

AHERN

Talks

- Your meeting with Trimble?
- Believe UUP are beginning to engage seriously.
- How to break through current phase? Move towards broad agreement on principles?
- Will press UUP on Strand 2 if you agree we can develop East-West architecture.
- Where do you stand on Articles 2 and 3?

Sinn Fein/Nationalist CBMS

- Understand concerns about republican movement. Keeping close eye.
- No immediate threat to Adams leadership or ceasefire.
- Many steps already: internment, exclusion orders, prisoner transfers/reategorisation and 230 early releases under 1995 legislation.
- Withdrawal of battalion this week, 30-40% reduction in military patrolling etc. But looking for more.

Bloody Sunday

- Active consideration. Will keep you in touch. Not dragging our feet.

AHERN CHECKLIST

Northern Ireland

- Good meeting with Sinn Fein. Clever presentation from Adams but also useful confirmation of commitment to the Mitchell Principles, and of readiness to accept and present a settlement falling well short of a united Ireland. Told Adams return to violence would stop me dealing with him again.
- Glad your contacts with Trimble back on track. Good luck, particularly on north/south, where UUP suspicions are acute.
- Hope parties can agree on key issues. Would have liked to go further on Heads of Agreement, but will need to come back to this in January.
- UUP will be suspicious if they think you are protecting Sinn Fein in the talks too much.
- Remain cautiously optimistic but a long way to go and a lot to do in a very short time after Christmas. And chance of renewed violence cannot be discounted.
- Working hard on prisoner transfers. Ball now largely in your court.
- Not far from conclusions on Bloody Sunday.

Anglo/Irish Relations

- Happy to issue Joint Statement. Shows breadth of our co-operation, outside Northern Ireland issue.
- Doing all we can to keep farmers within the law. Grateful for your understanding. Considerable anger among farmers, which we are trying to address.

Information and Consultation of Workers

- Social partners unlikely now to negotiate. Worried Commission will bring forward directive. Inappropriate new burdens, subsidiarity. Heads of Government need to tell Santer (and Flynn) to drop it.