

DRAFT CONTRIBUTION TO PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT

1. Separately at the European Council I had a cordial and substantive discussion with the Taoiseach (Mr Reynolds). Our Joint Statement, issued after the meeting, expressed our sympathy for the victims of recent terrorist outrages and our support for the security forces. It also called for restraint from all members of the community in Northern Ireland.
2. The Taoiseach gave me an account of the outcome of the Hume/Adams dialogue. We agreed that the two governments must continue to work together in our own terms on a framework for peace, stability and reconciliation consistent with our international obligations and our wider responsibilities to both communities.
3. We set out our own six principles. [These make clear our determination that the situation in NI should never be changed by violence or the threat of violence; that any settlement must depend on consent freely given; that negotiations on a settlement could only involve constitutional politicians; that there could be no secret agreement or understanding between governments and organisations supporting violence as a price for its cessation; that those claiming a serious interest in advancing the cause of peace in Ireland should renounce for good the use of or support for violence; and that 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.]

X 4. Finally, we renewed our support for the objectives of the talks process [begun last year], and urged the constitutional parties to intensify their efforts to find a basis for new talks. We agreed that the two governments will continue their discussions to provide a framework to carry the process forward.

5. The terrible events in Northern Ireland since that joint statement was made further underline the need for this process to succeed. As the House will know, at 9.55pm on Saturday two gunmen fired indiscriminately in a crowded bar in Greysteel, County Londonderry. Seven people died - ranging in age from 19 to 81 years - and 11 were injured. A claim of responsibility for this appalling act was subsequently received from the Ulster Freedom Fighters. A vehicle thought to have been used in the attack was found soon after and is still being examined. Meanwhile the RUC, who acted with exemplary speed and skill, have arrested eight people in connection with the attack, the first as early as 3.00 a.m. on Sunday morning..

6. Madam Speaker, this - like the Shankill Road bombing and the six other terrorist murders in Northern Ireland last week - was a barbarous and despicable attack on innocent and peaceable citizens. The whole House will want to extend its profound sympathy to the victims' families and friends in the face of such evil.

7. The House will know that less than 24 hours later an RUC

officer was shot and critically injured in Newry. This once again reminds us of the enormous debt we owe to all members of that gallant force and all those who support them.

8. The Government's determination to support the security forces is absolute. In our democracy, there is no place for the bomb and the bullet. Depraved acts such as these murders will bring the terrorists no advantage, but only the prospect of long years in prison. They will not deflect us from the search for a fair and lasting peace, which can be achieved only through that process of dialogue which both Governments regard as vital.

SECURITY SITUATION:Background

- Deaths: 27 this month, 23 since 23 October, 74 to date this year (compared with 70 in the same period last year and 85 in total last year).

NOTES FOR SUPPLEMENTARIES

- Q. After Shankill bomb, why were steps not taken to protect against retaliation attacks?
- A. The security forces are constantly making operational adjustments to counter specific threats and to take the initiative against the terrorists. Chief Constable has made clear that specific measures have been taken. In a democratic society it is simply not possible for the police to be present on every street corner all the time. But they are conducting, day in and day out, well targeted operations, many necessarily unpublicized.
- Q. Security situation out of control?
- A. No. The security forces are working tirelessly to protect the community. Their vigorous actions are bringing real successes:

- This year some 50 people charged with murder or attempted murder.
- To date some 3,600 kilograms of explosive have been recovered by the security forces - over twice as much as in the same period in 1992 (1,462 kgs).
- To 27 October, 164 firearms and 42 rocket and mortar launchers have been recovered;
- Examples of recent successes include the interception of three vehicles on murder missions in the last three weeks. As a result of this excellent work six people have now been charged.
- These tangible successes, and the many less tangible ones in which attacks are prevented and deterred, will continue.

Q. Untie the security forces' hands?

A. There are no political constraints upon the operational freedom of the security forces under the law.

Q. Additional measures/future action?

A. - We will be prepared to take any measure which we believe will be effective, but we are not prepared to take steps which, although superficially attractive, would have longer

term disadvantages. Above all, we will continue to deal with terrorism by the evenhanded enforcement of the criminal law.

- We frequently review both the legal framework and the available resources for our anti-terrorist strategy, upon the advice of the Chief Constable and General Officer Commanding.
- We are fully committed to providing the Security Forces with the resources they need.
- [If pressed] - we have received no requests for additional manpower.
- [Defensive] - no security Forces were withdrawn from this police Division to reinforce Belfast before this incident. (Background - William Ross MP suggested they were).

Q. - [Defensive] - Chief Constable's proposals for changes in the law:

- A. - The suggestions made by the Chief Constable are receiving the fullest consideration by my right Hon Friend. There is, however, always a careful and sensitive balance to be struck between measures intended to secure the conviction of the guilty, and measures which in practice may increase the likelihood of innocent people being convicted.

Q. Surely the terrorists are winning?

A. No political objective will be advanced by a single inch in this democracy by the use of violence.

Q. Internment?

A. I do not wish to comment on the possibility of internment beyond saying that it is an option which remains open to the Government.

Q. You know who the terrorists are yet fail to act?

A. The police and armed forces have had success after success. We live in a democracy and the security forces in a democracy must act within the rule of law. But the legal framework is of course kept under review.

NOTES FOR SUPPLEMENTARIES - TALKS

How will the two Governments work on a framework for peace stability and reconciliation?

The Talks process, which also involves the main constitutional political parties in NI, provides the best context for this. In our Joint Statement the Taoiseach and I made clear that we regard that process as vital and its objectives as valid and achievable. But all our policies are intended to create a framework for peace stability and reconciliation. This is true of our security policy but also of our actions in the economic and social field which are designed to make the Province a prosperous peaceful and just society free of fear and discrimination.

What are you going to do to restart talks?

The two Governments share responsibility with the main constitutional parties in the North. Three of the parties have been conducting bilateral discussions with the British Government. Mr Spring I know has made clear his wish to meet the parties himself. Dr Paisley and his colleagues have also discussed their separate proposals with me and with Michael Ancram. I hope he will re-engage in the talks process. The two Governments will continue their work to provide a framework to carry the talks process forward. The forthcoming meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference will add impetus to this, as I believe both the Taoiseach and I want. The Secretary of State and I will seek to meet each of the party leaders soon.

The Hume/Adams peace plan?

As our joint statement made clear, the Taoiseach and I agree that there could be no question of the two Governments adopting or endorsing the report of the Hume/Adams dialogue which was given to the Irish Government, and which was not passed onto the British Government. It is clear to me and, I think, the Taoiseach that these proposals will not be carried further.

Will you meet Mr Hume?

The Secretary of State and I wish to keep in close touch with the leaders of the NI constitutional parties at this difficult time, and we hope to see each of them soon. I am certainly ready to meet the Hon Member for Foyle. If he wishes to tell me more about his belief that the Provisional IRA can be brought to renounce violence I shall certainly want to listen. Clearly, as he appreciates, any response I make will be governed by the 6 principles the Taoiseach and I set out. These include the principle that there could be no secret agreement or understanding between governments and organisations supporting violence as a price for its cessation.

If there is a cessation of violence how will you respond

"imaginatively".

The essential requirement is that there should be a renunciation of violence and that it is sufficiently demonstrated. If this became true of the Provisional IRA a new situation would arise. The

British government and, as our joint statement made clear, the Irish government would wish to respond imaginatively. On the political level our response would reflect the fact that we have never opposed the right of nationalists to espouse aims and aspirations provided that is done by peaceful and democratic means. Indeed any political accommodation would be the more secure if it reflected as wide a range of differing political views as possible. More generally, if and when the security situation eased, we should want to consider the whole range of our laws, policies and deployments made in response to the challenge of terrorism.

What of Tanaiste Dick Spring's 6 principles?

I welcomed Mr Spring's recent speech as evidence of imaginative and innovative thinking by the Irish government. I noted in particular his emphasis on the principle of consent, his recognition that this means the Unionists may decline to give consent to constitutional change and his readiness, at the right time, to contemplate change to the Irish constitution to reflect these principles. We have not been invited to endorse these principles. But we shall want to consider their implications further in the work the two governments are undertaking to provide a framework to carry the talks process forward.