JOINT DECLARATION INITIATIVE: MEETING WITH THE TAOISEACH

Speaking Note

1. As the Prime Minister's letter explains, he remains anxious to work closely with you to secure a complete cessation of violence, together with the complementary objective of carrying forward the Talks process. He shares with you the judgement that if there is an opportunity here both Governments should be ready to take some risks to secure it.

2. As you know, the Prime Minister believes this can only properly, and indeed usefully, be done in a way which does not provoke the unionists and in turn the loyalist paramilitaries. You have had advice from Archbishop Eames and he in turn has sounded out Mr Molyneaux, as has the Prime Minister himself. That has been helpful. It seems clear that any way forward may provoke some turbulence from the unionists, though much depends on precisely what is done.

3. It is clear, in the Prime Minister's judgement, that it would be extremely difficult to bring the Joint Declaration in its present form to a successful conclusion. The enormous hopes which have been generated are matched by anxieties and suspicions on the part of unionists.

4. The Prime Minister believes that there are several unhelpful factors at work:

   - the hostile climate (at least as far as unionists are concerned) ever since the Hume/Adams démarche of 25 September

- the fact that the efforts of the two Governments to decouple the Joint Declaration Initiative from Hume/Adams - for example in the Brussels Joint Statement - have not been wholly successful

- the enormous support Hume has attracted, combined with almost complete ignorance of what his proposals entail

- Hume's apparent determination, manifested again in his further statement with Adams at the weekend, to remain centre stage and to claim that it is his work which is carrying things forward

- the consequence that unionists look everywhere for evidence of the contaminating effects of the Hume/Adams initiative, seeing it now in these principles, now in that document

- the unfortunate leaking in last Friday's Irish Press of an Irish Government draft paper taking a forward position on both constitutional and institutional issues. [NOTE: two features of this paper are: first that it seeks from HMG acknowledgement of the 'full legitimacy and value of the goal of Irish unity by agreement ...' and second a suggestion that the successor to the IGC should be a forum 'for both Governments to jointly guarantee and monitor' the operation of both the internal and North/South institutions. The former has been represented as HMG 'joining the ranks of the persuaders'; the latter as 'joint authority' by another name.]

5. Against that background, the Prime Minister has concluded that it would be wrong to carry forward the Joint Declaration in the form in which you have presented it.

6. However the Prime Minister is anxious to build on all the work you have done to test whether the Provisionals are seriously interested in bringing their campaign to an end. If they are, then a cessation could be achieved if the two Heads of Governments make a relatively forward statement at their next meeting. Accordingly we have prepared the new text you have seen. The Prime Minister would be ready to make a Joint Statement in these terms if you are able to give it as your firm judgement that it will result in a cessation of violence.

7. The Prime Minister believes it important that HMG should not <u>negotiate</u> on this text with the Provisionals. If the two Governments can reach agreement on the text he believes, as I think is your own intention, that it might be put to the Provisionals but only on a basis which did not invite negotiation.

8. It may be helpful if I explain some of the features of the draft we have prepared:

<u>Covering Communiqué</u>

- the covering communiqué provides the context, recapitulates the Brussels Joint Statement and, in paragraph 5, in effect explains that the peace process and talks are complementary

- paragraphs 6 and 7 are mainly drawn from Joint Declaration language, though with some adjustment to bring out the relevance of the issues to the Talks. It is the Prime Minister's judgement that the text will be more acceptable to unionists if it is clear that the statement has a direct bearing on the Talks agenda

- paragraph 8 introduces an annex on constitutional issues, again emphasising its relevance to the Talks process

Annex on Constitutional Issues

- paragraph 2 contains a statement, in our own terms, of the British position on constitutional issues. Although the presentation is different it contains most of the ideas, and much of the language, of the Joint Declaration. There is, for example, a reference to self-determination at the end of paragraph 2(c)

- in addition there is an explicit statement of the 'constitutional guarantee' which the Prime Minister believes is essential (paragraph 2(a)), and of HMG's belief that relations would be enhanced by changes to the Irish Constitution

- paragraph 3 is a statement of the Irish Government's position. It is drawn from the Joint Declaration, and includes the 'Eames language' you adopted. We have also included at the end of paragraph 3(a) a statement of the Irish Government's willingness, in the right context, to promote changes in the Irish Constitution

- paragraph 4 is a joint statement, in language taken from the Joint Declaration

- we have, as you will see, put the last two paragraphs in square brackets and proposed an alternative. This is to raise with you your judgement on the need for the Permanent Irish Convention. Since this was drawn up both Governments have made clear, in the Brussels Joint Statement, that they would respond imaginatively

to a cessation of violence; and the Prime Minister has also said, in the Mansion House speech in the first instance, that if the IRA end violence for good then Sinn Fein could enter the political arena as a democratic party and join the dialogue on the way ahead. Given that, we wondered whether the Permanent Irish Convention still seemed to be necessary. It is relevant that it is a point on which Mr Molyneaux has registered particular difficulty with the Archbishop.

9. Although this text looks different from the Joint Declaration and, to be candid, has been designed with that objective, we believe that most of the key substantive elements remain. We stand ready to discuss it with you urgently. The group Dermot Nally and I [Robin Butler] lead can be convened for this purpose. But we would be ready to discuss it with you in any other forum.