

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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CORRELATION BETWEEN THE REQUIREMENTS AS SET OUT IN THE
REPORT OF THE NEW IRELAND FORUM

AND THE POSITION OF THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

AS OUTLINED AFTER THE ANGLO-IRISH SUMMIT

OF 18/19 NOVEMBER

Forum Report
Chapter 5.2:
Requirements

Prime Minister's statements

- in [a] Communique: 19 Nov.
[b] Press conference: 19 Nov.
[c] House of Commons: 20 Nov.

1. A fundamental criterion of any new structures and processes must be that they will provide lasting peace and stability.

The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach agreed that it was a major interest of both their countries, as well as both the majority and minority communities in Northern Ireland, that there should be lasting peace and stability in Northern Ireland.[a]

...we can assure you that we intend to pursue the aim of lasting peace and stability and also the shared aim of reconciliation with good will and determination. [b]

2. Attempts from any quarter to impose a particular solution through violence must be rejected along with the proponents of such methods. It must be recognised that the new Ireland which the Forum seeks can come about only through agreement and must have a democratic basis.

...any attempt to promote political objectives by means of violence or the threat of violence must be rejected, as must those who adopt or support such methods... [a]

3. Agreement means that the political arrangements for a new and sovereign Ireland would have to be freely negotiated and agreed to by the people of the North and by the people of the South.

The Taoiseach also reaffirmed that it remained the wish of the Irish Government that the two parts of Ireland should come together by freely negotiated settlement and in peace, but recognised that any change in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom would only come about with the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland. [a]

The Prime Minister reaffirmed that Northern Ireland was part of the United Kingdom and that the majority in Northern Ireland wanted it to remain so. At the same time she confirmed that, if in the future the majority of the people in Northern Ireland clearly wished for and

consented to a change in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, the United Kingdom Government would put forward and support legislation to that end in the British parliament. [a]

4. The validity of both the nationalist and unionist identities in Ireland and the democratic rights of every citizen on this island must be accepted; both of these identities must have equally satisfactory, secure and durable, political, administrative and symbolic expression and protection.

The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach agreed on the need for efforts to diminish the divisions between the two communities in Northern Ireland and to reconcile the two major traditions that exist in the two parts of Ireland. [a]

...the identities of both the majority and minority communities in Northern Ireland should be recognised and respected, and reflected in the structures and processes of Northern Ireland in ways acceptable to both communities... [a]

5. Lasting stability can be found only in the context of new structures in which no tradition will be allowed to dominate the other, in which there will be equal rights and opportunities for all, and in which there will be provision for formal and effective guarantees for the protection of individual human rights and of the communal and cultural rights of both nationalists and unionists.

...the identities of both the majority and minority communities in Northern Ireland should be recognised and respected, and reflected in the structures and processes of Northern Ireland in ways acceptable to both communities... [a]

...the process of government in Northern Ireland should be such as to provide the people of both communities with the confidence that their rights will be safeguarded... [a]

We... agreed on the importance of creating a political framework in Northern Ireland which was acceptable to both the majority and minority communities. [c]

6. Civil and religious liberties and rights must be guaranteed and there can be no discrimination or preference in laws or administrative practices, on grounds of religious belief or affiliation; government and administration must be sensitive to minority beliefs and attitudes and seek consensus.

...the process of government in Northern Ireland should be such as to provide the people of both communities with the confidence that their rights will be safeguarded... [a]

There is a guarantee given by legislation passed by this House to the majority of people in Northern

Ireland. Most of us stand by that guarantee but also believe in human rights for each and every citizen of Northern Ireland and try to uphold them. [c]

7. New arrangements must provide structures and institutions including security structures with which both nationalists and unionists can identify on the basis of political consensus; such arrangements must overcome alienation in Northern Ireland and strengthen stability and security for all the people of Ireland.

Obviously, security can be improved or should be improved in Northern Ireland. It is not exactly easy to devise a way which is acceptable to all of the people there and it must be acceptable if it is to be improved. [b]

I think that all of us would still like to find a political framework that was acceptable to both the minority as well as the majority communities. We have not yet succeeded in finding it, and I hope that all Northern Irish political parties will play a constructive part in trying to seek it because those in the Republic of Ireland and many of us believe that unless and until we get that we shall not get the full improvement in security which we all seek. [c]

Question: In the sub-section [of the Communiqué] when you talk about the identities of the majority and the minority being recognised and respected and reflected in the structures and processes, is there, at base, an assumption on the fundamental notion that those identities, particularly of the minority, are not now being fully recognised and respected and not now being fully reflected in the structures and processes?

Prime Minister: The fact is that the minority do not think that they are, and therefore we try... again to get a framework which is satisfactory both to the minority and the majority. [b]

8. New arrangements must ensure the maintenance of economic and social standards and facilitate, where appropriate, integrated economic development, North and South. The

The Prime Minister and Taoiseach reviewed the work done under the auspices of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council at both ministerial and official levels on

Macro-economic and financial implications are dealt with in the study by DKM Economic Consultants published with this Report, which is based on a range of assumptions with regard to the availability of external financial transfers.

9. The cultural and linguistic diversity of the people of all traditions, North and south, must be preserved and fostered as a source of enrichment and vitality.

10. Political action is urgently required to halt disillusionment with democratic politics and the slide towards further violence. Britain has a duty to respond now in order to ensure that the people of Northern Ireland are not condemned to yet another generation of violence and sterility. The parties in the Forum by their participation in its work have already committed themselves to join in a process directed towards that end.

political, economic, security and cultural matters. [a]

(Note: a major element in the work of the AIIC involves cross-border economic co-operation)

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...in the absence of an acceptable political framework we shall not be able fully to get rid of violence. [c]