

1. The Conference between Her Majesty's Government, the ^{Irish Government} ~~Government~~ of the Republic and the ^{Parties involved in the} Northern Ireland Executive (designate) met at Sunningdale on 6 and 7 December. ✓

2. During the Conference each delegation stated their position on the status of Northern Ireland. ✓

3. The Taoiseach said that the basic principle of the Conference was that the participants had tried to see what measure of agreement of benefit to all the people concerned could be secured. In doing so, all had reached accommodation with one another on practical arrangements. But none had compromised, and none had asked others to compromise, in relation to basic aspirations. The people of the Republic, together with a minority in Northern Ireland as expressed by the SDLP delegation, continued to uphold the aspiration towards a united Ireland. The only unity they wanted to see was a unity established by consent.

4. Mr Brian Faulkner said that delegates from Northern Ireland came to the Conference as representatives of ^{apparently} incompatible sets of political aspirations who had found it possible to reach agreement to join together in government because each accepted that in doing so they were not sacrificing principles or aspirations. The desire of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom, as expressed by the Unionist and Alliance delegations, remained firm. ✓

5. HMG solemnly declared that it was, and would, remain their policy to support the wishes of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland about the status of Northern Ireland, ^{as part of the UK.} If, therefor
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in the future the majority of the people of Northern Ireland ^{by referendum} should indicate a wish to become part of a united Ireland HMG would support that wish.

6. The Government of the Republic of Ireland fully accepted and solemnly declared that there could be no change in the status of Northern Ireland until a majority of the people of Northern Ireland desired a change in that status.

7. The Conference agreed that arrangements should be made to register the declarations of HMG and the Government of the Republic of Ireland at the United Nations.

8. The Conference agreed that a Council of Ireland should be set up. It should be confined to representatives of the North and South of Ireland with proper safeguards for HMG's financial and other interests. It should consist of a fixed number of Ministerial representatives of the Government of the Republic and an identical number of members of the Northern Ireland Executive, with provision for other Ministers and members of the Northern Ireland administration to attend when appropriate. The Council will operate on a basis of unanimity. On a separate advisory and consultative level, there should be a body consisting of representatives elected by means of proportional representation from the Parties in the Dail (Oireachtas) and the Northern Ireland Assembly in equal numbers. It was also agreed that the Council should have a secretariat under a Secretary-General.

9. The Conference agreed that studies should at once be set in hand to identify, prior to the second stage of the Conference, areas of common interest in relation to which a Council of Ireland would take executive decisions and, in appropriate cases, be responsible for carrying those decisions into effect. In carrying

out this study, the objectives to be borne in mind will include the following:

- (i) to achieve the best utilisation of scarce skills, expertise and resources;
- (ii) to avoid, in the interests of economy and efficiency, unnecessary duplication of effort;
- (iii) to create new centres of excellence on which both parts of Ireland may draw; and
- (iv) to ensure complementary rather than competitive effort where this is to the advantage of commerce and industry.

In particular, these studies will be directed to identifying, for the purposes of executive action by a Council of Ireland, suitable aspects of activities in the following broad fields:

- (a) exploitation, conservation and development of natural resources and the environment;
- (b) agricultural matters (including agricultural research, animal health and operational aspects of the CAP), forestry and fisheries;
- (c) co-operative ventures in the fields of trade and industry;
- (d) electricity generation;
- (e) tourism;
- (f) roads and transport;
- (g) advisory services in the field of public health;
- (h) sport, culture and the arts.

10. The Conference agreed that the administrative budget of the Council of Ireland would be paid for on a fifty-fifty basis by the Republic of Ireland and the Northern Ireland Administration from

within its existing budget. It was also agreed to study further a formula by which the resources for financing any future functions which might be assigned to the Council of Ireland on a regular basis.

11. Following the appointment of a Northern Ireland Executive, the Government of the Republic and the Northern Ireland Executive will nominate their representatives to a Council of Ireland. The Council will then appoint a Secretary-General and decide upon the location of its permanent headquarters. The Secretary-General will be directed to proceed with the recruitment of his own staff and the drawing up of plans for the permanent headquarters.

12. The conference agreed that urgent measures must be taken to ensure that all who are responsible for crimes of political violence are brought to justice. They considered proposals for setting up a common law enforcement area, improving extradition arrangements and other means of more effectively bringing the criminal before the courts. They found the problems of considerable legal complexity and agreed to set up a Commission to consider urgently all the proposals put forward at the conference and to recommend within 2 months the most effective means of dealing with those who commit these crimes.

13. The Conference also considered the question of policing within Ireland as a whole. The responsibility for normal policing by the Garda and the RUC must remain with respective sovereign Governments (in the case of Her Majesty's Government policing is a reserved subject for the time being).

14. The Government of the Republic have offered to set up a Police Authority. A Police Authority already exists in Northern Ireland but it has already been announced that this will be re-constituted and that the re-constitution will include the appointment of a number of Assembly representatives to the Authority.

15. When these two Authorities are in existence, the following arrangements will apply:

- (a) A Standing Joint Police Authorities Committee, with equal membership from both Authorities, will be constituted under the aegis of a Council of Ireland. It will submit reports to the top tier of a Council of Ireland and at meetings to consider these reports a representative of Her Majesty's Government will be present. This Standing Committee will be able to discuss, and report on, all matters within the purview of the Police Authorities. Arrangements will also be made for the Chief Constable of the RUC and the Commissioner of the Garda to form a Standing Police Committee to consider matters of common interest.

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(b) The Standing Joint Police Authorities Committee will receive regular reports from both Police Authorities on matters within their purview; ✓

(c) The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland will immediately arrange for a review of the procedure for investigating complaints against the police on similar lines to the review which is already taking place in England and Wales. The revised

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complaints procedure will make appropriate provision for the inclusion of an independent element;

- (d) Both Police Authorities will have the specific duty of keeping themselves informed as to the manner in which complaints against the police are dealt with and will submit periodic reports on this subject to the Standing Joint Police Authorities Committee; ✓
- (e) Up to one third of the Northern Ireland Police Authority will be persons resident in Northern Ireland appointed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on the nomination of the Council of Ireland. The Government of the Republic will make similar arrangements in respect of their own police authority; X
- (f) The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland will set up a working party including a representative from the Alliance Party, the Social Democratic and Labour Party, and the Ulster Unionist Party and members of the Police Association to examine how best to introduce effective policing throughout Northern Ireland with particular reference to the need to achieve public identification with the police. ✓

16. It was agreed that the Council should be invited to examine what action has been taken both in the North and the South of Ireland to prevent discrimination and to protect human rights and to draw attention to any legislative or other measures which might be required either in Northern Ireland or in the Republic of Ireland to provide any necessary protections additional to existing legislation on ✓

these matters. To this end, both governments agreed that they should make available annual reports to the Council of Ireland and HMG said that, for their part, the Northern Ireland Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights would be invited to provide reports for this purpose.

17 The Conference took note of a reaffirmation by HMG of its firm commitment to bring detention to an end in Northern Ireland for all sections of the community as soon as the security situation permits. It is noted also that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland hopes to be able to bring into use his statutory powers of selective release in time for a number of detainees to be released before Christmas.

18 HMG stated that, in the light of the decisions reached at the Conference, it would now seek the authority of Parliament to devolve full powers on the Northern Ireland Executive and Northern Ireland Assembly as from 1 January 1974. The formal appointment of the Northern Ireland Executive would now be made.

19 The Conference agreed that a formal conference would be held early in the New Year at which HMG, the Government of the Republic and the Northern Ireland Executive would meet together to ratify the agreement reached and to review the work which has been commissioned

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