



NORTHERN IRELAND Information Service

ANGLO-IRISH INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE

JOINT STATEMENT

21 October 1987

The Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference met in Belfast on 21 October 1987. The British Joint Chairman, Mr Tom King MP (Secretary of State for Northern Ireland) was accompanied by Mr John Stanley MP (Minister of State for Northern Ireland). The Irish Joint Chairman, Mr Brian Lenihan TD (Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs) was accompanied by Mr Gerard Collins TD (Minister for Justice).

The Conference discussed reports from the groups of officials considering measures to enhance public confidence in the administration of justice and policy aspects of extradition. It was agreed that the two sides should remain in close contact on these issues.

During a discussion of cross-border security co-operation, attended by the Chief Constable of the RUC and the Commissioner of the Garda Síochána, the Conference agreed on the importance of continuing and enhancing co-operation and reviewed the programme of future work in this area. The Conference also noted with concern the readiness of terrorist groups to resort to criminal and racketeering activities for financial gain, including exploitation of the border for criminal purposes, and agreed that there should be the closest co-operation to deal with this menacing link between terrorism and other crime.

In the context of a discussion of measures to improve relations between the security forces and the community, the Conference noted that the Chief Constable had recently issued a Code of Conduct to the members of the RUC. Mr King emphasised the British Government's strong commitment to the policy of the RUC and of the Armed Forces in Northern Ireland that they discharge their duties evenhandedly and with equal respect for the unionist and nationalist identities and traditions. Mr Lenihan welcomed this statement. The Conference expressed the hope that the Code would contribute to that aim.

The Conference welcomed the publication in September by the British Government of the Guide to Effective Practice on religious equality of opportunity in employment.

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The British side stated their intention of proceeding to introduce new legislation in this field. The Irish side reaffirmed the importance which they attached to the early introduction of effective new legislation.

During a discussion of cross-border economic co-operation, the Conference noted that meetings on a number of specific issues had taken place in recent weeks between Ministers of both Governments. It noted also that the two Governments had agreed to commission a study which would assess the major economic and social problems in the North-West and identify ways to tackle these problems especially through the creation of new employment; the study would also examine ways in which this might be achieved through closer co-operation between the appropriate authorities on both sides of the border.

The Conference agreed that the agenda for its next meeting would include, in addition to certain of the above matters, the position of the Irish language in Northern Ireland.