



ANNEX A

## DRAFT COMMUNIQUE

(4 December)

1. [Cast list]
2. [EU issues]
3. The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach reviewed the two Governments' approach to the Northern Ireland negotiations. They reaffirmed their commitment to promoting a comprehensive agreement, based on consent, achieved through inclusive, three-stranded negotiations. They confirmed that no outcome is predetermined or ruled out in advance, and that no party can veto any significant issue of concern being raised.
4. They noted the progress achieved since the negotiations started on 10 June 1996, welcoming the positive and constructive contributions of all parties. They declared their own aim of encouraging agreement on proposals on decommissioning, such that the opening plenary session of the negotiations could be concluded before Christmas. This would enable substantive negotiations in the three strands to be launched when the talks resume later in January. They agreed to review their approach to the negotiations regularly, noting that a review was due before the end of May 1997, a date set in the British legislation.
5. On decommissioning, the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister confirmed their support for the compromise approach set out in paragraphs 34 and 35 of the Report of the International Body chaired

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by Senator Mitchell, under which some decommissioning would take place during negotiations. They confirmed that they would continue to work with the Independent Chairmen and all the parties to secure an agreed way forward. They noted that the British Government had introduced a Bill in Parliament, and the Irish Government would introduce a Bill in the Dail before Christmas, to enable decommissioning to proceed. They agreed that the two Governments were ready to establish an International Commission tasked with securing implementation of the International Body's report, including its compromise approach to decommissioning, once there was agreement in the negotiations on its terms of reference and the Opening Plenary had been concluded.

6. The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach repeated their commitment to the position agreed in their Communique of 28 February 1996 and reaffirmed in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the "Ground Rules for Substantive All-Party Negotiations" (Cm 3232) of 16 April 1996 as follows:

"Negotiations will involve the participation, in the appropriate strands, of representatives of both Governments and all those political parties operating in Northern Ireland (hereafter referred to as "the political parties") which achieve representation through an elective process and which, as set out in the Communique of 28 February 1996, establish a commitment to exclusively peaceful methods and which have shown that they abide by the democratic process.

In the Communique of 28 February, both Governments expressed the hope that all political parties with an electoral mandate will

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be able to participate in all-party negotiations. However, both Governments are also agreed that the resumption of Ministerial dialogue with Sinn Fein, and their participation in negotiations, requires the unequivocal restoration of the ceasefire of August 1994."

7. The Prime Minister explained that his statement of 28 November set out the criteria which would be applied in deciding whether or not the requirements of paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Ground Rules were met, as required by the British legislation. He confirmed that no new hurdles were being erected: once these requirements were dependably met Sinn Fein would be invited by the Secretary of State to participate as soon as practicable.
8. The Taoiseach agreed that Sinn Fein should not be invited to participate unless those requirements were met.
9. Against the background of the statements each has made, both Prime Ministers expressed the hope that the IRA would enable Sinn Fein to meet the requirements set out so that they could participate in inclusive negotiations on the same basis as all other parties at the first opportunity. They called upon the IRA to declare an immediate and unequivocal restoration of the ceasefire. In such circumstances they could envisage that, if these requirements are met on the basis each has already set out, Sinn Fein would be able to be invited to participate in the negotiations by mid - February.
10. [East/West issues]