



Less Lethal Weapons development in the UK

The journey, for those of us in Northern Ireland at least, began with the Good Friday Agreement in April 1998. That in turn set up the Independent Report on Policing headed by Chris Patten which included experts such as Cathy O'Toole.

The Patten Report was published five years ago. A whole chapter dealt with Public Order Policing. I quote:

“A major and controversial feature of policing in Northern Ireland has been Public Order Policing”.

“The most controversial aspect of Public Order Policing in Northern Ireland has been the weaponry used by the police, in particular plastic baton rounds”.

“We were able to discover very little research work was being done in the United Kingdom (except in the development of more accurate plastic baton rounds). By contrast we were impressed by the efforts being made and the commitment to develop non-lethal weaponry alternatives in the United States, particularly at the Institute for Non-Lethal Defence Technologies at Pennsylvania State University and the National Institute of Justice in Washington”.

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