

ANGLO/IRISH COMMUNIQUE FOR SUMMIT ON 28 FEBRUARY

1. The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach had two hours of talks at No. 10 Downing Street today. The Prime Minister was accompanied by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Right Honourable Patrick Mayhew MP, and by his Ministers of State, the Rt. Hon. Michael Ancram MP and the Rt. Hon. Sir John Wheeler MP. The Taoiseach was accompanied by the Tanaiste, Mr. Dick Spring TD and by the Minister for Justice, Mrs. Nora Owen TD.
2. The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach noted with profound regret the statement announcing the ending of the IRA ceasefire and called for its immediate and unequivocal restoration.
3. They unreservedly condemned the murderous IRA attack in London's Docklands and subsequent acts of terrorism, for which there can never be any justification. They expressed sympathy for the victims and their common resolve to bring the perpetrators to justice, to do everything possible to protect the public from further such atrocities, and to co-operate intensively at all levels to these ends.
4. The Taoiseach and the Prime Minister confirmed the utter repudiation by the Irish and the British people of the use of violence for political ends. They reaffirmed their common determination that those who use or support such methods would not succeed in derailing the peace process which belongs to all the people of these islands. They resolved that neither violence, nor the threat of violence, would be allowed to influence the course of negotiations, or preparations for negotiations, leading to a lasting peaceful settlement.

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5. The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach agreed that the IRA's abandonment of its announced cessation was a fundamental breach of the declared basis on which both Governments had engaged Sinn Féin in political dialogue. Accordingly, both Governments are agreed that the resumption of Ministerial dialogue with Sinn Féin, and their participation in negotiations, requires the restoration of the ceasefire of August 1994.

6. The Taoiseach and the Prime Minister reaffirmed their commitment to work for a lasting peace and a comprehensive settlement on the basis of the fundamental principles shared by their two Governments and set out in the Downing Street Declaration and in the Joint Framework Document. They affirmed the fundamental priority they attach to securing the earliest possible inclusive negotiations to address comprehensively all the relevant relationships and issues in an inter-locking three-stranded process. They confirmed that such negotiations should include all relevant parties which establish a commitment to exclusively peaceful methods and which have shown that they abide by the democratic process. Having undertaken the intensive consultations and the elective process as set out below, all-party negotiations will be convened on Monday 10 June 1996.

7. The two Governments recalled that, as set out in the 28 November Communiqué, there had been intensive discussions among the two Governments and the Northern Ireland parties, in various configurations, on the basis, participation, structure, format and agenda of substantive all-party negotiations. The Prime Minister reaffirmed the British Government's view that, having taken account of the differing positions of the parties and the view of the International Body, an elective process would offer a viable direct and speedy route to all-party negotiations. The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach agreed that an elective process would have to be broadly acceptable and lead

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immediately and without further preconditions to the convening of all-party negotiations with a comprehensive agenda.

8. The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach agreed that details of an elective process were for the parties in Northern Ireland, together with the British Government, to determine. The Prime Minister confirmed that the necessary legislation for a broadly acceptable elective process would be processed as rapidly as possible.

9. The Taoiseach, for his part, while noting that the question of an elective process and its nature were primarily a matter for the parties in Northern Ireland to determine, indicated that the Irish Government would support any proposal of that kind which, it was satisfied, was broadly acceptable to those parties, had an appropriate mandate and was within the three-stranded structure.

10. The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach agreed that the two Governments would conduct intensive multilateral consultations with the relevant Northern Ireland parties in whatever configuration was acceptable to those concerned, beginning on Monday 4 March and ending on Wednesday 13 March. The purpose of the consultations will be to:

(a) reach widespread agreement on proposals for a broadly acceptable elective process leading directly and without preconditions to all-party negotiations on 10 June 1996.

(b) reach widespread agreement on the basis, participation, structure, format and agenda of substantive all-party negotiations; and

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- (c) consider whether there might be advantage in holding a referendum in Northern Ireland with a parallel referendum held by the Irish Government in its own jurisdiction on the same day as in Northern Ireland. The purpose of such a referendum would be to mandate support for a process to create lasting stability, based on the repudiation of violence for any political purpose.

11. The two Governments will work to ensure that the consultations on the matters identified in paragraph 10 will lead to a fair and acceptable basis for the early launch of substantive all-party negotiations. The Taoiseach and the Prime Minister agreed that the two Governments would review the outcome of these consultations immediately after their conclusion on 13 March. Following that, the British Government will bring forward legislation on the elective process, based on a judgement on what seems most broadly acceptable, and decisions will be announced, as appropriate, on the other issues referred to in paragraph 10.

12. In the absence of the cessation of violence for which both Governments look, the two Governments affirmed their determination to continue to work in partnership with those parties which are exclusively committed to peaceful methods to secure a comprehensive negotiated settlement. The Taoiseach and the Prime Minister expressed their hope that all parties with an electoral mandate would be able to participate in all-party negotiations. They recognise that confidence building measures will be necessary. As one such measure, all participants would need to make clear at the beginning of the discussions their total and absolute commitment to the principles of democracy and non-violence set out in the report of the International Body. They would also need to address, at that stage, its proposals on decommissioning. Confidence building would also require that the parties have reassurance that a meaningful and inclusive

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process of negotiations is genuinely being offered to address the legitimate concerns of their traditions and the need for new political arrangements with which all can identify. The two Governments called upon Sinn Fein and the IRA to make Sinn Fein's participation in the process of such negotiations possible.

Welcome the announcement made today by British Prime Minister Major and Irish Prime Minister Bruton of a path to negotiations for a just and lasting settlement in Northern Ireland. I want to express my admiration for these two leaders, who have shown so much courage and determination in the cause of peace. The clear path they have laid out leads to inclusive talks on the future of Northern Ireland, once the cease-fire has been restored. I am convinced that this is the path supported by the overwhelming majority of the people of Northern Ireland, who have so resoundingly rejected violence and embraced peace. I call on those who have resorted to violence to heed the voice of the people and cease their campaign of terror.

The process that Prime Ministers Bruton and Major have announced will begin with intensive consultations among the governments and the parties to reach agreement on a broadly acceptable elective process, which will lead directly and without preconditions to all-party negotiations by June 30, 1996. The consultations, to begin early next month, will also address the framework for those negotiations and whether to hold a referendum in support of the peace process. I hope all the parties will commit themselves to participate fully in the process announced today in order to create the lasting peace the people of Northern Ireland deserve.

The United States remains fully committed to supporting the search for peace in which the two governments, the parties and the people of Northern Ireland have invested so much. I will remain in close touch with Prime Ministers Major and Bruton, who know they have my full support in their pursuit of peace. We will continue to work with the parties in the same cause.
