

JOINT STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE TAOISEACH ON
NORTHERN IRELAND: 29 OCTOBER

1. The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach discussed a range of matters of common interest, with particular focus on Northern Ireland.

2. They condemned the recent terrorist outrages as murderous and premeditated acts which could serve no end other than to deepen the bloodshed in Northern Ireland. They expressed their deep sympathy to the innocent victims, children, women and men who had been injured or bereaved.

3. The Prime Minister and Taoiseach called for restraint from all members of the community in Northern Ireland; expressed support for the security forces in their fight against all forms of terrorism; and noted the recent successes of cross-border security co-operation.

4. They utterly repudiated the use of violence for political ends. Their two Governments were resolute in their determination to ensure that those who adopted or supported such methods should never succeed.

5. The Taoiseach gave the Prime Minister an account of the outcome of the Hume/Adams dialogue, in the light of the Irish Government's own assessment of those and other related matters. They acknowledged John Hume's courageous and imaginative efforts. The Prime Minister and Taoiseach agreed that any initiative can only be taken by the two Governments, and that there could be no question of their adopting or endorsing the report of the dialogue which was recently given to the Taoiseach and which had not been passed on to the British Government. They agreed that the two Governments must continue to work

together in their own terms on a framework for peace, stability and reconciliation, consistent with their international obligations and their wider responsibilities to both communities.

6. Against this background the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach reaffirmed that:

- The situation in Northern Ireland should never be changed by violence or the threat of violence;
- Any political settlement must depend on consent freely given in the absence of force or intimidation;
- Negotiations on a political settlement could only take place between democratic governments and parties committed exclusively to constitutional methods and consequently there can be no talks or negotiations between their Governments and those who use, threaten or support violence for political ends;
- There could be no secret agreements or understandings between Governments and organisations supporting violence as a price for its cessation;
- All those claiming a serious interest in advancing the cause of peace in Ireland should renounce for good the use or, or support for, violence;
- If and when such a renunciation of violence had been made and sufficiently demonstrated, new doors could open, and both Governments would wish to respond imaginatively to the new situation which would arise.

7. The Prime Minister and Taoiseach renewed their support for the objectives of the Talks process involving constitutional political dialogue between the two Governments and the main constitutional parties in Northern Ireland. They regard that process as vital and its objectives as valid and achievable. They urged the Northern Ireland parties to intensify their efforts to find a basis for new talks. The Taoiseach and the Prime Minister agreed that the two Governments will continue their discussions to provide a framework to carry the process forward.