

COMPARISON OF BASIC PRINCIPLES IN ADAMS' 13 JANUARY 1994  
PRESS RELEASE AND THE JOINT DECLARATION

1. Adams - the Irish people as a whole have a right to national self-determination.

Joint Declaration

Para 4 recognises that the people living on the island of Ireland have a right to self-determination. This is consistent with the Adams formulation, in that the British Government, by recognising that right, (however qualified) has accepted that it will not override the decision of the people living on the island of Ireland.

HMG has, therefore, in the JD ceded any active role for itself in the determination of constitutional issues on the island of Ireland - a fundamental objective of Irish nationalism. Moreover provision in the JD that self-determination is to be exercised "by agreement between the two parts" is not inconsistent with the provision in the 26 April 1993 Hume/Adams statement to the effect that "The exercise of self-determination is a matter for agreement between the people of Ireland".

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2. Adams - an internal settlement is not a solution.

Joint Declaration

Para 2 of the JD states that it is the aim of both Governments to foster agreement and reconciliation, leading to a new framework ..... encompassing arrangements within Northern Ireland, for the whole island and between these islands - ie not an internal settlement, though arrangements within Northern Ireland would form part of the comprehensive settlement.

This reaffirmed the 3-stranded analysis underlying the 26 March 1991 statement by Mr Brooke, an analysis which has been reflected in many public statements.

An example is the Secretary of State's Liverpool speech, which stated that "any Talks [must] address ... all the relationships involved: those within Northern Ireland ... ; those between North and South; and those between the United Kingdom and Irish Governments." This is clearly incompatible with the notion of a purely internal settlement, and thus clearly meets the requirements of the Adams principle.

3. Adams - the unionists cannot have a veto over British policy.

Joint Declaration

No veto over British policy is given to unionists as such. The only veto which the Joint Declaration embodies is the right of a majority in NI (implicitly unionists for the time being), to withhold their

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consent from "any change in the status of Northern Ireland".

Thus the JD meets the essential requirements of the Adams principle. It also, helpfully from a nationalist point of view, limits the application of the veto by a majority in NI.

In any case, British policy on the constitutional issues, including the right of self-determination by the people of the island of Ireland, as set out in the JD, has been settled and endorsed (in the JD) by the Irish Government, main Irish opposition parties, and the SDLP, as well as most unionists - representing a substantial majority of the people living on the island of Ireland.

4. Adams - the consent and allegiance of unionists, expressed through an accommodation with the rest of the Irish people, are essential ingredients if a lasting peace is to be established.

Joint Declaration

The JD makes the consent of a majority in NI (presently but not necessarily permanently unionist) a condition of "any change in the status of NI" and specifically refers to HMG willingness, if that condition is satisfied, to legislate or to give effect to a united Ireland "or equally to any measure of agreement on future relationships in Ireland which the people living in Ireland may themselves freely so determine without external impediment."

Thus the JD seems to meet the requirements of the Adams principle.

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5. Adams - the British Government must join the persuaders.

The JD opens the door for SF to enter an inclusive process. While it is not specified at this point in the Press Release, it may be assumed that HMG is being asked to persuade unionists that their future lies in a united Ireland. This would involve exploratory dialogue with Sinn Féin on how they might be brought into a talks process.

Joint Declaration

The JD provides for HMG "to encourage, facilitate and enable the achievements of agreement [among all the people who inhabit the island] which will embrace the totality of relationships". This is framed in the context that both British and Irish Governments agree that the outcome of the exercise of self-determination cannot be pre-determined; but also that the Irish government has indicated, in the JD, that it will do all it can to increase trust and understanding and will examine aspects of the Irish State which can be represented as a real and substantial threat to the unionist way of life ethos.

6. Adams - the two governments have the major responsibility to secure political progress.

Joint Declaration

The JD itself, and the commitment to and involvement of the two governments in the Talks process, demonstrate that this requirement has been met.

7. Adams - a process to realise these principles .... containing the political dynamic which could create the conditions for a lasting peace and a total demilitarisation of the situation.

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Joint Declaration

The JD opens the door for SF to enter an inclusive political process if there is a permanent cessation of PIRA violence.

This process would involve exploratory dialogue with Sinn Fein on how they might be brought into a Talks process involving both government and all the NI parties, with the objective of reaching an agreement which would form the basis of lasting peace in the island of Ireland.

In the Coleraine speech and elsewhere, the Secretary of State has made it clear that a permanent cessation of violence would have profound implications for troop deployments in NI.

Thus, in various ways, a process has been clearly signalled.

Adams inaccuracies on page 9 - 10

8. Adams attributes a number of positions to HMG which are both inaccurate in themselves and not contained in the JD. Some of them have been misconstrued from eg the Prime Minister's explanations of what the JD does not do:

- no to the value of a united Ireland/no to joint authority.

The JD is silent on both, and therefore leaves the decision on them to the people of the island of Ireland. HMG has not ruled them out and cannot rule

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them out because the JD gives the people of the island of Ireland the right to self-determination.

- no to any timetable for a united Ireland.

A timetable set by HMG would be inconsistent with self-determination by the people of the island of Ireland and with HMG taking no part in its exercise.

- no to Britain joining the persuaders.

As qualified above.

- no to any change in the unionist veto.

There is no veto for unionists as such, but only for a democratic majority in NI in relation to "any change of the status of NI".

9. Although only tangentially referred to in the press release, it would be helpful if we could (again) correct the Sinn Fein assertion that, following a cessation of violence, exploratory dialogue with Sinn Fein would be concerned solely or primarily with the question of PIRA arms surrenders. The central objective would be to deal with a range of issues, the resolution of which would enable Sinn Fein to be brought into an inclusive political process.

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