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## JOINT DECLARATION INITIATIVE

1. This paper concerns a proposal now formally put to the British government by the Irish government. Its central feature is that a Joint Declaration should be made by both governments; it being the Taoiseach's judgement and advice that it will lead to a cessation of the Provisional Movement's violent campaign as they make a historic shift to constitutional and democratic procedures.

2. The Declaration would involve H.M.G. in acknowledging Irish self-determination, though in terms which are compatible with the constitutional guarantee, because of the emphasis on the need for the "concurrent" consent of the people of Northern Ireland. (The proposed text is at Annex A.) If H.M.G. approves this initiative the Taoiseach would take indirect soundings of the Provisionals. He believes that this text would be accepted by them. The text makes no direct reference to the Provisional Movement or to a cessation of violence.

3. Other features of the scheme are:

(i) <sup>Irish Convention</sup> the establishment by the Irish government of a permanent "to consult and advise on the steps required to remove the barriers of distrust which at present divide the people of Ireland and which stand in the way of the exercise in common by them of self-determination on a basis of equality." It is made clear a guiding principle would be that differences would be resolved by peaceful political means; and the Convention is open to all democratically mandated political parties in Ireland which abide exclusively by the democratic process.

(ii) rhetorical warmth from H.M.G. to the development in Ireland of reconciliation, fostering agreement and living together in harmony and partnership.

(iii) acceptance by the Irish government that self-determination by the people of Ireland as a whole must be achieved and exercised with the agreement and

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consent of the people of Northern Ireland.

4. The background to this formal approach is explained in Annex B. Annex C contains an intelligence assessment of attitudes and intentions of the Provisional Movement.
5. The matter is of obvious political and constitutional sensitivity; and there are great risks to our interests, including as respects stability in Northern Ireland and Anglo-Irish relations. There may also be an opportunity, if all concerned are in good faith. But it is a possibility that the Provisional Movement seek to exploit, through the Hume/Adams dialogue and in other ways, an opening to create dissension between constitutional politicians (e.g. between H.M.G. and the Unionists if the Declaration is made without achieving peace; or between the two governments if we reject what has become a cherished scheme of the Taoiseach). Opinion in each part of these islands has been alerted and, to some extent, alarmed, particularly in Northern Ireland, by the publicity surrounding the Hume/Adams talks. Although the text now commended by the Irish government does not derive from Mr Hume, his own dialogue with Adams has been concerned with earlier versions of the same paper.
6. In presenting this initiative formally, the Taoiseach has given the following assurances:
- (i) in his judgement, if the text is accepted, the violence will be brought to an end;
  - (ii) there are no secret deals beneath the surface of this text, and no expectations of H.M.G. other than are apparent from it;
  - (iii) the Irish government believes the initiative is formally compatible with the Talks process (indeed much of the language points to the need for precisely such a process of dialogue), and the Irish government remains actively committed to it;
  - (iv) the Irish government will not be pressing for Sinn Fein to be admitted <sup>at all</sup> to the Talks process. They envisage that the first task of the proposed Convention

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would be the drawing up of some principles which would emphasise shared commitment to peaceful and democratic procedures. If Sinn Fein were a party to this, and if peace had held through the period of its preparation, (which might take some months) then the Irish government would believe that SinnFein should become eligible to the Talks;

(v) if the initiative breaks down, H.M.G. may defend its actions publicly by referring to the Taoiseach's assurances.

7. Peace prospects; drawing on intelligence assessment; loyalist reaction.
8. Relations with Unionists
9. G.B. opinion
10. Anglo-Irish relations; and effects on nationalists in Northern Ireland
11. Effect on Talks
12. International reception and implications
14. Implications for security forces; and implications for security policy and army deployments. (Possible false expectations in respect of amnesties); handing in of weapons.
15. Handling of next steps: whether "go" or "no go"
16. Balance of advantage
17. Recommendation