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29 JANUARY 1996

cc: Ms Checksfield (o/r) - B
Mrs Patterson
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MR HILL - B
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NORTHERN IRELAND: "BULL POINTS"

I attach a copy of the Northern Ireland section of the FCO's latest "Bull Points" document for updating.

2. The FCO circulate this document to posts abroad where its main purpose is to supply Information Officers with an up-to-date quarry for speeches and answers to letters on which they can draw.

3. I should again be grateful if Miss Patterson could co-ordinate Northern Ireland Department responses. I would appreciate any comments/amendments you might have on the attached by close of play Wednesday 7 February 1996.

Signed:

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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT: HMG'S POSITION

- HMG remains firmly committed to seeking a widely acceptable and comprehensive political settlement in Northern Ireland, which encompasses relationships within Northern Ireland, in the whole island of Ireland and between the UK and the Republic of Ireland.
- The Government is committed to seeing all party negotiations as soon as possible. The British and Irish Governments made it clear in the Downing Street Declaration (December 1994) that democratically mandated parties which establish a commitment to exclusively peaceful methods and which have shown that they abide by the democratic process, are free to join in dialogue in due course between the Government and the political parties on the way ahead.
- But for all party talks to be viable, they need to take place on an equal basis, that is without the actual or implicit threat of violence should any group fail to get their way at the negotiating table.
- Not only do both the loyalist terrorist groups and the IRA have access to large weapons stockpile, but leading figures within Sinn Fein have consistently claimed that the right to the "armed struggle" remains.
- Decision time for Sinn Fein. Will they accept the challenge issued by President Clinton in Belfast to renounce violence and thus become a normal constitutional party? Or will they remain wedded to the outdated and undemocratic doctrine of the "ballot box and the armalite"?

- The Government believes that in order to instil the confidence and trust needed to bring all parties around the table there should be the beginning of a credible and verifiable process of the decommissioning of weapons by paramilitary organisations on both sides of the community. This process must be one in which all parties have trust and confidence.

Brief History

- Bilateral talks were held in 1991 and ended in 1992. Since then the search for a settlement has continued through bilateral discussions with the Northern Ireland parties and also with the Irish Government under the auspices of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference.
- On 15 December 1993 the British and Irish Governments made the Joint Declaration which made it clear that any settlement would be founded on the fundamental principles of democracy and consent. It also states that a democratically mandated parties which establish all commitment to exclusively peaceful methods and which have shown that they abide by the democratic process, are free to join in dialogue in due course between the Governments and the political parties on the way ahead.
- On 22 February 1995 "Frameworks for the Future" was launched by the Government and the Irish Government. The document contains two sets of proposals. "A Framework for Accountable Government in Northern Ireland" describes the Government's ideas on possible new democratic institutions in Northern Ireland; "A new Framework for Agreement" is a joint paper by the British and Irish Governments which offers proposals for relationships within the island of Ireland, and between the two Governments.

- Any agreement reached between the political parties and the Government will be put to the people of Northern Ireland in a referendum and they in turn will be put before Parliament before they are implemented. This is a triple safeguard - referred to as the triple lock.

The Twin Track approach

- On 28 November 1995, the British and Irish Governments launched the "twin track" initiative, following intensive discussions and consultation with the Northern Ireland parties. This process is designed to achieve parallel progress on the decommissioning of illegally held arms and on all party negotiations.
- On 1 December the Northern Ireland parties were invited to intensive preparatory talks to examine the ground rules aimed at achieving widespread agreement on the basis, participation structure, format and agenda for all party talks. Open agenda allows discussion of alternative approaches and each party will be treated on an equal basis.
- The Talks will also consider how negotiations can address all the relevant relationships in an inter-locking three stranded process and how best the structure and format of all-party negotiations can properly take account of democratic mandates and principles including whether and how an elected body could play a part.
- The talks may also extend to all steps needed to establish the necessary circumstances to bring all the parties together at the negotiating table in accordance with paragraph 10 of the Downing Street Declaration.

- By 9 January 1996 HMG had held bilateral meetings with all the relevant Northern Ireland parties to discuss their views on the way forward, although the meeting with the DUP was not part of the twin track process. A trilateral meeting involving HMG, RoI and Alliance Party was also held on 20 December. Further meetings are planned.
- Both Governments are committed to the firm aim of achieving the launch of all-party negotiations by the end of February 1996
- In parallel an International Body has been set up to report arrangements necessary to achieve decommissioning of paramilitary arms. The Body will be asked to:
 - identify and advise on a suitable and acceptable method for full and verifiable decommissioning
 - report whether is a clear commitment on the part of those in possession of such arms to work constructively to achieve that
- The two governments have invited Senator George Mitchell of the USA to chair the Body, which has been asked to report by mid-January 1996. The two other members are Harri Holkeri, a former Prime Minister of Finland, and General John de Chastelain of Canada.

PUNISHMENT BEATINGS/THE DISAPPEARED

- Horrific punishment beatings, by both the IRA and loyalist groups, continue; since the IRA ceasefire there have been 258 victims of punishment attacks. This sort of vigilante activity is barbaric and rejected by all civilised communities.

- This is not "policing" and is against all concepts of justice and human rights. As President Clinton made clear, both Sinn Fein and the loyalist parties should use their influence to stop the beatings.
- The bodies of a number of victims of the troubles have never been found. Bereaved families need to know where the bodies of their loved ones are to give them a decent burial and to allow proper mourning. It is long past time for terrorists to release the details of those who are missing. The Government has pressed Sinn Fein and the loyalist parties on this issue.

SECURITY SITUATION

- To date this year 1 person has died as a result of the security situation (Con Jim Seymour who was shot outside Coalisland RUC station in 1973 and had been in hospital since then).

Parades

- Decisions on the routing of parades are an operational matter for the police under the law. In reaching their decisions on the routing of particular parades, the primary concern of the police is to maintain public order and safety. The police cannot however ban parades: this power lies with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.
- Thanks to the RUC the marching season passed off relatively peacefully, despite tensions in Portadown, Belfast and Londonderry in the run-up to the Twelfth of July Orange parades. There are many thousands of parades each year only a few of which carry the potential for conflict; the overwhelming majority pass off peacefully.

SECURITY RESPONSE TO THE CEASEFIRE

- The Government and the security forces have reacted rapidly and imaginatively to the changed security situation of the ceasefire. As a result it has been possible to:
- re-open all closed border roads. 98 of the 104 crossing previously closed are now open and the rest are being worked on;
- relocate around 1,600 troops (ie 3 Battalions) to their home bases in England and Germany;
- end routine military patrolling in Greater Belfast and many other urban areas. Throughout Northern Ireland, military support to the RUC is running at 22% of its pre-ceasefire level.
- rescind exclusion orders from Northern Ireland, and many of those for whom the Home Secretary is responsible;
- End of routine checking of vehicles at all patrol bases;
- open town and city centres which had previously been closed to traffic at night-time and remove most security-related parking restrictions;
- removal of observation tower at Rosemount, Londonderry.
- move towards community policing.

More Troops to be Withdrawn/Further Measures?

- The situation is kept under review and a battalion was relocated in December. Look to the Police and Army for advice on what further measures can be taken, and when. Fully expect that as the ceasefires continue, there will be further changes.

Concessions to Sinn Fein?

- Not so. The measures taken have been a response to the changed security situation, and not concessions to terrorists.

The future?

- Firm objective of the Government to return to exclusively civilian policing. The need for soldiers to provide direct support to the RUC will continue to be reviewed as circumstances permit. Look forward to a time when the Army's role in Northern Ireland will be no different from its role elsewhere in the UK. But cannot drop our guard prematurely particularly in light of unhelpful comments made recently by Sinn Fein. The IRA continue to target, train their members and update their weapons.

PRISONS ISSUES

General

- the Northern Ireland Prison Service is committed to offering a service to the community in Northern Ireland by holding prisoners securely and working to reduce the risk of re-offending through offering constructive regimes;

- the Northern Ireland Prison Service offers all prisoners the opportunity to use their time in prison constructively through education and where appropriate, work and training;
- all prisoners are treated as individuals regardless of their political or religious beliefs;
- the Prison Service offers many facilities to allow prisoners to retain links with their families including access to telephones in all prisons, regular (weekly) visits for all prisoners and generous arrangements for pre-release and compassionate release.

Political Prisoners?

- No prisoner in Northern Ireland is imprisoned because of his beliefs, all have been convicted by the courts of crimes under the criminal law.

Early Release for Terrorists

- HMG has said that there will be no amnesty for those convicted of terrorist-related offences and that all prisoners shall continue to serve their sentences in accordance with the law;
- However, in response to the changed circumstances of the ceasefires the Government introduced legislation - Northern Ireland (Remission of Sentences) Act 1995 - to allow release on licence for some scheduled offenders (approximately 470) after they have served half of their sentence (previously this group of offenders would have been required to serve 2/3 of their sentence before release);

- The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has said that the continuing ceasefires are one factor that may be taken into account in considering the release of life sentence prisoners (however, it should be noted that terrorist life sentence prisoners in Northern Ireland already serve comparatively short sentences, the average being between 14 and 15 years);

Transfer of Prisoners

- The Government remains committed to the policy of allowing prisoners to serve their sentence close to their family if possible and allows transfers, either temporary or permanent, between jurisdictions to facilitate this;
- all those who are eligible for transfer to Northern Ireland and who wish to avail themselves of transfer arrangements have been transferred; (since November 1992 13 prisoners convicted of terrorist-related offences have been permanently transferred to Northern Ireland and 10 prisoners convicted of terrorist-related offences have been temporarily transferred to Northern Ireland; of the other prisoners requesting transfer to Northern Ireland none is eligible either because they have insufficient links with Northern Ireland or because of outstanding criminal charges in England);

Repatriation to the Republic of Ireland

- the Government remains committed to its policy of repatriating prisoners under the terms of its international agreements;

- until 1 November it was not possible to repatriate prisoners to the Republic of Ireland as the Irish Government had not ratified the relevant international convention;
- the two Governments have had meetings at official level to discuss the arrangements under which repatriation will take place.

FAIR EMPLOYMENT

- Government is totally committed to the elimination of all forms of unlawful discrimination in employment in Northern Ireland. To this end it introduced the Fair Employment (NI) Act 1989, the most radical piece of anti-discrimination legislation ever passed in the United Kingdom, and probably Europe.

Main features of the Act:

- Establishment of Fair Employment Commission (FEC) and Fair Employment Tribunal.
- Outlawing of indirect discrimination (direct discrimination unlawful since 1976).
- Compulsory registration of employers with the Commission.
- Compulsory monitoring of work-forces and applicants.
- Compulsory reviews of recruitment, training and promotion practices, at least once every three years.

- Affirmative action, with goals and timetables as directed by the FEC.
- Criminal penalties and economic sanctions to punish bad practice including loss of government grants and contracts.
- Unlimited compensation for victims of discrimination.
- Code of Practice on fair employment.

Progress

- The act is working well. Over 4,100 organisations are registered with the Commission and all those required to submit monitoring returns have done so.
- Many larger employers have introduced or are considering voluntary affirmative action measures.
- 1994 figures show that Roman Catholics account for 37.3% of the workforce (from 34.9% in 1990) compared with 40% in the economically active population.
- The Fair Employment Tribunal offers real redress for victims of discrimination and has made a number of substantial compensation awards.

Employment Equality Review

- A wide ranging, independent review of the effectiveness of the legislation ^{INVOLVING EXTENSIVE RESEARCH AND CONSULTATION WITH ALL INTERESTED PARTIES, N} is currently being taken forward by the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights (SACHR). The results of this review will be published when completed, probably toward the end of 1996.

MacBride

- The MacBride Principles are considered unnecessary because of the more wide ranging, precise and stringent requirements of the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1989.
- The MacBride Campaign has not created a single job in Northern Ireland and is thought to have discouraged some new job-creating investment.
- The Fair Employment laws are working well, what Northern Ireland needs is more job creating investment which will help achieve fair employment for both communities.

EDUCATION

- The Government believes that education has a role to play in the process of improving community relations among young people. To this end a number of measures, for which £3.1m has been allocated in the current financial year, are available.
- The Cross-Community Contact Scheme, introduced in October 1987, provides modest grant support to schools, colleges and youth clubs to develop joint, collaborative programmes involving young people from different backgrounds; some 600 schools (about 45% of NI schools) and over 400 youth clubs and other organisations are actively involved.
- The Cultural Traditions programme, introduced in May 1989, seeks to provide opportunities through which young people can explore both their shared cultural heritage and the rich diversity of cultural traditions.

- Support is provided to voluntary sector reconciliation organisations, museums, arts and cultural organisations and a range of other bodies for the development of programmes and projects designed to enhance and complement the opportunities provided through the formal education structures. EC funding is providing further assistance in developing the range of youth and education community/reconciliation related projects.
- The Common Curriculum includes the 2 cross-curricular themes of Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) and Cultural Heritage and students in compulsory education at all schools must be afforded opportunities, through all programmes of study, to learn about themselves and others, to understand and respect differences, and to resolve conflict by peaceful means.
- When the 1989 Education Reform Order became law, there were just 10 integrated schools in NI, with a combined enrolment of 1,788 pupils. Today there are 28 Grant-Aided schools (including 9 secondary schools), widely distributed throughout the Province, with a total enrolment of over 5,000 (this is around 2% of total pupil numbers). Growth has been steady at the rate of 2 or 3 new schools a year - the current school year (1995-1996) saw the establishment of 3 new secondary schools, one in Omagh, Co Tyrone, one in Loughbrickland, Co Down and one in Dungannon, Co Tyrone. One new primary school opened in Crossgar, Co Down and an existing Primary School in Portaferry, Co Down, transferred to integrated status.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Northern Ireland Community Relations Council

- Established in 1990 to promote community relations work in Northern Ireland;

- Budget in 1995/96 is over £2.3m and the Council has its own grant making capacity;
- Its members (up to 24) are representative of the community.

District Council Community Relations Programme

- Government provides grant aid for programmes which command cross-political support and encourage cross-community contact, mutual understanding and awareness of cultural diversity;
- All 26 Councils are currently involved in the programme.

Community Reconciliation Bodies

- Funding is provided to support bodies which promote cross-community contact and the creation of a more tolerant and harmonious community;
- The work of such bodies is an important means of harnessing community energies and promoting a more tolerant society.

Cultural Traditions Programme

- Aims to encourage greater understanding about different cultural traditions in Northern Ireland;
- It includes support for the Irish Language.

Capital Programme

- Provides funding for community based facilities which are accessible to the main sections of the community.

- Priority is given to small towns where there has been evidence of sectarian tension.

Research and Evaluation

- maintain up-to-date information on the nature and effects of community division through research, evaluation, and statistical monitoring;
- evaluate and assess the impact of the Government's policies;
- evaluate the impact and effectiveness of funded projects and bodies.

EQUALITY AND EQUITY

Targeting Social Need (TSN)

- TSN was launched in 1991.
- Economic and social disadvantage persist on both sides of the Northern Ireland community. On all major indicators however, eg unemployment, income, health, overcrowding - Catholics generally do worse than Protestants.
- These different experiences sustain feelings of discrimination and alienation which in turn influence attitudes to political and security issues.
- Through TSN, Government policies and programmes will be targeted more sharply at the areas and people in greatest need in order to reduce unfair social and economic differentials and promote equality and equity for all sections of the community. This in turn should contribute to healing community divisions.

- Priorities for action are employment and employability.

Race Relations

- The Government accepts the principle that protection should be given to those who suffer from discrimination on the grounds of race.
- Following a public consultation process to consider the needs of ethnic minorities and the traditional Irish traveller community, and the scope for legislation to outlaw discrimination on grounds of race, the Government in April 1995 announced its intention to introduce race relations legislation in Northern Ireland as soon as possible.
- The legislation will be along the general lines of the Great Britain Race Relations Act 1976, and will refer to the traditional Irish traveller community.

Policy Appraisal and Fair Treatment

- Revised Government Guidelines on Policy Appraisal and Fair Treatment (PAFT) came into effect for all Northern Ireland Departments, their Agencies and the Northern Ireland Office, on 1 January 1994.
- The Guidelines aim to ensure that those responsible for the development of policy and delivery of services do not unfairly or unnecessarily discriminate against specified sections of the community.
- Groups which may be covered by the guidelines include people of different gender, age, ethnic group, religious

belief or political opinion; married and unmarried people; disabled and non-disabled people; people with or without dependants and people of differing sexual orientation.

- The first annual report on the implementation of PAFT was published on 21 July 1995.

Employment Equality Review

- During the passage through Parliament of the Fair Employment (NI) Bill, the Government undertook to carry out a comprehensive review of the legislation after 5 years.
- The purpose of the review is to assess the effectiveness of the Fair Employment (NI) Act 1989, and progress towards equality of opportunity and fair participation in employment.
- The independent Standing Advisory Commission for Human Rights (SACHR) has been asked to carry forward the review.
- A review report will be available by 1996.

General

- In 1986 almost half of the people in Northern Ireland felt that community relations were getting worse. By 1991 just over one in six held the same view and in 1995, the figure has fallen to one in 25. Moreover, in 1991 40% of Catholics and 29% of Protestants said they expected community relations to improve further in the future. In 1995 these figures have improved so that 59% of Catholics and 43% of Protestants expected further improvement in the future. In 1995 less than 1% of Catholics and 7% of Protestants expect relations to get worse.

INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND (IFI)

- The International fund was established in 1986 by the British and Irish Governments in the wake of the Anglo Irish Agreement. It is administered by an independent Board, comprising a Chairman and 6 other Members, jointly appointed by the 2 Governments.
- The Fund's geographical remit covers the 6 counties of Northern Ireland and the 6 Southern border counties of Donegal, Cavan, Monaghan, Sligo, Leitrim and Louth. The Fund is required to spend approximately 75% of its resources in Northern Ireland.
- In its administration of the Fund the Board is supported by a Secretariat staffed by officials seconded by the two Governments and headed by Joint Directors General based in Belfast and Dublin respectively. In addition Government departments and public agencies, North and South, acting on behalf of the Fund assist with the day to day administration of the Fund's main programme of work.
- To date the donors to the Fund include the US (US\$²⁴⁰~~250~~m), the EC (ECU130m), Canada (up to C\$10m) and New Zealand (NZ\$900,000). Australia has indicated its intention to contribute A\$7m over 5 years. Further increases in contributions have been pledged by US and EU.
- Up to 30 September 1995 the Fund approved assistance of some £271m to over 3,000 projects and had contributed to the generation of approximately 20,000 full-time jobs - plus a considerable number of part-time and construction jobs.

- The Fund has a particular interest in supporting projects with a cross-border dimension and has had a catalytic role in helping to develop a substantial number of major initiatives. These include a marketing initiative with the two Tourist Boards jointly to market Ireland as a tourist destination overseas and a joint initiative sponsored by the CBI and CCI to develop increased cross-border trade links and business opportunities.
- The Fund has also supported four major flagship projects because of the impact they will have on the economic regeneration of their region. These are the construction of the Erne-Shannon link canal, the development of the Navan Fort research educational and visitor centre, the economic regeneration of the Strabane/Lifford area and pump-priming support for the proposed new University campus at Springvale in West Belfast.
- The Fund has been very successful in leveraging public and private sector investments. This is particularly true in the Urban Development and Tourism Programmes where the overall leverage factor averages 1:3. The Tourism Programme has played a key role in stimulating very substantial private investment in some of the most disadvantaged areas, North and South, where the tourism industry offers the greatest potential for economic activity and job creation. It is estimated that to date this Programme has helped to generate over 2,500 direct jobs.