

## Conclusions of Official Level Meeting on Northern Ireland

on Monday 15 July, 1996

### Meeting with SDLP at 7.00pm:

- \* Hold photocall in advance (draft to be supplied of comments to be made by Taoiseach).
- \* Agree at meeting on common approach in light of recent events.
- \* Government side to adopt the following approach at the meeting:
  - That it is right that we should both express anger at recent events,
  - That, at the same time, we have to recognise that dialogue is the only way of making political progress,
  - That, to this end, we should seek to secure agreement on a mechanism for speeding up the talks process.

### Belfast Talks

- \* The Government side should consist of the Tanaiste and Minister for Justice, in view in particular of the need to field our "A Team" at this point.

- \* We should aim for an approach based primarily on bilaterals, including with the British Government, SDLP and as many other parties as possible, to reach agreement on procedures and agenda for the opening Plenary before end-July - with a formal Plenary session to seal any agreement reached in bilateral mode.

#### **Official Level Meeting with Sinn Fein**

- \* Meeting to be held either in Government Buildings or Dublin Castle.
- \* In considering Government Buildings as a venue, benefits in terms of outreach to Republican community to be weighed against reaction by British Government and Loyalists.
- \* Purpose of meeting is to stabilise the situation and seek a restoration of the ceasefire.
- \* Advance contact to be made with British Government and Loyalist parties to make this clear.

### Visit by Garvaghy Road and Lower Ormeau Road residents to Dublin

- \* Recommended that the Taoiseach should meet them on behalf of the Government.

### Question of Meeting of Forum in Dublin

- \* Recommended against, particularly in light of (a) SDLP's withdrawal from Belfast Forum and likely reaction by Unionists/Loyalists to such a meeting (b) strong possibility that Alliance Party might not attend in present circumstances, and (c) the possibility that the question could arise of contact between Sinn Fein and Ministers involved in the Government party delegation.

### AIIC Meeting

- \* Recommended that we maintain our demands for a meeting of the Conference
- \* However, subject to Ministerial contact taking place tomorrow, in the margins of the Belfast talks, we might if pressed accept the



postponement of the Conference until next week. We could also accept a broadening of the Agenda beyond the issue of parades.

The Government...