

Prime Minister

See highlights. This means
the N-Ireland talks can go ahead
on Monday.

file ✓

JOINT STATEMENT

ANGLO-IRISH INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE

Laphu

DUBLIN 6 MARCH 1992

6/3

1. A meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference was held in Dublin on 6 March, 1992. The British Government was represented by the Joint Chairman, the Right Honourable Peter Brooke, M.P., Secretary of State for Northern Ireland accompanied by Dr Brian Mawhinney, MP, Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office. The Irish Government was represented by the Joint Chairman, Mr David Andrews, TD, Minister for Foreign Affairs and by Mr Padraig Flynn, TD, Minister for Justice. The Northern Ireland Minister for the Economy, Mr Richard Needham, MP, and the Minister for Industry and Commerce, Mr Desmond O'Malley, TD, joined the Conference for a discussion on North-South trade and the implications of the Single European Market for the island of Ireland. The Chief Constable of the RUC and the Commissioner of the Garda Síochána were present for discussion of security matters.

POLITICAL TALKS

2. The Conference welcomed recent political developments which had removed obstacles in the way of political talks. Accordingly, in order to allow an opportunity for talks to take place on the basis announced by the Secretary of State in the House of Commons on 26 March 1991, the two Governments have agreed that there will be no further meeting of the Conference until after the British General Election has been called. The talks would then cease. The two Governments envisage that a Conference will be held very shortly after the Election and that that Conference will decide, taking account of discussions in the meantime with the Northern Ireland

party leaders, a further interval between Conference meetings in order to provide an opportunity for talks to be resumed on the same basis.

SECURITY SITUATION

3. The Conference condemned recent acts of terrorist violence which have left such a toll of death, misery and destruction in their wake. They reiterated their determination that terrorism should not be allowed to dictate the agenda in either part of Ireland and welcomed the activities of community groups in opposing terrorism. The two sides considered arrangements for security cooperation with a view to strengthening them in every possible way and ensuring that those responsible for terrorist violence are brought to justice. They held a specific discussion on this occasion of the economic and social damage caused by terrorist attacks such as those in Lurgan and Belfast yesterday. They condemned the very serious risk to human life that these attacks posed and drew attention to the consequential loss of jobs and job prospects, the costs of security measures and compensation and the impact on policies of economic growth and development in both parts of Ireland. They welcomed efforts by both Governments to stimulate and focus economic growth.

CONFIDENCE ISSUES

4. The Conference discussed a number of issues relating to the confidence of the whole community in the security forces. The British side reaffirmed the importance it attached to such confidence as a critical element of its security policy. Conference discussion covered recent instances of the use of lethal force by the security forces, the Nelson case, the situation in Crumlin Road

Jail with reference to the recent Colville Report, the question of the accompaniment of the regular army and UDR by the RUC, issues arising in regard to the patrolling of Carlingford Lough by the Royal Navy and the closure of cross-border roads.

EXTRADITION

- 5. There was a discussion on extradition and it was agreed that a further meeting of officials would take place shortly.

NORTH/SOUTH COOPERATION AND THE EUROPEAN SINGLE MARKET

- 6. The Conference underlined the importance of the Single European Market in meeting the economic challenge facing both parts of Ireland as among the most peripheral regions of the European Community. The Conference welcomed increasing interest and new initiatives in North/South cooperation as well as the continuing work of the economic development agencies, the International Fund for Ireland, the CII/CBI Joint North-South initiative, the Chambers of Commerce and other bodies working together to improve the economic position of the island. The Conference reviewed joint initiatives to expand North-South trade and promote economic cooperation, particularly in respect of research, technology and innovation and of the opening up of public sector markets. The Conference agreed arrangements for officials to undertake further work to encourage cross-border trade and economic co-operation.

- 7. The Conference also reviewed developments in the field of energy and tourism. The Conference noted with satisfaction the decision of British Gas to join with An Bord Gais in gas interconnection which will link Scotland

with both parts of Ireland. The Conference also welcomed the decision that the ESB and NIE are joining together to improve the reliability of electricity supplies in the North West which suffers from being at the extremity of both supply systems. It also welcomed the initiative of Bord Failte and NITB for an all-Ireland tourism and reservation system and their preparation of a joint submission for funds under the EC INTERREG programme.

8. The Conference agreed on the need to improve transport communications between Belfast and Dublin and expressed satisfaction that consideration of the up-grading of the rail link between the two cities is nearing completion and that both Governments hope to make an announcement in the near future.