

C O N F I D E N T I A L

286/96

RUTH OSBORNE  
ANGLO-IRISH SECRETARIAT  
29 NOVEMBER 1995

CC PS/SIR JOHN WHEELER (B&L) - B  
PS/MICHAEL ANCRAM (B&L&DENI)- B  
PS/PUS (B&L) - B  
PS/SIR DAVID FELL - B  
MR STEELE - B  
MR THOMAS - B  
MR BELL - B  
MR DANIELL - B  
MR LEACH - B  
MR STEPHENS - B  
MR WATKINS - B  
MR BEETON - B  
MRS BROWN - B  
MR CANAVAN  
MRS COLLINS - B  
MR HILL - B  
MR LAVERY - B  
MR MACCABE - B  
MR MARSH - B  
MR PERRY - B  
DR POWER - B  
MR WHITE - B  
MS BHARUCHA - B  
~~MS DEVLIN - B~~  
MS MAPSTONE - B  
MR LAMONT, RID - B  
HMA, DUBLIN - B  
MR C BUDD, CAB OFFICE - B  
MR DAVID GOULD, CAB OFFICE - B  
MR STEPHEN McDONALD, WASHINGTON  
CHIEF CONSTABLE, RUCHQ

C

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (B&L) - B

PLENARY RECORD OF IGC HELD IN BELFAST ON 20 NOVEMBER 1996 - IC(96)5

I ATTACH THE RECORD OF THE PLENARY SESSION (EXCLUDING DISCUSSIONS IN RESTRICTED NUMBERS ON POLITICAL MATTERS, WHICH HAVE BEEN RECORDED SEPARATELY) OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE HELD IN STORMONT CASTLE, BELFAST ON 20 NOVEMBER.

[SIGNED]

RUTH OSBORNE

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PH/35168

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PLENARY RECORD OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE HELD IN STORMONT  
CASTLE, BELFAST ON 20 NOVEMBER 1996

PRESENT

BRITISH SIDE

SIR PATRICK MAYHEW  
SIR JOHN WHEELER  
MICHAEL ANCRAM

IRISH SIDE

MR DICK SPRING  
MRS NORA OWEN

OFFICIALS

SIR JOHN CHILCOT  
SIR DAVID FELL  
CHIEF CONSTABLE RONNIE FLANAGAN  
MR JOHN STEELE  
MR QUENTIN THOMAS  
HMA VERONICA SUTHERLAND  
MR JONATHON STEPHENS  
MR DAVID HILL

OFFICIALS

MR PADRAIC MACKERNAN  
MR TIM DALTON  
MR SEAN O HUIGINN  
GARDA COMMISSIONER PAT BYRNE  
MR COLM O FLOINN  
MR PAUL HICKEY  
MS LINDA O'SHEA FARREN

ANGLO-IRISH SECRETARIAT

MR PETER BELL  
MR JOHN FISHER  
MRS RUTH OSBORNE

ANGLO-IRISH SECRETARIAT

MR DAVID DONOGHUE  
MR STEVE MAGNER  
MR KIERAN DOWLING

IN ATTENDANCE

CHIEF SUPT GERRY SILLERY

IN ATTENDANCE

MR MAIRTIN O FAININ  
MR MICHAEL TIERNEY

THE CONFERENCE COMMENCED AT 2015 HOURS WITH A SHORT TETE A TETE FOLLOWED BY THE RESTRICTED SECURITY SESSION, RECORDED SEPARATELY. THE PLENARY SESSION THEN COMMENCED WITH POLITICAL MATTERS ALSO INVOLVING RESTRICTED NUMBERS. THIS TOO HAS BEEN RECORDED SEPARATELY. DISCUSSION ON THIS ITEM ENDED LATER THAN INTENDED AT ABOUT 2215. THE REST OF THE AGENDA ITEMS WERE THEREFORE DISCUSSED FAIRLY SWIFTLY AND ARE RECORDED AS FOLLOWS: IGC FINISHED AT ABOUT 2300 HOURS, FOLLOWED BY SEPARATE PRESS INTERVIEWS IN THE LOBBY.

CONFIDENCE ISSUESRESPONSES BY SECURITY FORCES TO RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

THE TANAISTE REMARKED THAT IT HAD BEEN DRAWN TO THE ATTENTION OF THE IRISH SIDE THAT THERE HAS BEEN A NOTICEABLE INCREASE IN SECURITY FORCE PRESENCE RECENTLY, PARTICULARLY IN THE AREA OF WEST BELFAST. THE IRISH SIDE WOULD BE CONCERNED THAT THIS WOULD HAVE A DETRIMENTAL AFFECT ON RELATIONS WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY. THE CHIEF CONSTABLE CONFIRMED THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME INCREASED SECURITY FORCE ACTIVITY. THIS WAS LARGELY IN AND AROUND SECURITY FORCE BASES BELIEVED TO BE UNDER THREAT OF TERRORIST ATTACK, AND WAS IN RESPONSE TO PIRA'S RECENT BOMBINGS OF THIEPVAL BARRACKS IN LISBURN WHICH HAD RESULTED IN THE DEATH OF WARRANT OFFICER BRADWELL. SIR JOHN WHEELER EMPHASISED THAT THE INCREASED SECURITY FORCE ACTIVITY WAS PROPORTIONATE TO THE PREVAILING SECURITY SITUATION, AND POINTED OUT THAT PATROLLING HAD NOT RETURNED TO PRE-1994 CEASEFIRE LEVELS, NOR HAD ADDITIONAL TROOPS BEEN RECALLED TO NI. TROOP LEVELS CURRENTLY STOOD AT 16,800 IN SUPPORT OF 11,400 RUC OFFICERS. THERE WAS HOWEVER, HE COMMENTED, A DETERIORATING SECURITY SITUATION. IN ADDITION TO THE THIEPVAL BOMBINGS THERE WAS AN ALARMING INCREASE IN 'PUNISHMENT' ATTACKS - 289 SO FAR THIS YEAR, OF WHICH 158 HAVE BEEN ATTRIBUTED TO REPUBLICAN AND 131 TO LOYALIST PARAMILITARIES, COMPARED TO 197 IN 1995, WHEN 129 WERE ATTRIBUTED TO REPUBLICAN AND 68 TO LOYALISTS. THERE HAS ALSO BEEN AN INCREASED USE OF FIREARMS IN CARRYING OUT THESE ATTACKS. IN ADDITION, THERE HAS BEEN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOYCOTTING OF BUSINESSES, PICKETING OF CHURCHES AND A MARKED INCREASE IN COMPLAINTS OF INTIMIDATION - SOME 320 INCIDENTS HAVE BEEN RECORDED, 125 OF WHICH WERE REPORTED IN JULY ALONE. THE IMPACT OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS, SIR JOHN WHEELER INDICATED, HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN THE WORK AND INEVITABLE PRESENCE OF THE SECURITY FORCES. THE TANAISTE THANKED THE BRITISH SIDE FOR THE SECURITY ASSESSMENT, RECOGNISING THE NECESSITY FOR INCREASED SECURITY FORCE ACTIVITY UNDER THE PREVAILING CIRCUMSTANCES. HE REITERATED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE SECURITY FORCES MAINTAINED GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY WHEN CARRYING OUT THEIR OPERATIONS.

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PARADES

THE SECRETARY OF STATE INDICATED THAT DR NORTH, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE REVIEW OF PARADES AND MARCHES, HAD BEEN ASKED TO REPORT BY THE END OF JANUARY 1997 AND IT WAS HOPED THAT THIS DEADLINE WOULD BE MET. HE COMMENTED THAT THE REVIEW BODY WAS MEETING IN NORTHERN IRELAND TWICE A WEEK AND WAS CONFIDENT THAT DR NORTH WAS TAKING HIS RESPONSIBILITIES MOST SERIOUSLY. ALTHOUGH DR NORTH HAD BEEN ASKED TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE EVENTS OF THE SUMMER, THE SECRETARY OF STATE STRESSED THAT THE REVIEW BODY WAS WHOLLY INDEPENDENT AND THE BRITISH SIDE HAD NO INDICATION WHAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD BE. MRS OWEN SAID THAT THE IRISH SIDE HOPED THAT AN EFFECTIVE AND SPEEDY RESPONSE TO DR NORTH'S RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD BE MADE BEFORE HMG'S FORTHCOMING GENERAL ELECTION AND CERTAINLY AHEAD OF NEXT YEAR'S SUMMER MARCHING SEASON. THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID THAT IT WAS HMG'S INTENTION TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS CAREFULLY AND IMPLEMENT THOSE CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE THEN INVITED THE CHIEF CONSTABLE TO COMMENT ON FORTHCOMING PARADES. THE CHIEF CONSTABLE REFERRED TO THE RECENT EMERGENCE OF A GROUP CALLING ITSELF THE 'ORMEAU RESIDENTS DEMAND EQUAL RIGHTS' (ORDER). HE INDICATED THAT THIS GROUP HAD SUBMITTED TWO APPLICATIONS TO MARCH DOWN THE ORMEAU ROAD OUTSIDE OF THE USUAL 'TRADITIONAL' MARCHING SEASON, MOST RECENTLY THE PREVIOUS SUNDAY (17 NOVEMBER). HE INDICATED THAT THE POLICE HAD IMPOSED THE CONDITION THAT THEY WOULD NOT MARCH DOWN THE LOWER PART OF THE ORMEAU ROAD. ALTHOUGH THIS WAS A RELATIVELY NEW 'PROTEST' GROUP, ON 17 NOVEMBER ONLY A FEW PROTESTORS TURNED UP, EXCLUDING THE LEADING ORGANISER, WHICH WAS AN INDICATION PERHAPS OF A CALMER ATMOSPHERE FOLLOWING THE TENSIONS EARLIER IN THE YEAR IN THAT AREA OF BELFAST.

THE CHIEF CONSTABLE ALSO ADVISED THAT NOTIFICATION HAD BEEN RECEIVED OF A PROPOSED ORANGE ORDER CHURCH PARADE IN DUNLOY THE FOLLOWING SUNDAY (24 NOVEMBER). THE LOCAL 'DUNLOY PARENTS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION' HAD ALSO PROPOSED TO PARADE AT THE SAME TIME. ALTHOUGH A POTENTIAL SECURITY PROBLEM FOR THE POLICE, NEGOTIATIONS WERE STILL

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ONING AND IT APPEARED THAT THERE WAS HOPE THAT THE TWO LOCAL PARTIES MIGHT REACH AN ACCOMMODATION BETWEEN THEMSELVES. HOWEVER, OPTIMISM MUST BE GUARDED GIVEN PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES.

THE TANAISTE COMMENTED THAT THE IRISH SIDE CONSIDERED THAT DUNLOY WAS A WORRYING POTENTIAL FLASHPOINT AREA, AS WAS THE FORTHCOMING APPRENTICE BOYS PARADE ON 14 DECEMBER. JOHN HUME WOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS RELATING TO THE APPRENTICE BOYS PARADE AND THERE WAS CONCERN THAT GENUINE EFFORTS BY HIM WOULD NOT BE RECOGNISED AND THAT HE WOULD LOSE THE SUPPORT OF THE LOCAL NATIONALIST COMMUNITY TO THE BENEFIT OF SINN FEIN SHOULD NEGOTIATIONS COLLAPSE. HE CONCLUDED DISCUSSIONS ON THIS ITEM BY EMPHASISING THAT BOTH THE BRITISH AND IRISH SIDES SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT POSSIBLE TO KEEP TENSIONS CONNECTED WITH THIS SENSITIVE ISSUE TO A MINIMUM FOR THE AVOIDANCE OF ANOTHER 'DRUMCREE'.

PRISONS ISSUES

REPATRIATION: THE TANAISTE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION OF THE CO-OPERATION OF THE HOME OFFICE IN TRANSFERRING IRISH PRISONERS IN GB TO THE ROI SINCE THE LATTER'S RATIFICATION OF THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON THE TRANSFER OF SENTENCED PERSONS IN NOVEMBER 1995. SIR JOHN WHEELER COMMENTED THAT THE DECISION OF REPATRIATION FROM GB TO ROI WAS OF COURSE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HOME SECRETARY WHO, HE KNEW, WAS KEEN TO KEEP THE PROCESS GOING. HE COMMENTED THAT OF THE 22 REMAINING PRISONERS CONVICTED OF TERRORIST OFFENCES IN ENGLAND AND WALES, 19 HAD REQUESTED REPATRIATION TO ROI; ONE HAS SO FAR BEEN GRANTED, AND FOUR HAVE, AS THE IRISH WOULD KNOW, BEEN REFERRED TO ROI FOR CONSIDERATION. FIVE PRISONERS HAVE ALSO SOUGHT REPATRIATION TO NI PRISONS. MRS OWEN COMMENTED THAT THE PROCESS OF TRANSFER WAS LENGTHY; IT HAD BEEN TAKING ON AVERAGE ABOUT 9 MONTHS. NOW THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME EXPERIENCE ON THE WORKINGS OF THE PROCEDURES THE IRISH SIDE WERE AIMING TO REDUCE THAT TIMESCALE BY ABOUT A THIRD.

GB CONDITIONS: THE TANAISTE MENTIONED THAT CONDITIONS FOR IRISH PRISONERS IN GB APPEARED TO BE AN ON-GOING CONCERN. SIR JOHN WHEELER POINTED OUT THAT THIS TOO WAS A MATTER FOR THE HOME

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SECRETARY. HOWEVER, HE STRESSED THAT IRISH PRISONERS RECEIVED EQUAL TREATMENT AND STANDARDS OF ALL OTHER PRISONERS OF THE SAME SECURITY CATEGORY AT EACH ESTABLISHMENT. HE POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE FORMAL ARRANGEMENTS IN PLACE FOR ALL PRISONERS TO REGISTER COMPLAINTS WHICH WOULD BE THOROUGHLY INVESTIGATED.

### POLICING ISSUES

THE TANAISTE EXPRESSED IRISH SIDE'S APPRECIATION OF THE CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REMARKS WHEN HE TOOK UP HIS NEW POSITION ABOUT THE CHALLENGES BEFORE HIM AND HIS RECOGNITION OF THE NATIONALIST COMMUNITY'S DIMINISHING CONFIDENCE IN THE RUC, POST-DRUMCREE, AND OF HIS AIMS OF REBUILDING THIS. HE INQUIRED ABOUT HMIC'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE USE OF PBRs. HE COMMENTED THAT THE USE OF PBRs SHOULD BE AVOIDED WHENEVER POSSIBLE AS THEY HAD A DETRIMENTAL AFFECT ON THE CONFIDENCE WITHIN THE NATIONALIST COMMUNITY OF THE SECURITY FORCES. SIR JOHN WHEELER INDICATED THAT HMIC'S REVIEW OF PBRs WOULD CONCENTRATE ON PROCEDURES AND TRAINING FOR THE HANDLING OF PUBLIC ORDER SITUATIONS, TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION DISORDERS ASSOCIATED WITH RECENT MARCHES, INCLUDING THE NEED TO ENSURE ADEQUATE PROTECTION TO POLICE OFFICERS FACED WITH DETERMINED AND PLANNED ASSAULTS AND ATTACKS BY PETROL BOMBS. THE MINISTER POINTED OUT THAT BETWEEN 7-16 JULY THIS YEAR DURING WIDESPREAD AND EVIDENTIALLY PLANNED UNREST OVER 8,000 PETROL BOMBING INCIDENTS TOOK PLACE AND SOME 20,000 PETROL BOMBS WERE THROWN AT THE POLICE. MR O HUIGINN POINTED OUT THAT CAJ HAD QUESTIONED THE ACCURACY OF THE CLAIM THAT 20,000 PETROL BOMBS HAD BEEN THROWN. SIR JOHN WHEELER AND THE CHIEF CONSTABLE RESPONDED THAT ONLY THOSE ON THE RECEIVING END COULD VERIFY THE FEROCITY OF THOSE ATTACKS WHICH HAD BEEN CLEARLY EVIDENT. SIR JOHN WHEELER GAVE THE ATTACK ON THE NEW BARNESLEY BASE AS AN EXAMPLE, POINTING OUT THAT A BARRAGE OF PETROL BOMBS WERE THROWN AND OVER 80 ROUNDS OF AMMUNITION WERE FIRED. THE GRIM REALITY OF THE SITUATION WAS THAT HAD THE USE OF PBRs NOT BEEN AVAILABLE TO THE POLICE, THE LIVES OF THOSE OFFICERS, AND CIVILIANS, WOULD HAVE BEEN AT SERIOUS RISK. THE CHIEF CONSTABLE CONFIRMED THAT, WHILST THE POLICE WERE RELUCTANT TO USE PBRs AND THE WHOLE AREA OF HANDLING RIOT SITUATIONS WERE CONTINUOUSLY UNDER REVIEW, THEIR USAGE DURING THE EVENTS OF THE SUMMER HAD WITHOUT DOUBT SAVED LIVES OF BOTH THE SECURITY FORCES AND CIVILIANS, AND HAD PREVENTED LARGESCALE DAMAGE TO PROPERTY.

AN OTHER BUSINESS

SPRINGVALE CAMPUS

MICHAEL ANCRAM INDICATED THAT ALTHOUGH NOT RULED OUT THE SPRINGVALE CAMPUS PROPOSAL DID NOT APPEAR TO BE FEASIBLE IN THE PRESENT ECONOMIC CLIMATE. THE UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER'S COUNCIL WERE NOW PROPOSING TWO SMALLER FREE-STANDING ELEMENTS. THE TANAISTE COMMENTED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT ANY ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL WAS IMPLEMENTED AS THE IRISH SIDE WERE EXTREMELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE LEVEL OF POLARISATION THAT HAD BEEN TAKING PLACE IN THAT AREA OF NORTH AND WEST BELFAST.

BROADCASTING

MICHAEL ANCRAM REPORTED THAT THE HERITAGE SECRETARY WOULD BE RESPONDING SHORTLY TO THE MINISTER FOR ARTS, CULTURE AND THE GAELTACHT, MR HIGGINS' LETTER, CONFIRMING THAT THE BRITISH SIDE HAD NO OBJECTION TO EXTENDING THE PROVISION OF RTE RECEPTION FROM ROI TO NI, PROVIDED IT DID NOT AFFECT THE ALREADY EXISTING UK SERVICES.

IRISH LANGUAGE MEDIUM EDUCATION

MICHAEL ANCRAM REPORTED THAT THIS YEAR THREE SCHOOLS IN BELFAST HAD RECEIVED GRANT-AIDED STATUS, NAMELY THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF BUNSCOIL AN TSLEIBHE DHUIBH AND BUNSCOIL BHEANN MHADAGAIN, AND THE SECONDARY SCHOOL, MEANSKOIL FEIRSTE. IN ADDITION, APPROVAL FOR GRANT-AIDED STATUS FOR BUNSCOIL AN IUIR IN NEWRY WOULD BE GIVEN GRANT-AIDED STATUS FROM AUGUST 1997, PROVIDED THE REQUIRED ENROLMENTS WERE CONFIRMED. A GRANT OF £40,000 HAD ALSO BEEN PROVIDED TO GAELOILIUINT UNDER THE EU PEACE AND RECONCILIATION PROGRAMME.

EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARDS

IN RESPONSE TO A QUERY FROM THE TANAISTE, THE SECRETARY OF STATE STRESSED THAT THE DECISION TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARDS FROM 5 TO 3 WAS REQUIRED FOR THE PURPOSES OF INCREASED EFFICIENCY AND ECONOMIC EFFECTIVENESS, AND WAS CONSISTENT WITH NATIONAL UK POLICY.

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C O M M U N I Q U E

THE COMMUNIQUE WAS DISCUSSED AND AGREED AND IS ATTACHED.

RUTH OSBORNE

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JOINT STATEMENT  
ANGLO-IRISH INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE  
BELFAST, 20 NOVEMBER 1996

1. A MEETING OF THE ANGLO-IRISH INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE WAS HELD IN BELFAST ON 20 NOVEMBER 1996.
  
2. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WERE REPRESENTED BY THE JOINT CHAIRMAN, SIR PATRICK MAYHEW QC, MP, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND, WHO WAS ACCOMPANIED BY THE RT HON SIR JOHN WHEELER MP, MINISTER OF STATE, AND THE RT HON MICHAEL ANCARAM MP, MINISTER OF STATE, NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE. THE IRISH GOVERNMENT WERE REPRESENTED BY THE JOINT CHAIRMAN, MR DICK SPRING, TD, TANAISTE AND MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, WHO WAS ACCOMPANIED BY MS NORA OWEN TD, MINISTER FOR JUSTICE.

POLITICAL MATTERS

3. THE CONFERENCE REVIEWED DEVELOPMENTS IN THE POLITICAL TALKS PROCESS.

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4.

THE TWO GOVERNMENTS REITERATED THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WHICH WOULD PROVIDE LASTING PEACE AND STABILITY. THEY AGREED THAT AN INCLUSIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE TALKS PROCESS OFFERED THE BEST MEANS OF ACHIEVING SUCH A SETTLEMENT. THEY REAFFIRMED THE HOPE OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS THAT THERE WOULD BE AN EARLY AND UNEQUIVOCAL RESTORATION OF THE IRA CEASEFIRE AS THE NECESSARY ENABLING CONDITION FOR A FULLY INCLUSIVE TALKS PROCESS.

5.

THE CONFERENCE CONSIDERED THE CURRENT POSITION IN THE LIGHT OF DEVELOPMENTS TO DATE IN THE TALKS, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO DECOMMISSIONING. THE TWO GOVERNMENTS REAFFIRMED THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL ASPECTS OF THE REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL BODY, INCLUDING THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE APPROACH SET OUT IN PARAGRAPHS 34-35 OF THE REPORT, AS THE BEST POSSIBLE BASIS FOR PROGRESS IN RELATION TO DECOMMISSIONING. THEY EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT ALL OTHER PARTICIPANTS WOULD WORK WITH THEM TO SECURE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL ASPECTS OF THE REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL BODY, AND TO JOIN WITH THEM NOW IN EFFECTING THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE TRANSITION INTO SUBSTANTIVE THREE-STRANDED NEGOTIATIONS ON THIS BASIS. THEY REITERATED THEIR VIEW THAT PROGRESS SHOULD BE MADE ON THE BASIS OF AN INCLUSIVE AND DYNAMIC PROCESS IN WHICH MUTUAL TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IS BUILT AS PROGRESS IS MADE ON ALL THE ISSUES OF CONCERN TO ALL PARTICIPANTS.

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SECURITY SITUATION

6. THE CONFERENCE REVIEWED THE CURRENT SECURITY SITUATION WITH THE CHIEF CONSTABLE AND THE COMMISSIONER. IT CONGRATULATED BOTH THE COMMISSIONER AND THE CHIEF CONSTABLE ON A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT RECENT SUCCESSES, INCLUDING FINDS OF WEAPONRY AND ARRESTS.

CONFIDENCE ISSUES

7. THE CONFERENCE CONSIDERED THE MEASURES WHICH ARE BEING TAKEN BY THE SECURITY FORCES IN RESPONSE TO THE CURRENT SECURITY THREAT. IT REAFFIRMED THE WILLINGNESS OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS TO ADJUST THEIR RESPONSE IF THERE SHOULD BE REDUCTIONS IN THAT THREAT.
8. THE CONFERENCE REVIEWED RECENT PARADES AND DISCUSSED THE PROSPECTS FOR NEXT YEAR'S MARCHING SEASON. IT UNDERLINED THE NEED FOR THOSE ENGAGED IN THE PLANNING OF PARADES AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES INVOLVED TO ENGAGE IN DIALOGUE, AND TO EXERCISE COMPROMISE AND BALANCE IN THE INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE, WITH A VIEW TO REACHING EARLY AGREEMENTS BETWEEN ALL CONCERNED. IT LOOKED FORWARD IN THIS CONTEXT TO THE REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF PARADES AND MARCHES IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND RECOGNISED THAT EARLY FOLLOW-UP ON THE REPORT'S PROPOSALS WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN EASING TENSIONS IN ADVANCE OF NEXT YEAR'S PARADES. THE CONFERENCE RECALLED ITS LONG-STANDING VIEW THAT THE RIGHT

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TO DEMONSTRATE MUST BE EXERCISED WITH RESPECT FOR THE SENSITIVITIES OF OTHERS AND WITH REGARD FOR PUBLIC ORDER.

9. MINISTERS DISCUSSED A NUMBER OF PRISONS ISSUES AND NOTED RECENT PRISONER TRANSFERS FROM THE UK TO THE REPUBLIC.
10. THE CONFERENCE ALSO CONSIDERED A NUMBER OF REVIEWS OF POLICING MATTERS WHICH ARE IN PROGRESS AT PRESENT. IT NOTED THAT THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT POLICING ARRANGEMENTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND ARE IMPARTIAL, SENSITIVE TO BOTH TRADITIONS AND COMMAND WIDESPREAD ACCEPTANCE ACROSS THE WHOLE COMMUNITY WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT ISSUE FOR DISCUSSION IN THE POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS.

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES

11. THE CONFERENCE CONSIDERED RECENT PROGRESS IN THE WORK WHICH IT HAD COMMISSIONED INTO WAYS OF IMPROVING AND EXTENDING RTE AND TELEFIS NA GAELIGE RECEPTION IN NORTHERN IRELAND. IT LOOKED FORWARD TO EARLY AGREEMENT ON THIS SUBJECT.
12. IT ALSO WELCOMED THE RECENT DECISION TO RECOGNISE BUNSCOIL AN IUIR IN NEWRY AND LOOKED FORWARD TO THE CONTINUING FACILITATING OF PARENTAL CHOICE AS REGARDS IRISH LANGUAGE SCHOOLING IN NORTHERN IRELAND.
13. IT ALSO DISCUSSED THE FUTURE OF THE SPRINGVALE PROJECT.

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