

FILE

PRIME MINISTER

ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT: POINTS FOR ANSWERS

Some points to make in the House:

(1) Following the Chequers Summit last year, I made clear that unification, joint sovereignty and joint authority were not solutions for Northern Ireland. My statement was widely welcomed by Unionists at the time. Nothing has happened in the meantime which changes in any way the position on those three points. I cannot see what the hon. Gentleman is so exercised about.

(2) When I hear some hon. Gentlemen's comments, I have the feeling that his problem lies not with the Agreement, but with the fact that he had decided to find fault with the Agreement regardless of what was in it. So now, even though they may have found that it did not match their own advance scare-stories, they find themselves locked into opposition regardless of the Agreement's merits.

(3) The security forces including the RUC and the UDR have by their courage and dedication done a great deal to reduce the level of violence. But we cannot leave it all to them. There is no such thing as an "acceptable" level of violence; and if we are to bring the violence to an end, it will only be by reconciliation of the two communities. That is what this Agreement sets out to achieve.

(4) Co-operation under the Agreement is a two-way street. The spirit of the Agreement is not one of each interfering in the other's affairs: it is one of both sides working together on problems which affect Northern Ireland and the Republic.

(5) The Agreement is a positive incentive to devolution because if an acceptable basis for devolved government can be found, then the Intergovernmental Conference ceases to deal with the matters transferred to the devolved government. In

our joint press conference, the Taoiseach undertook that his government will do everything it can to promote devolution.

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17 November 1985

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