

**NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD**

**MINUTES OF THE 17<sup>TH</sup> PUBLIC MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND  
POLICING BOARD HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2003 AT  
12:00 NOON IN WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST**

**PRESENT:**

**MEMBERS:**

Professor Desmond Rea (Chairman)  
Mr Denis Bradley (Vice-Chairman)  
Mr Joe Byrne  
Mr Fred Cobain  
Mr Brian Dougherty  
Mr Sam Foster  
Mr Barry Gilligan  
Mr William Hay  
Lord Kilclooney  
Mrs Pauline McCabe  
Mr Alan McFarland  
Mrs Rosaleen Moore  
Mr Ian Paisley Jnr  
Mr Suneil Sharma  
Mr Sammy Wilson

**POLICE SERVICE OF  
NORTHERN IRELAND IN  
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Hugh Orde (Chief Constable)  
Mr Paul Leighton (Deputy Chief  
Constable)  
Mr Sam Kinkaid, (Assistant Chief  
Constable)  
Mr Duncan McCausland (Assistant Chief  
Constable)  
Mr Roy Toner (Assistant Chief  
Constable)  
Mr Austin Hunter (Director of Media &  
PR)  
D/Superintendent Sproule, C1  
D/Chief Inspector Adair, C1  
Chief Inspector, Command Secretariat

**OFFICIALS IN  
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Alastair McDowell (Acting Chief  
Executive)  
Head of Policy & Accountability  
Head of Training & Community

Consultation  
Acting Head of Audit Services  
One Board Official

**Apologies:**

Apologies were received from Mr Attwood, Viscount Brookeborough, Mr Kelly and Mr McGrady.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

I would like to welcome members of the public and media to this public session.

I would also welcome the Chief Constable and his colleagues to this public session, and I would ask him now to address the meeting and then introduce his colleagues who are going to make a presentation on Serious and Organised Crime Squad work.

**Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:**

Thank you Chairman. I will ask Assistant Chief Constable Sam Kincaid from Crime Operations to introduce our colleagues in relation to that. But before that, if I may give a very brief overview of where we are in terms of the crime picture for Northern Ireland, as we have now got the figures in for the first three months of this financial year and we can compare them with the first three months of last financial year.

I am pleased to report that overall crime has fallen by 14%, which equates to over 5,300 offences, in the first quarter, when you compare it with the first quarter of last year. We are fairly confident that as most of the crime has now been validated that is a fairly accurate figure.

In terms of domestic burglary, that has fallen by 16%, which is 422 less victims than we would have had the same time last year.

In terms of vehicle crime which is theft of vehicle or unauthorised taking of a vehicle they have fallen by 18%, which is 729 offences, in the same time period. Our detection rate for overall crime remains at about 21%, which is

identical to the same time last year. I am aware and you are aware that we are working hard to increase our clear-up rates, in particular in relation to domestic burglary which is our major concern at the moment.

In terms of security and persons charged with terrorist offences, that has gone up from 9 in the first quarter of last year to 31 this year. There were 48 shooting incidents in the first quarter of this year, compared to 83 in the first quarter of last year. In terms of bombing incidents, we were down to 13 compared to 68 at the same time period. We would also say there were 6 fewer casualties of paramilitary style attacks in the same time period.

In terms of drugs, which I think has been a major success story for the Police Service of Northern Ireland during the past year, we have had some major seizures. I note there is a question on drugs and I will cover the actual detail in that question.

What continues to worry us are road traffic accidents. In the first 3 months of this year there are 39 fatalities, which is compared to 29 in the same period last year and that is still an area of major concern.

The final point I will make is, we noted the last report from the Police Ombudsman, I think is important because it relates to the serious disorder last June in East Belfast, where we were obliged to fire 60 plastic baton rounds and 10 live rounds during some of the worst disorder seen for some time. The Ombudsman's report, not only exonerates the officers and says that all those deployments were entirely justified because they posed a serious and immediate threat to life; she also noticed that my officers had shown considerable constraint and on many occasions where we would have been justified in firing baton rounds, we did not do so. I think that is an extremely important point. It is worth noting that it is almost a year since we last had to fire a baton round on the street in Northern Ireland and I think that is an important point.

If I could hand over to ACC Sam Kinkaid now to introduce our colleagues.

**Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Sam Kincaid:**

The Chief Constable recently announced the creation of the Crime Operations Department at the end of this year. Part of its responsibility will be the investigation of serious and organised crime. The Board, I believe has already had presentations on issues like drugs which is part of the remit of organised crime.

Today, there are two short presentations on issues that are particularly significant in Northern Ireland. Detective Superintendent Sproule from C1 Branch will be talking initially about what is called 'Intellectual Property Crime'. You may have seen much of the press recently, for example, of the successes of the police operations at the 'Lammas Fair' and it is important to note that in terms of United Kingdom, Northern Ireland accounts for more detections in this area than in any other part of the United Kingdom.

The second area is one I know has been of great interest to certain members of the Board, which is the issue of extortion and extortion criminal acts in Northern Ireland and Detective Chief Inspector Adair will be speaking about that. I will now pass over to Detective Superintendent Sproule.

**Detective Superintendent Sproule:**

Thank you Mr Chairman for the invitation and the opportunity to come today and talk to you.

As you know Crime Branch is restructuring, we will hope for significant resources and I would say that at the outset. This type of investigation is very resource intensive and to tackle the top tier of criminality is not easy. It is a multi- disciplinary, multi agency approach, financial investigation plays a major part with it.

Organised crime obviously is too wide a subject to cover in ten minutes, what we had hoped to do was to concentrate on two areas that we are responsible for in the Serious and Organised Crime Squad, both of the areas are priorities for the Organised Crime Task Force.

Intellectual property crime, or more commonly known as counterfeiting, are illegal copied goods, manufactured and sold without the consent of the trademark owner or copyright owner. As you can see it is 5 – 7% of world trade. It is measured in billions of pounds and over the last 25 years, the copyright industries have grown twice as fast as the remainder of the economy, creating jobs at three times the rate of the rest of the economy. You can see, the direct loss of jobs throughout the EU is 17,000.

The types of property that are counterfeited and what we would normally come across are CDs, DVDs and computer software. One in three CDs in Northern Ireland that is sold is counterfeit. This is quite amazing when you see the number of CDs that are sold. Computer software, about 35% of all computer software is counterfeited and 12% of sports goods and clothing.

Most of the smaller items come into Northern Ireland by air, about 60% of the smaller items will come in by air from the Far East, Malaysia, Pakistan and Singapore. Often routed through re-distribution areas in the rest of the EU and concealment methods are becoming evermore elaborate, so the concealment methods that we would have come across in relation to drugs are now being used for counterfeit products.

Damaging costs - it costs the economy. We know of one major clothing retailer who would not open a shop in Belfast because of the level of counterfeiting of their products in Belfast. There is a draft EU directive asking member states to take more action in respect of counterfeiting. There is an ambivalent attitude among third world countries that are responsible for producing many of these items. It creates local jobs and they would see that

the only people who suffer are the foreign multi-nationals and it is not really their problem.

Some specific incidents, for example, the Concorde crash in Paris in 2000. A piece fell off a Continental DC10 which took off before Concorde, it was not the right part, it was a counterfeit part, it ruptured a wheel which then caused the fuel tank to explode, killing 109 people on board and 4 on the ground. It is a rather extreme example but I think it illustrates the point. If you have brake shoes manufactured in Turkey to very low specifications, potentially your wife, your children are at very real risk because of this type of activity.

Alcohol is another favourite area for counterfeiting. We have seen many examples of vodka being sold, which is watered down industrial alcohol which contains very high levels of methanol, which can cause a stomach upset and indeed blindness. Not exactly a new phenomenon in Northern Ireland I know, making drink that makes you blind, but it is certainly worrying.

A lot of the tobacco that is seized is actually counterfeit, with very high levels of tar content. Clothing, for example, that is not fire retardant. You can see a direct loss of £1.6 billion per year in the UK. It is not the victimless crime that is often portrayed.

The Organised Crime Task Force threat assessment for 2003 recorded that PSNI had seized £6.7million, but that only represented 5% of the market that was there. So, you will see in Northern Ireland a market in excess of £135 million annually or £80 per head of population for counterfeit products. The organised crime gangs that are involved, that were recorded in last year's threat assessment, 41% of crime groups were involved in counterfeiting and they move with the times obviously and in increased use of the internet to sell goods.

Last year in Northern Ireland 200 people were prosecuted for counterfeiting offences and there is a clear organised crime involvement, the use of

violence, intimidation and corruption against both law enforcement officials and legitimate manufacturers. Worryingly again, 93% of the groups involved have paramilitary connections. The structures of paramilitary groups are particularly suited to organised criminality, where you have enforcers, financiers and actual operatives.

Police in Northern Ireland take the lead in the investigation of intellectual property crime, whereas in England it tends to be Trading Standards, but because of the organised crime involvement police do take the lead in Northern Ireland, the Trading Standards react to complaints from members of the public for defective goods. But if you have bought a video which should have cost you £40 and you get it for a fiver, you are not likely to go to Trading Standards and report that there is somebody getting up and down through the performance to go to the toilet or there is a shaky video.

What are the PSNI doing about it? You will see that we continue to seize more goods than all the other UK forces put together. The PSNI take the lead in an expert group under the Organised Crime Task Force which involves industry, the music industry, the film industry, clothing industry which are all represented. We try to increase awareness across the organisation, by targeting those at a strategic level and that is where the resources come in.

Identifying barriers to prosecution - you will have heard perhaps of one individual constable who works at Nutt's Corner in that area, had 167 DPP files which he was waiting to prosecute. The time to do the actual paperwork is enormous and a great drain on the resources. Those individuals should be out in a more proactive role and that is what we want to encourage. Less bureaucracy in the prosecution, and changing public perception, it is too important to be left to the police alone.

Throughout the UK, 52% of shoppers will buy counterfeit products or counterfeit clothing, they are quite happy with that and very often it is seen as a public service. If you are on a tight budget with children, or teenagers who

will wear nothing other than brand labelled goods and you can get them for a quarter of the price, you are obviously going to do it.

We want to try to harness public support and that is where I would encourage yourselves, when you get the opportunity, to try to change public perceptions. It is slow and it will take time, but it has to be done. If we point to the number of schools or hospitals that could be built with this tax revenue it does not have the same effect I think, as pointing out the dangers of counterfeiting and the money that is going to thugs, very often terrorists thugs who are involved in all sorts of other criminality.

We will work closely with the Assets Recovery Agency in restraint and confiscation, but we need to change perceptions. Intellectual property crime is seen as low risk, high profit and there is a lack of credible sanctions. Too often custodial sentences are not given out for intellectual property crime and bail is another issue that is fairly topical at the moment for all types of serious crime, bail appears to be the norm.

Could I hand over to a colleague Chief Inspector Esmond Adair who is going to talk to you in relation to extortion. Thank you.

**Chief Inspector Esmond Adair:**

The legacy of terrorism is significant within Northern Ireland society, with a large proportion of organised criminal groups, either associated with or controlled by paramilitaries. Extortion is traced directly to terrorism; indeed local criminals derive their status and influence from current or historic paramilitary links. Paramilitary power is being consolidated over both catholics and protestants through smuggling, drug dealing, extortion and protection rackets.

Reporting in July 2002, the Northern Ireland Select Affairs Committee painted an astonishing picture of institutionalised systematic violence and intimidation

in Northern Ireland, with organised crime now inextricably linked to terrorism. Far from the terrorists turning to peace and stability they have turned the screw harder in terms of extortion and protection rackets.

Extortion is endemic to Northern Ireland society with some areas suffering much worse than others. It is a grossly under reported crime, it is widespread and its impact on the community is significant. It is therefore a hidden problem and of major concern to us in the PSNI. It has been estimated that as little as 10% of extortion is reported to the police. My experience is, that that is a gross over estimation and I would suggest that less than 1% is reported to the police.

The biggest difficulty that we have in working with people who are being extorted is their fear of reprisals from paramilitaries and it is a very difficult hurdle to get over. The paramilitaries exercise their control over the communities through extortion and other activities and in some areas indeed, the paramilitaries decide who works when and where and how much they pay for the privilege of doing it. Demands have been made, usually on behalf of prisoner welfare groups, for example the Loyalist Prisoners Aid is one where we are always getting demands made for donations to Loyalist Prisoners Aid. Indeed since the Good Friday Agreement, the number of ex prisoners who are running extortion rackets has increased dramatically.

The organisations get roughly 30% and the individuals themselves cream of about 70% to fund their 'fat Harry' lifestyles. Again the paramilitary groups will say that 'if you are caught, you do not admit any association with the paramilitary groups and you take your punishment'.

The vast sums of money that is being extorted and certainly in relation to the building trade, amounts to several million pounds. It has provided terrorists and in particular loyalist terrorists, with more funds than any other activity in the last thirty years. It is engrained in Northern Ireland society, it has become part of the culture in some areas, that people expect to pay the paramilitaries.

Indeed builders, when they are tendering for some of their tenders actually put in their tender, “protection money”.

Extortion is particularly bad in North, South and East Belfast and in particular Mid Ulster. There are very few areas in Northern Ireland that escape extortion, but those are the main areas, and it is certainly rife, with very few businesses being allowed to continue to operate without paying over some amount of money.

The Police Service is proactively targeting, both the extortionists and the victims. We have visited many victims, saying ‘we know you are being extorted, you do not need to pay this money, we can help you’. It is a particular problem, because the first thing they ask me is ‘well, can you give me 24 hour protection?’ and obviously I cannot do that.

Extortion disrupts and prevents investment, Belfast has gone under massive changes since the Good Friday Agreement, but the areas that have the highest deprivation, they are the ones that are worst affected by extortion. Indeed, in the past few months, I personally have been to see 22 builders who have been extorted. One agreed to help the police, many said they were not being extorted and the ones that did say they were being extorted said, ‘it is easier for me to pay, it is basically the lesser of two evils, I get no hassle, I pay a £1,000 and I have a £1/4 million contract and I walk away with no hassle”.

The police response would depend on the nature of the incident, we have run 25 proactive police investigations into extortion this year, with 11 people being arrested and charged with offences relating to extortion. At present we have a number of operations ongoing.

The nature of the police response will depend on the incidents and then the circumstances surrounding each incident. Each incident is different and depending on how the incident unfolds, will depend upon our response to it.

The Serious Crime Squad is proactively targeting the extortionists and we are trying to assist in particular the construction industry. I have been to many presentations and given many presentations to the Constructors Builders Federation, the NHBC, about the fact that you do not have to pay this, there are ways in which we can help you to deal with it.

Year by year extortion has increased its grip on the community and as I said, in some areas it has become an accepted way of doing business in that area. The police cannot defeat extortion alone, the public have to come on board with us and help us. As I said, from the 22 builders I have approached 21 said no, one said yes. The one that said yes, we got a positive result out of. So we can make a difference, but we need help, we cannot do it on our own.

There are other issues that need looked at, people who are caught extorting money are charged with a blackmail offence, blackmail falls under section 20 of the Theft Act 1969 which actually pre-dates extortion. Extortion did not start until the 70's and I feel that there should be an aggravated offence that legislators need to look for extortion in particular. The maximum sentence for blackmail is 14 years, the average sentence at court is less than 3 years. Now when one looks at the upheaval for people who have helped us, who have had to move out of this community, leave their friends and their businesses behind and I go to them and speak to them and tell them the sentence that the extortionists have received, they cannot believe it. They look at me in disbelief and say, 'what only three years, my life is completely changed'.

Those are the difficulties that we are up against, we need tougher sentencing, legislation needs to be looked at. The Director of Public Prosecutions tends to go for the offence of blackmail as it is an easier offence to prove than section 15 of the Terrorism Act, which is more difficult to prove.

In conclusion, extortion remains a cornerstone of paramilitary fund raising activity in Northern Ireland, groups from both sides of the community expect a level of compliance, if you do not comply, you do not work in their areas. It is as simple as that. Successful police operations have resulted in several top level arrests; this has prompted extortionists to adopt more subtle and cautious approaches. The amount of money that is being raised will ensure that extortion will continue to be practised. The Police Service, the public and the Government must become more creative, innovative and supportive in order to eradicate extortion. Thank you.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

I think I speak for all of the Board Members when I say we have found both presentations sobering, to say the least.

Mrs Pauline McCabe has a question that relates to the involvement of paramilitary groups in other activity.

**Mrs Pauline McCabe:**

Could the Chief Constable comment on the extent to which paramilitary groups are now involved in the organisation of drugs trafficking and whether this involvement is increasing or decreasing?

**Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:**

Thank you, the recent successes of the Drug Squad clearly indicates to us that there is substantial paramilitary involvement at the top end of the drugs business as well as at the bottom end, which has been raised by Members of this Board very frequently.

Currently the LVF and UDA continue to be active in this field and we have had some major successes, again some recently, which I will comment on in a moment. They do not dominate the market, it is a myth to think that all

drugs activity in Northern Ireland is a result of paramilitary activity, it is not, although they are clearly trying to increase their share of the market.

What we have also seen in the last year and you will have seen because people have died as a result of it, there have been feuds over territory in relation to paramilitary groups fighting for the market, which is another fall out, another side effect of drugs activity. It is also not accurate to suggest that all drug dealing is on the loyalist side of the divide.

There is evidence clearly that republicans are also involved in this, as well as other criminal activity, to fund their organisations. We have the Drug Squad as well as other members of the Police Service of Northern Ireland currently running operations against both sides, so it is not as if it is dominated by one or the other.

In terms of the recent successes, our informed judgement is, that the increased success is a result of increased real success in policing terms, rather than an increase in market supply. We have a fairly static market here, we have a small population, 1½ million people and so demand is fairly static, so these seizures we think represent increased success from the use of intelligence from Special Branch, District Officers or from the Crime Department and acting on that intelligence and disrupting the activity.

Very briefly, to take three examples from this year, some of the biggest seizures ever recorded in Northern Ireland in February, 300,000 'e' tablets were seized at Belfast docks at a street value of £3million, we would attribute that to the LVF. In July a major seizure in Dover, which we are convinced was heading for Northern Ireland, which was intercepted by colleagues at the docks, again that was another major find, 450,000 ecstasy tablets which would have come over here and been sold to the young people in the night clubs. Very recently in August, the largest ever seizure of cannabis, 500 kilograms, street value of £2½ million which we think was a joint operation between various loyalist gangs.

I think the only observation I would make, is one which reflects on the comments made by my colleagues earlier, we are only one part of a judicial process, these successes we would say are vital in building confidence within the communities but we are determined to fight the challenge. It is worth noting that in relation, for example, to the seizure of cannabis, we objected to the bail of those 3 people on the grounds we thought they would abscond, we thought the offence was extremely serious and that they would interfere with witnesses, they were granted bail. In the even more recent one in Ballyclare, which was 120,000 ecstasy tablets, likewise we objected to bail, again generally on the same reasons, the seriousness of the offence, the risk of re-offending, the risk of absconding, these people, if convicted face very substantial prison sentences, we think that is a very real issue and again these people got bail, which is a comment I have made before. I have raised it with the Ministers who are very interested in it, I think it is our obligation. It may well be that the legalisation needs to be looked at because I would not and I do not want to comment on individual cases in terms of decisions, but I think it is something that does need to be looked at if we are to build confidence in our communities in Northern Ireland.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

I should emphasis for the benefit of members of the public that these questions tend to cover a broad area. Question 11 relating to violent crime, Mr Sam Foster.

**Mr Sam Foster:**

Chief Constable, considering the fears of the community because of violent crime, does the Chief Constable feel the need for an increase of police personnel, thus showing a more visible presence, from which criminal activity may be curbed, reducing crime and also becoming a necessary deterrent for any intended criminal activity? Would he also agree that more police presence throughout the community regains links with the people?

**Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:**

Thank you, I think the first point to make is that we have in Northern Ireland just under 9,000 police officers for a population of about 1.6million, which is about 3½ times more than any other Police Service in the United Kingdom, for very obvious and understandable reasons which I do not need to rehearse with the Board. You will also be aware of our Human Resource Strategy, which has been approved and has been supervised and monitored by the Board, which is to concentrate on the front end of the business rather than the office end of the business. We are committed to getting as many police officers as we can on the front line.

In terms of recruitment, which is also I think worth noting, we set a target of 540 per annum until we reach our ceiling of 7,500 regular officers, I think we are on target and the quality for our recruits here is extremely high and that is not just my observation, that is the observations of street officers who I meet who are working with them. So, we are maximising our recruitment, which is limited at the moment by funding, but also by the capacity of our current college, but we are working on our new college as you are aware.

I also, as you know, asked the Board to stop severance last year, to enable me to keep the levels up and the expertise within the organisation and we continue to re-deploy officers away from headquarters and ... (sound recording fault) ... and reducing levels of sickness from 1,000 to 600 officers per days means that there are over 350 extra officers per day, available for extra duty on the streets of Northern Ireland. In terms of deployment on the front end we have 105 dedicated neighbourhood policing teams now across the Province and that consists in real terms of 103 sergeants and 631 constables dedicated to front line policing. In terms of visibility and the impact on crime, I am fully aware of the community problems and issues and would like to see a visible presence. I have no difficulty with that, but I think we do have a fairly visible Police Service in Northern Ireland, certainly compared to many of my colleagues who do not have the numbers I have to deploy on the streets. But it is worth noting I suppose, that in terms of does that reduce

crime per se, the chance of a randomly patrolling officer coming across a burglary that he or she would likely to come across is one in seven or eight years on that basis. Of course, our problem is far more intense than that. We focus on hot spots, on the high crime areas, but I think before ...(tape unclear).... I need to be sure that the ones we have are deployed in the best possible way.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr.

**Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:**

It is really following on from the presentations by Detective Superintendent Sproule and Detective Chief Inspector Adair. I think this presentation was dynamite and it shows quite clearly we have a mafia society here and I think we have to show what support we can give to the law enforcement agencies to ensure that crime is beaten.

Now, there was a proposal made here that we should be bringing forward a new offence to tackle this crime. Will that new offence also be able, would that bringing forward of new legislation also be able to protect people who come to you with information about extortion, with information about crime, about drug crime. I know constituents that come to me and they have said, 'I have given the police this information' and then whenever they consider what could happen to them, their wives and families, they back off and the police then are not able to get these "low lifes" off the streets. I wonder if you could indicate the sort of legislation that would be required to help us, then the Board could then press that with the Secretary of State. Would Superintendent Sproule be able to give us more information on the paramilitary groups, since 93% of these groups are paramilitary organisations, who are the market leaders, who are really at the cutting edge

of this crime, so as we can see exactly what they are doing and what communities they are torturing?

**Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:**

Several supplementary questions rolled into one. In broad terms, we do have a lot of legislation which we can use.

We have been successful in the last year where we have needed new legislation we have gone to Government and they have supported us. Less importantly, we have been promised the power of arrest for disqualified driving, a minor matter but very important in keeping the death drivers of the road. Government listens to our concerns, the Law and Order Action Group are happy to engage in debate around what else we need, so I can take it to that group to take it forward. We have already witnessed, for example, issues such as the proposed new public order legislation.

I think you have identified the key issue, we need victims, to prove a case, to get the evidential stand that we need people who are victims of this crime. Now, there are some very clever strategies that have been deployed by Andy's Unit to try and exclude the need for independent witnesses, witnesses to give evidence, through proactive police operations which we control. You understand, I do not want to go into too much detail about that, because there are many ongoing operations and I will hand over to Andy in terms of some of the other issues, but we do have strategies to disrupt. We have identified people, we have arrested and convicted people. Again, it is very hard to convince players that we mean business, when the people who are convicted get fairly light sentences, and bearing in mind the procedure here where 50% automatic remission, in reality means an 18-month sentence. I do not know if Andy wants to comment on the particular issues around the market leaders?

**Detective Superintendent Andrew Sproule**

From the perspective of intellectual property crime, all shades of paramilitaries are involved in intellectual property crime. Wherever there is a market, a niche, organised criminality will find it and they will move on with technology, where videos some years ago were the big thing, now it is DVDs and CDs and so on. They are innovative, they are entrepreneurs and they are able and willing to use violence to further their gain. But it is not one particular organisation who would be the market leader, all organisations are involved.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

Mr Denis Bradley has a question on auto crime.

**Mr Denis Bradley:**

Chief Constable, following the success achieved by the Auto Crime Team in West Belfast, have you any plans to extend the initiative to other parts of Northern Ireland?

**Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:**

The other thing I think worth noting is that in West Belfast vehicle related crime has been recognised as a priority simply because the fact that over 70% of all vehicles stolen from Northern Ireland are stolen from that particular district, but more important 25% of all stolen vehicles in Northern Ireland are recovered in West Belfast. Which is why that particular District Commander identified the problem, worked out a plan to deal with it and it has been extremely successful. As a result, there is a lot of confidence in the community, that historically may not have had much trust in us, and I have been out to meet some of those people.

The point in terms of drawing it out across Northern Ireland is a matter for my District Commanders. I have given devolved power to my District Commanders to deal with their local issues, in consultation with their local communities, and now with District Policing Partnerships and I will ask them to account for performances. So it is a matter for them to decide how they

deal with car crime at a local level and I think that is important, I think that is why we pay them, what we hold them to account for is performance. So if they fail to deliver against targets, set by this Board and naturally then they have to answer to me and my top team. If they are not addressing it in a similar way, identifying what is the best plan, what we do is to make sure the best practice from across Northern Ireland, and there are all sorts of initiatives going on, depending on what the local need is, are shared among the District Commanders so they can benefit and learn, and we do not spend our time re-inventing the wheel. I have no plans to tell my District Commanders to deal with this in one way, because I think what works in West Belfast may not work in Moyle, or in Antrim, it has to be dealt with by the local District Commanders. I think the other way is through District Policing Partnerships, if they debate with the local commanders, that may also have some impact on how we do our business.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

Could the Chief Constable comment on the extent to which the Police Service can influence the siting of bonfires, which sometimes are located in dangerous positions?

**Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:**

It is a very interesting question and something that we are thinking of doing a lot more work on. Currently there is no specific legalisation that we can use to regulate the size of the bonfire, although coming from a different world, it is probably unique to the United Kingdom that people are allowed to set fire to main roads and local areas on that particular night without the fear of any sort of supervision or sanction. It is a complex issue framed round the history of Northern Ireland. My preferred choice would be a partnership based approach.

We work very closely with the fire brigade, I met the new Chief of Fire Service yesterday, who was very interested in working with us and I am meeting Chief Executive of the Housing Executive, tomorrow or the next day, to see if we

could actually create some sort of working partnership involving the community contacts and the councils. We have to start thinking about moving to designated sites, supervised by their councils, so they could have the opportunity to have their bonfires, but everyone else could go about their normal business. I think that might work but we need to start now, rather than on the 10 July, which you may have seen done historically. Currently in terms of hard legalisation, there is none.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

Question relating to .....

**Lord Kilclooney**

Sorry I want to come in with a supplementary on that, because bonfires on the 11<sup>th</sup> night are one of our great traditions in Northern Ireland, and a most enjoyable evening for many people, I hope you will take into account, this year they were better patrolled and the Head of the Fire Brigade did say that they had less problems this year than in any previous year?

**Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:**

I think that is right and I think what is really positive, we saw this year were far more national flags and far less paramilitary flags and certainly some of my District Commanders took some very fast action in places where the flags were clearly inflammatory. In terms of bonfires, I think it was better but it could be a lot better. The notion that the Roads Agency has to pay tens of thousands of pounds the following month, to put the roads back in order needs to be looked at. I fully recognise the fact that it is getting a lot better, I was out the whole night of the 11 July.

**Lord Kilclooney**

I hope you enjoyed it? *[laughter]*

**Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde**

I was too busy, but there does come a stage when people should not be allowed to put barricades across a road, they should not be allowed to set fire

to tarmac, but they should be allowed to have an enjoyable evening, as safely as can be, in an environment where everyone can enjoy themselves.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

Question on illegal street traders, Sammy Wilson.

**Mr Sammy Wilson:**

Chief Constable, we have heard today about the extent of counterfeiting etc, and one of the major outlets for that is the local street traders. Legislation was introduced by the Northern Ireland Assembly for local councils to take action against illegal street traders. However, I know from my own experience in Belfast City Council, officers from the council cannot go out to do that duty without police support, because on many occasions they have been attacked by the street traders themselves because of the paramilitary muscle which they bring to their activities. Could you give us some indications as to why there is not a general directive, given there is this push against counterfeiting crime, why there has not been a general directive from headquarters to District Commanders to give support to local councils? Why has it been left to District Commanders to decide whether or not they are going to devote resources to helping and supporting council officers? Also since there is general concern in Belfast about the extent of illegal street trading, despite the fact the legislation has been in place now for a year and a half, why you have refused to meet with the representatives of the Belfast Business Community to discuss what could be done to get illegal street traders of the streets?

**Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:**

First of all, I did not know I had refused to meet them, I have in Belfast four extremely capable District Commanders who are charged with the responsibility of delivering local policing and working with the councils, which I know they do and working with the business community, which I know they do, to bring these issues to a successful conclusion.

In terms of your issue, if I can be specific, South Belfast DCU does support the council. It is interesting that actually only Belfast City Council has sought to establish an enforcement policy under this legislation which came into force in November 2001. We did work with the council on their first seizure operation, we have a joint involvement protocol with them and we do continue to support them. One of the reasons we do not act on our own is I think council should be in on it and also there is an issue about storage. To date I am told Belfast City Council has a large warehouse of 6, forty foot containers filled with illegal purchases, and that does not include the hot food stands which have been closed down under the Safe Streets Campaign that is being run by South Belfast as well. So I think there is a lot of activity going on at the right level. I do meet with Members of the business community frequently, and I am happy to meet with the council, but I do think that these sorts of issues are best dealt with at a local level where the local commander can deploy resources as appropriate.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

A question on justice for all, Sam Foster.

**Mr Sam Foster:**

Chief Constable, great stress has directly been placed on the PSNI to bring to justice the killers in the Omagh atrocity of 1998. What steps are being taken to do likewise in rooting out the killers of the Enniskillen Cenotaph on Remembrance Day in 1987? Further, there is a thrust towards seeking out the murderers of some individuals who were victims of terrorism, but this thrust appears very one sided in that a number of individuals who are serving in Her Majesty's Forces seemingly have no consequence, indeed many civilians appear forgotten about too. Are some victims lesser mortals than others, is such trust not very discriminatory, adding hurt and resentment to many loved ones, who are nothing more than just good citizens of Northern Ireland, but still sorrowing over their loved ones?

**Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde**

Chairman, I will ask ACC Sam Kincaid who is the Commander of Crime Operations to go into detail, but no one is of no consequence as far as the Police Service in Northern Ireland is concerned. There is no hierarchy of victims in our book and the resource issue has been rehearsed frequently, I do not intend to repeat it. We do have a plan in terms of reviewing historic cases, I am fully aware that this was raised by Irwin Montgomery at the Police Federation Conference very eloquently yesterday, around the concerns round the murdered police officers who are again another group who are equally important to us. But I think it is also worth noting in his speech yesterday, he made the point that our officers have no lingering concerns about what is being done. The question is what is not being done and how can we address it and I think that is a fair point very well made, but I will hand over to Sam to deal with the detail.

**Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Sam Kinkaid:**

Could I just begin by saying the Police Service has a responsibility under Section 32 of the Police Act to professionally investigate any evidential opportunity that exists for an unsolved murder. The Police Service is currently carrying out enquiries into a number of historic cases, where evidence opportunities have been found to exist. As is normal practice, we limit what we say publicly about such investigations. Can I categorically state that each case is judged on its merits and prior to this meeting I analysed the work currently being carried out in what are commonly called historic cases. I can reveal that it is not one sided in terms of the types of cases that are being carried out. They include murders by both by republican and loyalist terrorists and we have recently also looked at new lines of enquiry in a number of cases where police officers were murdered.

A new Crime Operations Department will have a province-wide responsibility for dealing with all correspondence and actions relating to historic cases. As the ACC I will have to decide on the action taken ... (tape unclear) .... we will take forward every evidential opportunity that can be advanced. Secondly what other priorities exist currently, in relation to serious and organised crime,

and you have heard a presentation, prior to me speaking in terms of some sorts of priorities that exist for us and the need we have to put detectives to meet the crime targets set by this Policing Board is also relevant, so those are the two key factors that I have to look at in terms of historic cases.

**Mr Sam Foster:**

Chairman, if I may come back on just one point please? The Enniskillen bomb 16 years ago (tape unclear) very, very disappointing for that part of the world.

**Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Sam Kinkaid:**

Can I just say Chairman, that is not correct. I am going to limit what I say, but there have been aspects and they have been looked at in a number of investigations. One of them has been, for example, the bomb that went off at the Cenotaph. We have looked at different times, at various opportunities that have existed, to perhaps take that investigation on and that is currently one of the ones that we have been looking at in terms of new evidence opportunities. Because of the nature of the enquires that were carried out in that particular area, we do not publicise that, and there are good practice reasons for that, we are not in the business of advertising what we are doing to suspects.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

Mr Sammy Wilson has a supplementary.

**Mr Sammy Wilson:**

Chief Constable, despite what has been said here today, there is a general perception that the investigations into historic crimes have tended to be one sided and the Police Federation made it clear that they feel that there has not been the same activity given to following up the murders of the police officers

as some other cases. A recent one, and I think Sam Foster has highlighted it, recently the police undertook an investigation into a murder which occurred, I think it was 1972, by raiding the homes of ex UDR men in the Trillick area. I just want to ask a number of questions about it.

First of all, was new evidence produced that provoked this? Or was it simply because of the siren cries of Sinn Fein?

Secondly, why was it, given there is immense dissident republican activity in that area, why was it felt necessary to almost identify people, some of whom had left the security forces a long time ago, by having up to six police vehicles arrive at their homes and raid those homes. If questions had to be asked, why could the people involved not have been asked to come down to the station?

Thirdly, given the fact that the police themselves on the 6 November 1998, identified, less than six miles away, two of the people who were involved in the Omagh bomb, to the point where the Chief Inspector, actually told the Sunday Express what dole office they went to, how much dole they received, can we expect the same kind of diligence and enthusiasm in pursuing those particular individuals?

**Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:**

I will hand over to ACC Kinkaid to do the detail, but in broad terms the issue for us is not one of ... (tape unclear) ... it is the issue of our chances of getting success in criminal investigations. As a Board, you are only too well aware of our shortage of detectives and deploying detectives on jobs, where we have no extra leads to follow is not time well spent. I think it is also worth noting and it is in danger of being missed all the time, the immense amount of effort put in by police officers in the RUC, over time to solve these murders, including the ones of their colleagues, in extremely difficult circumstances where they had far less resources than I now enjoy, I will ask Sam to deal with the detail on that particular investigation.

**Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Sam Kinkaid:**

The particular investigation you are talking about is a live one where we currently have a number of officers looking at specific lines of enquiry and it was one that fits into the criteria that I spoke about earlier, quite clearly. It is run as a proper investigation to the standards that we have in terms of a murder investigation manual that we apply to our investigations. So issues to do with things like searches would be one set out in a criteria and advanced by the Senior Investigating Officer for it.

I have been kept briefed on the line of enquiries that the Senior Investigating Officers followed and I find it is a relevant investigation. It may have got more publicity, not always for reasons to do with the police, but it is interesting to note, that at the same time that was going on, we arrested a number of suspects from republican terrorist groups in that same area, for the murders of police officers, which involved the same style of searches and people who got interviewed and brought in and there were not the same issues raised. Both investigations to my mind were handled the same way, in terms of at the same time, a new investigatory opportunity came in and the police professionally looked at it and dealt with it. You have to accept that if we decide there are investigatory opportunities there is a standard model that comes into play for how that investigation takes place and the types of enquiries and searches that go on and I am quite satisfied that searches and enquiries were carried on by the Senior Detective were proper and professional and were to the standard that I would expect them to do, bearing in mind the nature of the serious crime that they may be investigating.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

Final supplementary to Mr Foster's question, Willie Hay.

**Mr William Hay:**

Chairman, this follows on from what Sam Foster was saying and it is about the extradition of Eddie McNicholl from the South of Ireland to Northern

Ireland. This is a man who was charged in relation to the murder of an RUC Officer in July 1975. He was held on remand in the Maze Jail and he escaped, illegally entered America, he was deported recently from the United States. The question I want to ask you Chief Constable, I suppose to reassure the family of this particular victim, is the PSNI actively pursuing the extradition of McNicholl, from the South of Ireland to Northern Ireland, because there are certainly a number of public statements about this case and one of the public statements that I have seen in at least two papers is that this man will not be extradited from the Republic, provided the INLA ceasefire holds. Are there any political stoppages, either from the South of Ireland or from the Northern Ireland Office that stops this man being extradited?

**Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:**

It is difficult to deal with particular cases, without some sort of prior notice but I will certainly get back to you on the detail of it. But in broad terms there is no one at political level who can influence our investigations.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

We are reluctant ... (tape unclear) ... members of the public (tape unclear) about particular cases.

**Mr William Hay:**

I would have thought Chairman on a general question, I have asked, I would have thought that some senior police officer would have been able to tell to me today and the general public on the extradition of this man, has he been actually involved?

**Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:**

As you are fully aware there are 1,800 unsolved murders, I cannot deal in detail with it, as I will certainly deal with it outside this meeting but I cannot deal with it now.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

Joe Byrne, this is the final question, the Police Service IS Strategy.

**Mr Joe Byrne:**

Chairman, can I ask the Chief Constable, owing to the fact that modern policing very often requires intelligence based information, what is happening in relation to bringing in a new IT Strategy for PSNI, given that about £100 k will be spent on this item.

**Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:**

I will ask ACC Roy Toner to deal with that issue.

**Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:**

As you are aware from the Patten recommendations, Patten identified the shortcomings within the RUC as was and PSNI as is, in relation to information technology and an external Independent Validator was appointed to monitor the progress towards achieving the requirements of our information technology and information systems strategy.

Now, what we have in place is planned to deliver 85% of that strategy within the five year deadline, that is August 2006. That will be all remission critical systems, in other words the systems that the operational officers and colleagues that are beside me here in organised crime, all those different departments all the critical systems will be in place by August 2006. The remaining 15% of the strategy will slip a further 18 months after that, that is because we are trying to have a more integrated and more properly resourced information system within the organisation in that intervening period. In other words we are proposing to do more than was originally envisaged in the original strategy.

The actual budgetary requirements for this are £79 million over the five years of the programmes. We are on target within those budgets at this time.

There are two additional factors at the moment that we are addressing, one is the Causeway Programme, which is, I am sure colleagues around the table will know, is the integration of all the Criminal Justice Agencies on an IT based platform. So that in the future, Court Service can communicate and transfer information directly to the PSNI, we can transfer information directly to the Prison Service etc. We are working steadily towards that and we are making very good progress. As well as that, within the European Union the Schengen arrangement will require any officer within any of the agreed European Union States, to be able to do a check on an individual or a vehicle in relation to whether that individual or vehicle is wanted, and also in relation to extradition requests as well. So in future we will be part of the system as will the Garda Siochana, as will all the other Police Services in the United Kingdom and the European Union States, so the likelihood is that we will be working towards one of our officers will be able to do a check on their new digital radio system which we are bringing in from next year and it will be a European wide check on individuals, which we hope will be significant advances, specifically in relation to some of the issues that colleagues raised here, in relation to the intellectual property rights and that type of organized crime across the whole of Europe. So basically we are on target, 85% will be delivered on time and we are on budget.

**Mr Fred Cobain**

Just a question to Mr Adair about extortion. Mr Adair raised the issue about inflated contracts as far as house building was concerned. You know Chairman, that we raised this specific issue with the Security Minister, about contracts being inflated through extortion, both in the private sector and the public sector housing field. You will be interested to know that a letter was received back from the Security Minister, she dismissed that issue and said there were no inflationary prices, either in the public or private sector.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

Chief Constable you will take that as a comment rather than a question.

**Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:**

Mr Chairman just on the issue of instilling confidence into policing. We have heard a lot of things which would make the community really frightened about what is going on in society, and we have heard from the police the big black hole that there is in terms of legislation that is required to address these issues. There are also other matters which I think the police have to address in terms of making sure that who they recruit are properly vetted so we do not get dodgy people doing the policing, because that would drive more people away from the police instead of driving them into the arms of the police.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

An apology at this moment in time to members of the public and to our media colleagues, for the breakdown in the sound system, it appears to have been some sort of power surge which has affected the system.

Thank you in particular to Detective Superintendent Alan Sproule and Inspector Esmond Adair for their presentations today and to you Chief Constable and your colleagues for taking questions at this session. That concludes the session, thank you.