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PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH MR AHERN, 12 DECEMBER

**CHECKLIST OF POINTS TO MAKE**

**Cooperation between Ireland and the United Kingdom**

- Glad that Ministers of our two Governments have been establishing personal contacts. This supports the good co-operation at official level.
- We have many problems in common, and we should take every opportunity to learn from each other, and to add value to our individual efforts.
- See much scope for co-operation in the use of information technology in education. I hope that we can also use it to establish links between schools in our two countries.
- [Defensive: Irish language training in English Schools] I know that David Blunkett will want to look at the whole National Curriculum before he makes individual changes. I understand that there are ways of permitting Irish language teaching in individual schools under the present law. We are very ready to see these used.



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**Irish beef exports/farmers' protests**

- Grateful for your cooperation and understanding during past week.
- Greatly regret Holyhead incident in which Irish beefburgers destroyed. Government has condemned illegal protests in strongest terms. Decisive action taken to ensure no repeat and freedom of movement for Irish imports.
- As you know, police chiefs have autonomy to decide how best to handle demonstrations. But hope you agree that situation at ports now under control. Police taking all reasonable steps to ensure Irish truck drivers have free passage, and are imposing full weight of law on any attempts to intimidate them.
- Will continue to monitor situation closely and to keep you informed of developments.
- Support Commission's free movement of goods proposals. Hope Luxembourg will call for UK Presidency to take them forward. Shows our commitment to keeping intra-Community trade flowing.

**Bloody Sunday** (*Defensive*)

- Recognise the pain and distress of the events of 30 January 1972. The Government has a duty to address that. Sorry that process of examining Irish material is taking some time. Please bear with us: important to be thorough not hasty.



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**Roisin McAliskey** ( *defensive* )

- Delay in case caused by birth of Ms McAliskey's baby and her subsequent non-appearance at court because of ill-health. Judicial Review hearing today (12 December) at request of CPS may lead to decision on whether committal hearing can proceed.

- If decision is taken to commit, and after any avenues of appeal have been exhausted, the Home Secretary will need to take final decision on surrender to Germany. Decision governed by safeguards of Extradition Act 1989.

- HMG has no power to intervene in case other than in exceptional circumstances. CPS, acting on behalf of the German Government, are trying to speed up committal hearing.

- (only if raised) The Home Secretary has received a formal set of representations from Ms McAliskey's solicitors asking him to review the original order to proceed. The main ground is Ms McAliskey's health. The Home Secretary is considering his response in the light of the outcome of Friday's hearing.

**Prison transfers (defensive)**

**Repatriation**

- Have made good progress and doing all we can. Ball is in Irish court on number of cases.

- 9 republican prisoners repatriated (3 last week). 1 agreed (Donnelly) will transfer shortly.



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- Of outstanding cases: 3 are with Irish Government; 7 are with Home Office but our decision waiting upon enactment of Irish Bill about enforcement of sentences (expected 16 December); 4 (the Balcombe Street gang) await setting of tariffs about which Home Secretary has only recently received formal representations which need to be taken into account; and 1 case (Kinsella) has been suspended as he has appealed against his conviction.

Transfer to Northern Ireland

- No outstanding requests. Home Secretary recently approved last outstanding request (Martin) who will be transferred shortly.

BSE (if raised)

- Grateful for Irish support during BSE crisis. Hope that despite recent events, you will continue to help us achieve a partial relaxation of the export ban based on the science.

- UK has acted on all Florence pre-conditions and now needs recognition for the measures taken and the sacrifices made.

- Have passed Commission proposals for export of meat from Certified Herds. Revised to take account of Scientific Committees' expert opinion. Now Northern Ireland-only to start with. Strict adherence to computerised tracing. Expect Commission to table proposal soon.

- Have also given Commission proposals for a Date Based Scheme which will allow export of meat from animals born after preventive measures fully in place. Scientific committees now examining. We will then look for early progress.



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- Regret any inconvenience resulting from 3 December announcement on deboned beef. Had planned to brief Partners in advance, but early public statement necessary following leak to media.
- On basis of scientific advice (SEAC), decided to debone meat as a precautionary principle. Recognise actual risk of BSE very small (3 cattle in 2.5 million) - but can not allow any BSE infective to enter food chain.
- New measures will cover all beef sold in UK, including third country imports. But no ban on imports of bone-in-beef - will debone in UK.
- No implications for Export Certified Herds Scheme proposals - they cover only boneless beef and animals at no risk from BSE. But EU scientists should consider implications for SRM Decision.