

Statement from the Pat Finucane Centre

06 July 2007

"While carrying out research the PFC recently discovered a document outlining the British military view of its own role, function, successes and failures from 1969 to 2006. The document, [Operation Banner - An Analysis of Military Operations in Northern Ireland](#) () offers an unprecedented and deeply worrying insight into the thinking of senior military officers and civil servants at the Ministry of Defence in Whitehall. Above all the document betrays a profoundly colonial mindset towards the conflict here and those involved in it. From the perspective of Whitehall the rolling hills of Tyrone and Armagh might as well have been the Hindu Kush a century ago.

Significant dates are wrong while significant historical events have been omitted or misinterpreted. Loyalist violence and the links between loyalist paramilitaries and the state has been airbrushed out of this military history, prepared 'under the Direction of the Chief of the General Staff'. In 2006, when the document was written, the CGS was General Mike Jackson who drew up the notorious 'shot list' in the hours after Bloody Sunday.

The British Government has long sought to portray its role here as that of the neutral broker, the referee between two warring factions. This document, which was not intended to be made public, makes no such pretence. According to the MoD there was only one war and one enemy - the IRA. Loyalist paramilitaries on the other hand were 'respectable'.

This deeply flawed document is powerful evidence of why we need to deal with the past honestly and openly. We have written to Defence Secretary Des Browne demanding that the MoD withdraw this document and that he write to specific families in Derry and South Armagh to apologise for comments contained in the text.

It is clear that the document was not intended to be put in the public domain. We are making it temporarily [available on our website](#) () in case the MoD attempts to restrict access.

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