

SPEAKING NOTE

Grateful for opportunity to speak to you again about the Joint Declaration. Useful meeting in Dublin on Friday, and I now believe that we have a text we can live with. Your help in getting us this far has been greatly appreciated.

[Show text - either Annex B including underlinings showing recent amendments, or Annex C without the underlinings.] You can see that this incorporates an explicit statement of the constitutional guarantee - either in para 2 or at the beginning of para 4 and retains other amendments which you and Dr Eames suggested.

The Irish are considering our preference for the new para 12 instead of the existing paras 10 and 11 which talk about the permanent Irish Convention. I believe they may go along with us on that, but that they may - probably in the event of the IRA announcing a cessation of violence - announce unilaterally that they will establish such a Convention.

Not looking for your agreement to this text. Realise that you have been as helpful so far as you have been able. Would like, however, to feel that you were able to acquiesce to our making the Joint Declaration.

My own judgement is that there is now considerable advantage in a Declaration being made whether or not any confidence can be placed in the hope that the Taoiseach has entertained that it will lead to a cessation of violence.

To do so may produce peace. And this text would be a price worth paying for that. At the least it would put considerable pressure on the Provisionals and (providing Hume is on board - which the Irish Government is anxious to ensure is the case) should draw a definitive line under Hume/Adams.

I appreciate your reluctance to get into Strand Two yet or Understand that the Unionist community in Northern Ireland will have anxieties about this. I am anxious that it should not be misread as a signal of intentions we do not have. As you know I am committed to the Union.

The Government intends to make clear before Christmas that its consultations will be on the footing that it believes the time for a Select Committee has come and it envisages inviting the House in the New Year to agree to its establishment.

Mr Molyneux understands the need to involve the SDLP; and accepts a three stranded approach. Nonetheless for unsurprising reasons, in the current circumstances of turbulence on the "peace" front, he is not ready yet to enter formal Talks or to broach Strand Two.

Defensive: political Talks

I am glad you have made clear that you are ready to press on with Strand One issues with Michael Ancram.

I believe there is more work which can usefully be done on this. You have discussed the forthcoming publication of your blueprint with Michael Ancram. We shall obviously consider that with great interest when it is ready. I gather you also discussed with Michael Ancram the possibility of work on a Bill of Rights once your blueprint has appeared.

Glad you recognise [Molyneux said to Michael Ancram on Tuesday evening] that further work on Strand One can only be credible if the SDLP is involved. You mentioned that they could be drawn in and I believe this is highly desirable.

SECRET AND PERSONAL

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Once the Joint Declaration is made I hope John Hume and his colleagues (and, if it comes to that the Irish Government) can be brought to focus on the Talks. I very much support your view that the Talks process must be seen to have momentum and to have our continuing support.

I appreciate your reluctance to get into Strand Two yet or to meet Irish Ministers face to face. But I hope that, when the time is right, we can pursue a settlement in three strands.

Note

The implication of Michael Ancram's recent discussion is that Mr Molyneaux is not expecting an early delivery of an internal settlement; fully understands the need to involve the SDLP; and accepts a three stranded approach. Nonetheless for unsurprising tactical reasons, and recent turbulence on the "peace" front, he is not ready yet to enter formal Talks or to broach Strand Two.

SECRET AND PERSONAL

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