

NORTHERN IRELAND: JOINT DECLARATION

There are high expectations that the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach will take an important initiative at their Summit in December, and in particular will seek to initiate a peace process.

2. The attached annexes summarise recent developments and analyse the options.

3. The critical recent developments have been these:

- Archbishop Eames has suggested two sets of amendments to the Joint Declaration and largely cleared them with the Taoiseach. The version incorporating all these amendments is at Annex B
- Mr Molyneaux was reported by the Archbishop as having amendments of his own to suggest to paragraphs 9-11. But Mr Molyneaux has declined to do so. Instead, in the wake of last Friday's leak to the Irish Press, he has issued a statement over the weekend accusing diplomats in London and Dublin of shamefully exploiting the desire for peace
- the Provisionals are pressing for the Joint Declaration approach, although Martin Mansergh has indicated that they are not signed up to the most recent version. Hume and Adams issued a further joint statement over the weekend
- while publicly the Irish Government now accepts that peace and the Talks are parallel and complementary objectives, in private they have been briefing widely in order to put pressure on HMG to take a peace initiative with them. Over the weekend the Taoiseach

has, however, further distanced himself from Hume/Adams as an initiative coming from one side of the community only

- the Irish joint framework document leaked in the Irish "Press" on 19 November has been presented as incorporating the British Declaration required by Hume/Adams. The Taoiseach has denied that this document has anything to do with a peace process, and has disowned the draft. It is in fact an official level draft of the Irish side's input, for which the British side has been pressing since September, to the primarily Talks-related work which has been going on in the Liaison Group.

4. The recommendations in the attachment are as follows:

- HMG should put to the Irish Government, at an early meeting of the Butler/Nally Group, its own draft Joint Statement for the Summit. The version at Annex C is not a defensive document, but one which would test just as strongly as the Joint Declaration whether the Provisionals will end violence when it comes to the crunch. It incorporates much of the Joint Declaration language, and all of the amendments proposed by Archbishop Eames. The main overall difference from the Joint Declaration is that the draft Joint Statement at Annex C provides a more balanced framework, clearly incorporating the necessary guarantees. It is also drafted to be more clearly compatible with the Talks process. For these reasons it would provide a better position for us if there were to be a cessation of violence which failed

- the key decision is whether this version, or a less forward draft designed primarily to defend HMG's position, should be put to the Irish side. The papers recommend the former course. This will need to be reviewed at the meeting in the light of the most recent contacts with Mr Molyneaux and assessment of the political considerations
- if Annex C were put to the Irish side, this should be on the basis that we were not prepared to enter indirect negotiations through them with the Provisionals over it; but also that this language would only be available for the Summit Joint Statement if the Taoiseach had given his prior guarantee that in his view it would produce renunciation of violence by the Provisionals
- the meeting will need to consider whether any text put to the Irish side should first be tried on Mr Molyneaux, or some other appropriate judge of Unionist reaction. (Mr Molyneaux could not be expected, and should not be asked, expressly to approve any text for this purpose.)
- the handling of John Hume, if such a Joint Statement were made at the Summit, would need to be discussed with the Irish side. We should insist that he would not be given any role in putting the text back to the Provisionals, or in the staging of the Joint Statement at the Summit
- we should not table in advance of the Summit, either privately or publicly, a response to the leaked Irish document. This would be misinterpreted as carrying forward the outcome of Hume/Adams, from which we must maintain our distance

- the Summit should be deferred until later in December. Apart from the difficulties with the previously proposed date of 3 December, a later date will increase the pressure on the Provisionals, given the pattern of speculation in previous years by mid-December as to whether the Provisionals' customary Christmas ceasefire will be extended

- as part of the handling plan for the Summit, there may be a case for releasing in London on the eve of the Summit some of the language to be attributed to the British side in the draft Joint Statement. This could help to defuse some of the inevitable suspicion in the majority community in Northern Ireland. Further contact will be needed with Mr Molyneaux, Archbishop Eames and others over how best to minimise any adverse short term impact.

Northern Ireland Office  
22 November 1993