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Joint Statement issued following a meeting between
the Irish Government and representatives of the SDLP,
Monday, 22nd March, 1982.

The Taoiseach, Mr. Charles J. Haughey, T.D., accompanied by the Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Brian Lenihan, T.D., and Minister for Transport and Posts and Telegraphs, Mr. John Wilson, T.D., met a delegation from the SDLP in Government Buildings today. The delegates consisted of Mr. John Hume, M.E.P., Leader of the Party, Mr. Séamus Mallon, Deputy Leader, Mr. Eddie McGrady, Spokesman on the Environment and Dr. Joe Hendron, Chairman of the Constituency Representatives.

The meeting considered the current situation in Northern Ireland, in particular the proposals being developed by the Northern Ireland Secretary of State for a form of administration there.

Both sides considered that the proposals as they were emerging were unworkable. They found them deficient in that they concentrated on the details of an administration for Northern Ireland, without due regard for the broader dimensions of the problem.

Both sides agreed that another failed initiative in Northern Ireland could only lead to further frustration

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there and lessen the prospects for progress by democratic political means. They shared the conviction that such progress should be pursued in present circumstances through the further development of the Anglo-Irish process initiated between the Taoiseach and the British Prime Minister at their meeting in December, 1980.

The meeting also noted that the main Unionist parties had already rejected the proposals as unacceptable.