

SPEECHES IN THE DAIL ON 27 OCTOBER

There were a number of developments in the Dail on 27 October, when there was an emergency debate on Northern Ireland. Both the Taoiseach and the Tanaiste made formal statements and the Taoiseach also answered some questions. The broad results of this are benign and suggest that the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach may be ready to strike the same note after their forthcoming meeting. Points which emerged include these:

- (i) The Taoiseach made it clear that he fully agreed with the sentiment that the Talks process should be got going again. "Every effort that can be made is being made by both Governments to bring about a resumption of dialogue."
- (ii) On Hume/Adams the Taoiseach's speech included acknowledgement of John Hume's courageous role but went on to say: "However, the creation of a peace process has to be more widely based, and to involve the two Governments, conscious of both their international obligations and their wider responsibilities to both communities. Consistent with these, the two Governments must work together to reach a common understanding in their own terms on a framework for peace. Any initiative can only be taken by the two Governments, and there can be no question of them simply adopting or endorsing the report of the Hume/Adams dialogue that was recently given to us and which we have not passed on to the British Government". Note: The dismissal of the Hume/Adams report is welcome. But it will be important in presentational terms to avoid the suggestion that the two Governments are cooking up something together in the same area. Fortunately this can be put in a helpful form because,

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(iii) in his speech to the Dail the Tanaiste, Mr Spring enunciated six principles. (His speech is attached). The first two principles together seem to have the useful effect of implying that the way the Irish people should exercise their right of self-determination (though the expression has been carefully avoided) is through the Talks process. The two Governments are indeed working together on that and are known to be so (although no principle in quite that form has been agreed or made public in that context);

(iv) in general Mr Spring's principles, though we should not adopt them wholesale (and they have inevitably been subject to some carping criticism from Unionists), amount to a helpful statement building on many of our own positions. In some ways they amount to a unilateral deployment of some elements of the Joint Declaration Initiative. There is an express recognition that Unionist consent includes the possibility that the Unionists will withhold their consent from a united Ireland. The fifth principle is a fresh implicit but strong commitment to constitutional change in the Republic in the right circumstances.

(v) Mr Spring's sixth principle is that if the terrorists renounce violence they could play a peaceful part in the development of Ireland's future. It includes an offer that the Irish Government will develop structures to bring in from the cold those who have lived in the shadow of their own terrorism. The general tenor is too forward for HMG to accept in the present context.

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SC/SIL/22125