

TALKS WITH MR HAUGHEY IN DUBLIN ON 4 DECEMBER

JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE

Notes for supplementaries on Northern Ireland matters

1. ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT

The British Government remains fully committed to both the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the search for political progress in Northern Ireland.

2. PROSPECTS FOR FRESH TALKS?

We remain committed to doing all we can to bring about early agreement on a basis for fresh talks.

3. TALKS BEFORE THE BRITISH GENERAL ELECTION?

The need for political progress in NI remains - whether before or after the General Election. But there is still an opportunity for talks before the election if the basis for them can be agreed.

4. INCLUDE SINN FEIN/PIRA?

The terrorists and those who support them exclude themselves from constitutional talks.

5. THE TWO GOVERNMENTS SHOULD SHOW THE WAY?

Progress is best made through a process in which the four main NI political parties are participating as free agents. Imposed solutions are unlikely to command the necessary widespread support.

6. SECURITY CO-OPERATION?

There is good co-operation between the security forces. But we know that the terrorists try to exploit the Border. We want to see whether more can be done to deny them that resource.

7. DEAL ON EXTRADITION?

No deal has been done. I am grateful to the Taoiseach for confirming his intention to close loopholes in the Irish legislation. On the question of substitution of charges (speciality) there is a clear understanding which we have consistently honoured. But we will consider the case for British legislation if a suitable opportunity arises.

8. BELFAST/DUBLIN RAILWAY LINE - A TARGET FOR TERRORISTS?

It would be a victory for the terrorists if they could scare the two Governments away from co-operation over a social and economic benefit such as the rail link. They cannot.

9. EC POLITICAL UNION WILL SOLVE THE NI PROBLEM?

There is a divided community in Northern Ireland. Changes in the EC alone cannot heal that division. But completion of the Single Market will help with social and economic co-operation.

10. DO THE GOVERNMENTS SUPPORT THE BRITISH-IRISH INTERPARLIAMENTARY BODY?

The Body is independent. It was established by the two Parliaments, not by the two Governments or the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The two Governments are ready to co-operate with the Body but its deliberations are independent.

11. INTERNMENT?

We have kept the necessary power on the statute book. There are no present plans to activate it. We have made clear that it is not helpful to speculate about the very particular circumstances in which the power might be used.