



NORTHERN IRELAND Information Service

JOINT STATEMENT FOLLOWING THE ANGLO-IRISH CONFERENCE 17 JUNE

A meeting of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference took place in Belfast on 17 June 1988. The British Government was represented by the Joint Chairman, Mr Tom King MP (Secretary of State for Northern Ireland) accompanied by Mr John Stanley MP (Minister of State Northern Ireland Office). The Irish Government was represented by Mr Gerard Collins TD Minister for Justice (Acting Co-Chairman) and by Mr Ray Burke TD Minister for Energy and Communications. The Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and Commissioner of the Garda Siochana were present for that part of the Conference which dealt with security co-operation.

2. The Conference discussed the current security situation in Northern Ireland. They expressed their abhorrence of recent outrages and reaffirmed the determination of the two Governments to work together for the defeat of terrorism. They reviewed the programme of work which is being carried out between the two police forces and discussed a number of issues with a view to further enhancing cross-border co-operation on security matters.

3. Ministers discussed the serious difficulties which had arisen in recent extradition cases, and reaffirmed their determination to ensure effective extradition arrangements. Ministers also reviewed a number of issues relating to confidence in the administration of justice and took note of the work in hand. The Secretary of State briefed the Irish side on new arrangements that had been made in relation to special category prisoners which would include a special review of these cases.

4. Noting the publication of the White Paper on Fair Employment, the Conference welcomed the progress being made in the preparation of legislation. They reaffirmed their mutual interest in having legislation which should be as effective as possible in securing fair employment in Northern Ireland and agreed to maintain close contact on this issue.

5. On the social and economic problems of West Belfast, which the Conference had discussed in detail at its two previous meetings, the Secretary of State said he hoped shortly to make a statement about further measures to improve the performance of the public sector, and stimulate the involvement of the private and voluntary sectors, in areas of Belfast characterised by exceptionally high unemployment and poor rates of economic activity. These measures would begin in the current financial year and would involve action to enhance employment opportunities and to improve the conditions of life in these areas. The Irish side welcomed the prospect of specific measures to address this serious problem.

6. The Conference welcomed the European Commission's proposal to contribute to the International Fund for Ireland. The two sides agreed to continue to work together to attract further contributions to the Fund, and to ensure that its operations conferred the greatest possible benefit on the people north and south of the border. They agreed that the next meeting of the Conference would be an opportune time to review the progress of the Fund so far.

7. The Conference noted that, in pursuance of its decision on 21 October 1987, consultants have been appointed to carry out a study to assess the major economic and social problems in the North-West of the island and to identify ways to tackle these problems especially through the creation of new employment.

8. The Conference agreed to consider ways in which bilateral contacts between Ministers on economic and social questions might be reinforced.

9. The Conference discussed also the Consultative Paper outlining proposals for educational reform in Northern Ireland. The Irish side drew attention to concerns which had been expressed in the nationalist community about certain aspects of the proposals.

10. The two sides agreed that further meeting of the Conference would be held shortly.