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ANNEX A

~~DRAFT~~ SPEAKING NOTE ON NORTHERN IRELAND FOR MEETING WITH THE
TAOISEACH

General

- welcome opportunity to meet today;
- chance to touch on a range of issues, including Northern Ireland matters;
- accord a very high priority to Northern Ireland;
- very important that there should be close co-operation between our two governments;
- can assure you of our commitment to this;
- stand fully behind the Anglo-Irish Agreement, Joint Declaration and Framework documents.

Talks Process/Decommissioning

- important that try to make progress with the talks quickly after they resume on 3 June;
- may be difficult - tension of marching season; possibility/probability of continuing IRA attacks; further pressure on the Loyalists;
- but this only highlights the need for both governments together to do the maximum possible to encourage the parties to engage on substantive issues;
- the talks process offers the best means at present to achieve the outcome which we both want: an agreed, comprehensive settlement;
- key challenge will be to overcome the impasse on decommissioning;
- officials have presented a possible approach to your officials: could put strong pressure on the UUP to agree if the two governments present a united front;

Sinn Fein Entry/Cease-fire

- want to see Sinn Fein at the talks if there is a genuine and unequivocal restoration of the ceasefire;
- after the attacks and disruption we have seen in recent weeks, Sinn Fein have effectively excluded themselves from the talks when they resume on 3 June;
- important for both governments to keep up pressure for the ceasefire to be restored immediately;

Articles 2 and 3

- noted with interest your recent comments on the need for Unionist consent to any agreement: very much agree;
- need to build confidence in both parts of the community, especially Unionists;
- unilateral amendment of Articles 2 and 3 would be widely regarded as a very significant contribution - moderate Unionists likely to respond very positively;
- interested to hear your views.

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Community tensions/North report

- deeply saddened by the sectarian attacks on churches which we have seen in recent weeks - condemn them unreservedly;
- determined to do everything possible to ensure that there is no repeat of Drumcree;
- urgent consideration is being given to how the recommendations of the North Report can best be implemented.

If raised: Bloody Sunday

- conscious of the strength of feeling that surrounds this issue, and determined that any evidence should be examined extremely carefully;
- officials have been examining the material handed over by John Hume: if there is new evidence, appropriate action will be taken - no options have been ruled out;
- [as a request has been made for leave to apply for judicial review of the findings of the Widgery Tribunal, we will not be able to comment further on the material received until the outcome of the Court hearing is known.]

If raised: Time-frame for Talks

- look forward to any ideas you might have;
- officials can consider the implications in more detail.

If raised: Summit

- could be useful for Secretary of State and Tanaiste to have a political meeting, either an IGC or less formal, in the second half of May to prepare for the resumption of talks;
- the two of us could meet in the margins of the Amsterdam summit;
- most useful time for a Summit would be the second half of July, to allow us to take stock of progress in the talks and assess the outcome of the marching season.

If raised: Strand Three

- await your proposals: must not do anything to create alarm among Unionists;
- agree it would be sensible for officials to work up ideas.

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If raised: Roisin McAliskey

- is seen regularly by a consultant obstetrician - has also been examined by an obstetrician engaged by her solicitor;
- when she goes into labour, Prison Service have arrangements in place to ensure she reaches the hospital quickly, and that her birthing partners are contacted;
- from the moment she leaves prison until after she returns she will not be restrained in any way;
- a side ward will be made available for her at the hospital;
- as far as possible she is treated in the same way as other women in her condition;
- **[if pressed:** she did not attend court on 6 May because the medical officer certified her as unfit to do so, due to the lateness of her pregnancy and because she felt too tired and uncomfortable to attend - not unusual for women in an advanced state of pregnancy to be certified as unfit to attend court.

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