

JOINT STATEMENT

ANGLO-IRISH INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE

LONDON, 27 APRIL 1992

A meeting of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference was held in London on 27 April 1992. The British Government was represented by the Joint Chairman, the Rt Hon Sir Patrick Mayhew MP, accompanied by Mr Michael Mates, Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office. The Irish Government was represented by the Joint Chairman, Mr David Andrews TD, Minister for Foreign Affairs and by Mr Padraig Flynn TD, Minister for Justice. The Chief Constable of the RUC and the Commissioner of the Garda Síochána were present for discussion on security matters.

POLITICAL TALKS

2. The Conference reviewed political developments since its last meeting on 6 March 1992 and confirmed that, to allow a further opportunity for talks to take place on the basis announced by the former Secretary of State in the House of Commons on 26 March 1991, there will be no further meeting of the Conference before the week beginning 27 July 1992. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to the principles and terms of the 26 March 1991 statement. The two Governments expressed the strong hope that, with the co-operation of all involved this further opportunity for talks will achieve a new beginning for relationships within Northern Ireland, within the island of Ireland and between the peoples of these islands.

SECURITY SITUATION

3. The Conference totally condemned recent acts of terrorism and reviewed the present security situation. Ministers expressed their appreciation for current measures of security co-operation and their determination to enhance and strengthen these.

CONFIDENCE ISSUES

4. The British side emphasised the importance they attached to building confidence in both parts of the community in the fairness and effectiveness of measures against terrorism. They recognised that, to be effective, the actions of the security forces require the support of all sections of the community for their work on behalf of the entire community.

5. The Irish Co-Chairman made a presentation on the question of public confidence in the security forces and in the administration of justice which is a major objective of both Governments under the Agreement. He referred to a number of issues including the situation in the prisons, the question of accompaniment of the armed forces (including the UDR), allegations of harassment by the security forces and the issues arising from the Nelson case including those which are under review by the British Government.

6. The Conference discussed the implications of the closure of cross-border roads as regards security, the economic and social welfare of the communities affected, and North/South co-operation. They agreed that the issue should be kept under review.

7. In relation to forthcoming parades in Northern Ireland, the Conference recognised that the right to demonstrate should be exercised with respect for the rights and sensitivities of others and with regard for the maintenance of public order. The Conference had before it a joint paper on the issue of the use of lethal force by the security forces which enabled the Conference to carry discussion forward.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES

8. Ministers welcomed the development of discussion of economic and social issues and of North/South co-operation in the Conference since the Review Document of May 1989. They reviewed the wide variety of matters that have been considered and the work that has been set in train and renewed their commitment to continuing with this to the benefit of both parts of the island.

DECISION TO UPGRADE THE BELFAST-DUBLIN RAIL LINK

9. With reference to discussion at previous meetings, the Conference was pleased to announce the decision by both Governments to upgrade the Belfast-Dublin rail link which is of major importance to the development of closer North/South economic co-operation as part of the improvement of economic, social and political contacts between both parts of Ireland. The upgrading will permit increased speeds on the line, and will provide for new signalling equipment and rolling stock. The total cost of the work is estimated at Stg £66.5 million. The Conference welcomed the grant support given by the European Community for up to 75% of the cost of the project. It is anticipated that work on the line will commence shortly and will take 5 years to complete.

FUTURE TOPICS

10. The Conference gave consideration to its future discussion of economic and social topics.