

Irish Press
page 1.

19x193

19 November

Blueprint for a
new Ireland.

Secret plan says Britain to recognise goal of unity

EXCLUSIVE
by Emily O'Reilly

BRITAIN would acknowledge the legitimacy of the goal of a United Ireland under a top secret plan drafted by key Anglo-Irish officials. The confidential document is published in full on pages 4 and 5 of the IRISH PRESS today.

The plan also envisages that the United Ireland goal would be expressed in any future structures within the North and between North and South.

The blueprint for peace, drafted in the past few weeks, states that "a balanced accommodation" between the two Northern Ireland communities could come about only by changes to Articles 2 and 3 and by a British acknowledgement of "the full legitimacy and value of the goal of Irish unity by agreement, cherished by the greater number of people living in Ireland, and the consequential need for practical provisions to give that objective equally meaningful operational expression and opportunity, including in any future structures within Northern Ireland and between North and South."

And sources close to Government have told the IRISH PRESS that the acknowledgement, if made by the British, would meet the demand in the

Hume/Adams initiative for the British government to make a declaration that it has no long term interest in maintaining full union with the North.

The Irish draft of the plan envisages new political structures in Northern Ireland, joint North/South political authority over a range of issues involving the island as a whole, plus a beefed up intergovernmental conference which would monitor the new internal and North/South political structures.

It also envisages a new "inter-parliamentary forum" between elected representatives North and South.

The North/South institutions "will have clear institutional identity and purpose and will be mandated by legislation in both Parliaments to discharge or oversee a range of executive functions on matters which, by virtue of such legislation, the two Governments decide will be administered uniformly throughout the island, or which the two administrations, North and

South, subsequently agree are to be so administered."

The plan was drafted on the instruction of the two Governments after the Anglo-Irish intergovernmental conference on September 10 last. It was to provide "aspects of a possible outcome... likely to prove acceptable to all parties to talks, thereby paving the way for a lasting political settlement and an end to violence."

It has not yet been discussed between the two Governments, but it clearly outlines the parameters of a future settlement. The major stumbling block will be British reluctance to actively promote closer union between North and South.

The document also outlines key principles for a lasting agreement identical to the principles that Dick Spring outlined in the Dail last month.

North
and
South:
The Blueprint
for peace

pages 4 & 5

Irish Draft
JOINT WORKING PAPER

Status of Paper

1 British and Irish officials were instructed at the meeting of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference on September 10 to use their best endeavours to draft a joint illustrative working paper, without commitment on either side and ad referendum to ministers, whose object was to seek to identify, as a basis for discussion, aspects of a possible outcome, consistent with the agreed statement of 26 March 1991, likely to prove acceptable to all parties to talks. They were also instructed to submit their conclusions for discussions at the next meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference.

CONFIDENTIAL

/cont



SCÉALA ÉIREANN

Do chum glóire Dé agus onóra na hÉireann

THE CALLS for peace in Northern Ireland grow by the day. Yesterday, a day after Belfast's Windsor Park bristled with hostility, thousands of people marched through the city in a vast peaceful demonstration. In Derry the people marched — and south of the border a minute's silence for peace was observed in offices, factories and schools.

It's been said often enough and it's probably true — this is the best chance for peace for many years. The brutal aridity of violence has been demonstrated and, all must hope, is at last dawning on the users of bombs and bullets.

Indications of radical thinking by the Irish and British Governments on future arrangements are welcome. But there's radical and radical — and clearly the two Governments are mixing their boldness with great commonsense, realism and understanding.

The great dilemma remains: how can we arrange our political life in order that it recognises both the legitimate aspiration of national unity and the wishes of the unionists to remain British. There is a great task of persuasion to be done — and a deal of compromise. Everybody in Ireland, north and south, has to be convinced that our best future lies in common purpose, in working together, in allowing the Irish people to rediscover the rich diversity of its heritage and in giving the island as a whole the best chance to function effectively on the international stage.

This process can really only begin to take place after the end of violence, after the wounds of 25 years have begun to heal. The IRA and the UDA must appreciate by now that the apparent intractability of the Northern Ireland problem bears a direct relationship to their activities.

A cessation of violence must be loudly and widely welcomed. However, the talking must go on whether or not the violence ends. It's good to know that the two principals in the matter, the Irish and British Governments, see

What the Government is seeking

The declaration sought from the British Government is very much along the lines being suggested by HUME/ADAMS...

THE contents of the document published by the Irish Press this morning reflects much of the content of recent statements by both the Taoiseach and the Tánaiste. Both the statements and the document acknowledge the critical importance of balanced constitutional and institutional frameworks in any new agreement that emerges from the present highly charged peace process.

Nationalists must have equal rights in future political structures in Northern Ireland — and their desire for closer links with the South must be given practical expression. Unionists can retain their constitutional links with the Union for as long as a majority want, but nationalists must also be allowed express their allegiance to the south by the introduction of cross-border political structures.

What is left out of the document, understandably as all of this would have to be negotiated, is any indication of exactly what powers would devolve to an internal Northern assembly and which would devolve to North-South institutions. Nationalist aspirations are unlikely to be appeased if the south is given a say in potholes and excluded from areas of real importance.

Yet the document also implies that over time the North-South institutions could take on more executive powers over a wider range of issues — again subject to consent. But until, and unless, these powers are spelled out it is unlikely that Sinn Fein will rush to welcome the broad thrust of the document.

What is interesting also about the document is the beefed-up role envisaged for the Intergovernmental Conference: If expanded in the way suggested it would eventually become the de facto Government of Northern Ireland — joint authority by another name.

In addition to its present composition and role, the plan envisages that elected Northern representatives could become "formally associated" with its work.

The Conference would also monitor all the new political institutions on the island and, in the case of the internal Northern Assembly, would have the power to intervene and seek redress if the Assembly was not giving equal rights and full participation to both communities.

Under the plan, the direct role of the British Government in Northern affairs would significantly diminish over time.

The crunch issue addressed by the document concerns the balancing of the constitutional positions of both Governments. While the Irish Government has repeatedly stated in recent months that it would be willing to delete or amend Articles 2 and 3 — the constitutional claim over the North — in the event of an agreed settlement, it has never made a clear, unambiguous statement of what it expects in return. This document appears to spell that out.

What the Government want, and indeed what the Secretariat civil servants believe is essential to any lasting settlement, is for the British to acknowledge "the full legitimacy and value of the goal of Irish unity by agreement, cherished by the greater number of people living in Ireland, and the consequential need for practical provisions

to give that objective equally meaningful operational expression and opportunity, including in any future structures within Northern Ireland and between North and South."

SOURCES close to the talks have told the Irish Press that the British declaration demanded by Hume/Adams is very much along those lines, and that any difference is just a semantical one. If that is the case, then Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams' response to this published document will be worth noting.

However, it's one thing for the civil servants and the Irish Government to say that such a declaration is desirable. It's

quite another to get the British Government to actually make it.

Recent tensions between the two Governments have revolved around this issue. When the Taoiseach says "Peace First" he is really talking about the need for the British to make such a declaration in the belief that it would encourage the IRA to end their campaign of violence. And when the British play down the need for peace to precede the restart of the talks process they are in effect rejecting the demand to make the declaration.

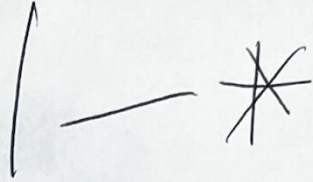
At the moment, despite John Major's conciliatory speech this week at the Guildhall, the Taoiseach is reportedly of the belief that the Unionists' hold over John Major is so strong that the British Prime Minister is unlikely to do anything to jeopardise their support.

Some Government members suspect that the real reason for the positive sounding speech

was to nudge Albert Reynolds away from the December deadline he has set for the beginning of a process leading to a cessation of violence in the short term. But sources close to the Taoiseach insist that Mr Reynolds is not naive and that furthermore he is not prepared to be "fobbed off" by British blandishments or by protestations that they are really on side but just need some more time before they move.

IN any event, the Irish side have now clearly laid out their demands and, to judge from this document, both sides acknowledge what needs to be said and done if a lasting settlement is to be achieved.

And, if that really is the case, then there can be little excuse for no progress being made when the two Prime Ministers meet in a fortnight's time at the Anglo-Irish Summit in Dublin.



END.