

SECRET AND PERSONAL

DUBLIN MEETING: OVERALL OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the meeting are:

- to draw the sting of recent revelations and recriminations so that they can be put behind us;
- to restore mutual confidence in respect of the "peace process" and political development, which are complementary;
- to agree the text of Joint Declaration, and/or its future handling in public and private;
- to secure re-dedication to the Talks process by the Irish Government. The best confirmation of this would be a promise from the Irish side to produce, through the Liaison Group, an approved version of the long promised draft Joint Framework Document. (The Taoiseach has of course disowned the version leaked to the Irish Press on 19 November.)
- to consider a report on Security Cooperation and decide further action (through the Chilcot/Dalton Group);
- to agree a positive press line;
- to settle arrangements for the date and level of the next meeting (Heads of Government or Butler/Nally);

Fall-Back

If there is a breakdown on the Joint Declaration, and the Irish side may be playing for this, our objectives will be:

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- to break on the right issues: the constitutional guarantee (and/or Irish unwillingness to accept the consent of principle properly); Articles 2 and 3; the Irish Convention (no role for HMG; a nationalist forum, too well advertised as a Hume/Adams objective); proxy bargaining for peace;
- to reassure GB and Unionist opinion that HMG stood firm. No compromise on principle and policy;
- to reassert the principle, agreed by both Governments in Brussels, that there can be no secret agreements or understandings with those supporting violence as a price for its cessation;
- maintaining commitment to the pursuit of peace (all our policies have this objective.) Willingness to be imaginative, and take risks, but not compromise on principle;
- maintaining consistent commitment to the pursuit of a political accommodation through the Talks process.