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**JOINT DECLARATION: FOLLOW-UP ACTION**

The Prime Minister asked for a short note on what options would be open to us, particularly in the security field, if the IRA were to reject the Joint Declaration. I attach a short note on security options, together with an updated intelligence assessment of reaction to the Joint Declaration.

This material has been assembled today, so my Secretary of State has not had an opportunity to see it. He will, however, be seeing it this evening so I shall let you know any additional comments which he has.

The Joint Declaration is one element in the Government's overall strategy for bringing terrorism to an end for good. If the Declaration does not produce an end to violence in the near future, the essentials of the strategy remain valid and will continue to be pursued.

Politically, we shall press on with the Talks process urgently. Just before Christmas, the Secretary of State wrote to the leaders of the four main constitutional parties inviting them to further bilateral discussions with Michael Ancram in the week beginning 10

January. We shall also be pressing the Irish Government to participate actively, in line with their commitment to the Talks process in both the Joint Declaration and the Brussels statement. Having signed up to the importance of the Talks process, and having secured our co-operation in the Joint Declaration, the Irish will be in a weak position to delay the Talks process further. On the experience of last year's Talks, a resumption of the Talks process will itself increase pressure on the IRA, who will be concerned that a political settlement might be reached without their participation.

*the Joint Declaration is clearer, it may be right for the Prime*

On the security front, the available options are listed in the attached paper. Security policy is never static, and so a good number of measures have been under consideration, both within Government and with the Irish. These would have been under consideration anyway and my Secretary of State is concerned to avoid suggestions that there will be a "crack down" if the IRA reject the Declaration. This only creates the impression that we have been lenient on the IRA until now. The fundamental principles of our security policy will remain the same: we will continue to act within the law; we will continue to apply resources appropriate to the level of violence and the threat; and security policy will continue to be conducted, as far as practicable, in a manner likely to command the confidence of as wide a section of the community as possible.

Clearly if there is an upsurge in violence we shall need to consider our response carefully. It may be that the public consensus generated by the Joint Declaration will, if it is rejected, demand security measures that would otherwise have proved counter-productive because of their impact on public confidence in the security forces. On the other hand, PIRA are hoping for some 'over-reaction' from the Government which will shatter the public consensus and so let them off the hook.

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NORTHERN IRELAND: POSSIBLE SECURITY MEASURES

General Security Policy

The most effective counter to the terrorist campaign will continue to

As far as security co-operation with the Irish Government is concerned, however, we shall certainly be on strong ground in seeking to carry forward and develop our existing agenda, which is already being pursued through joint working groups at official level. Mr Reynolds has himself suggested the possibility of tougher security measures in the Republic (though, as some unionists and others have pointed out, this suggests that the Irish Government have until now been deliberately holding back). Once reaction to the Joint Declaration is clearer, it may be right for the Prime Minister to seek to capitalise on Mr Reynolds' remarks.

co-ordination; and improving intelligence coverage of particular areas (eg South Armagh);  
Copies of the letter go to John Sawers and Melanie Leach.

in command and control, developing further the work of the Province Executive Committee, and extending, where possible, tour lengths for key Army appointments; and  
in the use of... that tasks are appropriately distributed and effectively carried out.  
In April NI Committee will be reviewing the appropriateness of current force levels.

**JONATHAN STEPHENS**

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