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BRITISH VERSION - with amendments underlined

POINTS TO BE DRAWN ON BY IRISH AND BRITISH GOVERNMENT  
REPRESENTATIVES OR SOURCES IN OUTLINING THEIR APPROACH TO THE  
INTERVAL IN THE TALKS PROCESS

When the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister spoke on the telephone on Thursday, 13 March, 1997,

- they noted the central importance of the talks process, as the best means of securing an accommodation based on the freely-given consent of both unionists and nationalists;
- they reaffirmed their commitment to the talks process and their determination to carry it forward to an agreed outcome, with or without Sinn Fein;
- they shared the hope that, following the Westminster and local elections, participants will be able to complete the address to decommissioning so paving the way for talks to begin on the substantive issues and also shared the determination to encourage this point to be reached as soon as possible after the talks resume;
- they agreed that the two Governments should seek to avail of the interval in the talks as an opportunity to optimise the prospects of worthwhile progress in the talks and to that end that;
  - British and Irish officials should examine the question of an indicative time frame and calendar for the talks with a view to proposing such to the participants generally for their agreement and regular review;

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- it would be desirable that the Heads of the two Governments should meet at an early opportunity after the resumption of the talks in order to review the course of the talks following the resumption and to consider their approach to the talks with a view to encouraging progress to an agreed outcome;
- during the talks interval, Irish and British officials should undertake preparatory work to explore each Government's approach to the substantive negotiations, with particular focus on strand 3 matters, to ensure each Government is ready to play a full part when the talks resume and substantive political issues are reached with the launch of the three strands;
- they agreed that efforts should continue to identify a means of resolving differences on the decommissioning of illegally-held arms, which would be capable of securing agreement in the negotiations, on the basis of the International Body's report and the commitment of the two Governments to the implementation of all aspects of that report, including its compromise approach under which some decommissioning would take place during the negotiations.

In regard to participation in the talks, the Heads of Government

- were at one in reaffirming the need for a genuinely unequivocal restoration of the IRA ceasefire and for compliance, in actions as in words, with the requirements of paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Ground Rules for the talks;
- noted that if these requirements were met, there was a legal requirement for the British Government to invite Sinn Fein to participate in the talks without delay.

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