

The Conference also discussed the question of policing and the need to ensure public support for and identification with the police service throughout the whole community. It was agreed that no single set of proposals would achieve these aims overnight, and that time would be necessary. The Conference expressed the hope that the wide range of agreements that had been reached, and the consequent formation of a power-sharing Executive, would make a major contribution to the creation of an atmosphere throughout the community where there would be widespread support for and identification with all the institutions of Northern Ireland.

It was also broadly accepted that the two parts of Ireland are to a considerable extent inter-dependent in the whole field of law and order, and that the problems of political violence and identification with the police service cannot be solved without taking account of that fact.

Accordingly, HMG stated that at an appropriate time and in circumstances which would be acceptable to the people of Northern Ireland as a whole, they would wish to discuss the devolution of responsibility for normal policing and how this might be achieved with the Northern Ireland Executive and the Police.

With a view to improving policing throughout the island and developing community identification with and support for the police services, the governments concerned would cooperate under the aegis of a Council of Ireland through their respective police authorities.

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To this end, the Irish Government would set up a Police Authority. It was agreed that appointments would be made to each police authority by the governments concerned after consultation with the Council of Ministers of the Council of Ireland. In addition, the following arrangements will apply when the two Police Authorities are in existence:

- (a) A Standing Joint Police Authorities' Committee with equal membership from both authorities will be constituted under the aegis of the Council of Ireland. It will submit reports to the top tier of the Council. This Standing Committee will be able to discuss and report on all matters within the purview of the Police Authorities.
- (b) The Standing Joint Police Authorities' Committee will receive regular reports from both Police Authorities within their purview.
- (c) The Council of Ireland will establish an independent complaints procedure for dealing with complaints against the police.
- (d) The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland will set up a working party including representatives from the Alliance Party, the Social Democratic and Labour Party and the Ulster Unionist Party and members of the Police Association to examine how best to introduce effective policing throughout Northern Ireland with particular reference to the need to achieve public identification with the police.