policies, working methods and consultation arrangements in order to increase community involvement in the delivery of public services. A total of 14 projects have been selected for funding using an open application process. Each public sector applicant was expected to include community partners in their proposal.

Of the successful projects a number will benefit predominately protest / loyalist communities as follows:

- South & East Belfast Health and Social Services Trust working with East Belfast Community Development Agency targeting victims of domestic violence, £124, 800

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- Northern Investing for Health Partnership working with HSSTs, District Councils and community networks targeting areas of high social need and low community infrastructure in 10 local government districts in the Northern area of the province, £250,000.
- Belfast Education & Library Board working with the North & West HSST and Belfast Partnership boards targeting schools including the Belfast Model School for Girls, Mount Gilbert Community College and Castle High School, scheme is worth £248,500 for North and West Belfast.
- North Down LSP working with NIHE, North Down Borough Council Ulster Hospital, Youth Service, YMCA and community associations targeting young people in Rathgill, Breezemount and Conlig housing estates, £184,000.
- Castlereagh LSP working with Castlereagh Borough Council and others targeting residents of Ballybeen estate under Ballybeen Regeneration, £245,000.
- Edenbrooke primary School working with North & West HSST, Belfast Education & Library Board and others targeting pupils of Edenbrooke and their families towards the development of a "Peaceful School", £235,000.
- Belfast Education & Library Board working with parents and children in Inner East Belfast promoting the value of education as an avenue to better employment prospects, £209,000.

Local Community Fund

The Local Community Fund has an initial budget of £3million and is to be used to develop community capacity and leadership in disadvantaged areas across Northern Ireland. It was announced by Secretary of State in February 2003 and has its origins in the alienation of groups who feel left behind by the peace process. A strong political message has been given that while the Fund is not exclusively for loyalist communities, it will have a significant and positive impact in such communities.

SEUPB Loyalist Outreach

On the 22 August the SEUPB meet with loyalists representatives (attended the NI side of NSMC) to explore issues in relation to accessing PEACE II funding. It was agreed that Deirdre McBride (former chief executive the Belfast LSP) would take forward a project which would, in particular look at the uptake of PEACE II on six defined localities; review reasons for project rejection, help define new projects and organise workshops to provide support and training in making grant application.

Other Actions

The Active Community Initiative supported a demonstration project involving research into isolated Protestant communities living in border areas. Its aim was to facilitate a fuller understanding within Government and the wider community of the particular difficulties facing these communities in order to

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influence future policy development in the support of better community involvement.

Through the Churches Community Work Alliance, DSD now grants aids this organisation which although includes all the main churches is of greater significance to the Protestant community because of the higher profile and influence of the church in that community.

In addition, the support for an Integrated Development Fund bid in west Belfast will, in particular, help the Shankill area address its needs.

Ex-Prisoners

Since the 1994 ceasefires the NIO, T&EA, Probation Board, NIACRO, NIVT and others have assisted ex-prisoners groups on both sides to re-integrate into their communities (and hopefully engage in more productive pursuits). The experience of these interventions has been mixed. The management and accountability issues surrounding some projects proved highly problematic. Nevertheless, it is a constituency that has come back into sharp focus again in relation to 'wiping the slate clean'. This is an important constituency that will need to be factored into our consideration of interventions with loyalist groupings.

Also, we need to be aware of the discussion by the NI Executive about interdepartmental work on employment and employability of ex-prisoners.

Interventions by the Irish Government

The Irish Government has for many years sought to foster good relations with loyalists. Up until recently contact has mostly been with the Progressive Unionist Party (and UVF). Lately, however, there have been contacts with the UPRG (UDA), mostly through DFA and Martin McAleese with Denis Moloney playing some role. On June 11th, at the request of Archbishop Eames, the Taoiseach met with the Loyalist Commission. Two clear (and linked) messages emerged. First, that paramilitary activity must stop. Second, there was a promise of support to deprived loyalist (and republican) communities in a bid to ease tensions. The DFAs' Reconciliation Fund and other measures would provide renewed focus on supporting community development in those areas.