

FUTURE POLICY GROUPThe White Paper and AfterSummary

1. The purpose of this paper is to bring to the attention of Ministers the risk of serious unrest coming from the majority if the forthcoming White Paper should appear to provide for imposition of an unacceptable devolutionary settlement and to suggest how this risk might be reduced through both the timing and content of the White Paper.

Timing

2. We feel that the White Paper should be published as soon as possible after the result of the Border referendum has been declared.

Content

3. The White Paper must hold out some incentive to the mass of urban working class people to accept the authority of the Government and to help the security forces to bring violence to an end. To achieve this the White Paper would need to say in the strongest possible terms:
 - (a) that the U.K. Government will use all its power for as long as necessary to crush terrorism and to maintain Northern Ireland as part of the U.K. so long as that is the wish of a majority of Northern Ireland people;
 - (b) that the U.K. Government welcomes the result of the referendum in which Northern Ireland people have indicated their desire to remain part of the U.K.;

- (c) that as people in Northern Ireland pay the same taxes as people in other parts of the U.K. they are entitled to the same standards of housing, social services and economic development and the U.K. Government is determined to see that this is achieved;
- (d) that in view of the increased interest to be taken by the U.K. Government and Parliament in Northern Ireland affairs in future Northern Ireland will be given parity of representation with Great Britain in the Westminster Parliament and that this will be implemented at the earliest possible date;
- (e) that the U.K. Government would welcome some kind of formal machinery (such as a Council of Ireland) to promote economic co-operation between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic but accepts that this would not be practicable until the Government of the Irish Republic formally recognises the constitution of Northern Ireland and drops its claim to sovereignty over the six counties of Northern Ireland;
- (f) that in view of the wide differences between existing parties the U.K. Government does not propose to impose a devolutionary settlement. Rather it will be willing to continue some form of direct rule until such time as newly elected representatives to a Northern Ireland Assembly can work out an acceptable form of provincial government (within certain stated limits).
- (g) that arrangements will therefore be made as soon as possible for a Northern Ireland general election to elect 80-100 members of a new, enlarged Northern Ireland Assembly.

3.

The Assembly's task will be to try to reach agreement on how it would conduct its legislative and other business and control an executive. Until a workable agreement on these matters is reached all legislative and executive powers will remain with Westminster and the Secretary of State respectively;

- (h) that the blame for the troubles of recent years must be shared by all interested parties including the minority, the Government of the Irish Republic and the U.K. Government as well as the Northern Ireland Government and majority. The time has come, therefore, to cease looking back and to work for peace and co-operation in the future.

4. This would mean that if a workable agreement could not be reached between local parties, a form of direct rule (based of course on the full Northern Ireland representation at Westminster) would become permanent or semi-permanent. This would be much less likely to provoke serious violence than the imposition of an unacceptable devolutionary settlement.

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