

POSSIBLE BRITISH VERSION OF PARAGRAPH 4 OF JOINT DECLARATION

4.10.93

4. In confirming its wish, and its commitment to ensure, that Northern Ireland should remain in the United Kingdom unless and until that might cease to be the wish of a majority of its people, and that it would be wrong to change that status without the consent of such a majority, the British Government affirms nonetheless that it would have no selfish strategic or economic interest in retaining Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom against the wishes of its people; that its primary interest is to see peace, stability and reconciliation established by agreement among all the people who inhabit the island; and that it will work together with the Irish Government to achieve such an agreement which will embrace the totality of relationships. At the same time, the British Government:

(i) confirms that the future status of Northern Ireland should only be determined on the basis of concurrent consent, North and South, of the people living in Ireland;

(ii) accepts and acknowledges accordingly that if, but only if, a majority in each part of Ireland freely expressed the wish that there should be a united Ireland then this should come about;

(iii) confirms its wish to see agreement reached between the people of the island of Ireland, North and South, on arrangements, structures or institutions to which all the people living in Ireland could give assent and support;

(iv) confirms that such arrangements, structures or institutions may if so empowered by the relevant Parliaments take the form of agreed independent

SECRET and PERSONAL

structures for the island as a whole;

(v) confirms, in particular, that if, in the future, a majority of the people of Northern Ireland clearly wish for and formally consent to the establishment of a united Ireland, it will introduce and support legislation to give effect to that wish;

(vi) acknowledges, accordingly, a binding obligation to work to implement without impediment any measure of agreement on future relationships in the island of Ireland whether of this character or any other which the people living in the North and South respectively may themselves freely determine and consent to;

and accordingly hereby acknowledges the legitimacy of claims to rights of self-determination made by the people of the island of Ireland, North and South. The British Government believes that the people of Britain would wish, in friendship to them, to encourage the people of the island of Ireland, North and South, to reach agreement on how they may live in concord, harmony and partnership, showing respect for their diverse traditions and fully recognising the special links and the unique relationship which exists between the people of Britain and Ireland. The British Government will seek, consistently with the foregoing, to assist and enable such a process over a period of dialogue and co-operation based on full respect for the rights and identities of both traditions in Ireland.