



Mr Prime Minister 16A
You will want to look at these, particularly those which I have outlined in yellow.

SECRET AND PERSONAL

B.07201

MR POWELL

cc Mr Ingham, No 10
Mr Stark

Anglo-Irish Agreement: Possible Questions and Answers

I don't like the references to giving the Irish Governor a "formal role" in the North. Better to say that the Agreement "provides a systematic means of taking account of Irish Governor views,"
CDP
9/xi

The attached material has been drawn up in discussion between British and Irish officials. It seeks to identify some of the questions that may be asked in the period after conclusion of the proposed Agreement and to suggest how these could be answered by the two Governments without significant divergence appearing between them.

2. The material is extensive and, on some matters, detailed. Officials realise that the individual suggested answers are unlikely to be used as they stand. The material is intended rather as a quarry for both Governments to draw on, whether at the press conference by the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach after the Summit or subsequently in the two Parliaments and elsewhere.

3. The material is in two parts. Part I contains the more important questions likely to be addressed to the Prime Minister or to the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach. Part II contains other questions likely to be addressed to the Prime Minister or to the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach, as well as questions likely to be addressed to the Taoiseach alone.

4. Consideration is still being given to draft answers to questions about the status of Northern Ireland and about mixed courts.

5. The material incorporates some comments by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and by Sir Robert Armstrong. It will also be submitted to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary.

C L G Mallaby

7 November 1985

PART I: THE MORE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO THE PRIME MINISTER

1. By giving the Irish Government a role in relation to Northern Irish affairs, surely the agreement infringes sovereignty?

Answer No. There is no derogation from sovereignty and the agreement makes this clear.

2. (Also for So is the Irish role merely "consultative?"
the
Taoiseach)

Answer The Intergovernmental Conference will be a unique mechanism. There is no single word to describe its role. It will not have executive functions: Article 2(b) of the agreement makes clear that there will be no derogation from sovereignty and that each Government retains responsibility for the decisions and administration of government within its jurisdiction.

no decision making functions

[I hope you won't remember]

~~But the Conference will be more than just consultative in that~~ ^{may} The Irish Government will put forward views and proposals on its own initiative (as well as being invited to do so); there is an obligation on both sides in the Conference to make determined efforts to resolve any differences; and one of the Conference's functions will be to promote cross-border co-operation between North and South in Ireland.

Note: It is accepted by both sides that the words "consultative" or "consultation" should not be used to describe the agreement.

3. So the Irish will after all share in decision-making ?

Answer As Article 2(b) of the agreement makes clear, each Government retains responsibility for the decisions and administration of government within its own jurisdiction. On matters covered by

the agreement, however, the British Government in reaching its decisions will take full account of any views and proposals put forward by the Irish side, and also of the obligation on both sides to make determined efforts to resolve any differences.

4. (Also for What happens when differences cannot be resolved in the the Intergovernmental Conference? Taoiseach)

Answer

Article 2(b) makes it clear that each Government retains responsibility for the decisions and administration of government within its own jurisdiction. But a key point of the agreement is that we are both committing ourselves to determined efforts to resolve differences. Moreover the agreement reflects the careful consideration that the two Governments have given to minimising differences: it envisages for example a variety of levels at which matters can be considered and also provides for the convening of special meetings up to Ministerial level when required by either side.

5. In November 1984 in the communiqué issued after their Summit the Prime Minister and Taoiseach agreed "that 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". How will the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach test the the acceptability of the agreement to unionist community?

Answer

The identity of the majority community is already recognised and respected, in the way the majority desire, by virtue of Northern Ireland being and remaining part of the United Kingdom. Article 1 of the agreement confirms that position. This agreement also provides means for the expression of the

identity of the minority. The agreement thus furthers the aim of making the structures and processes in Northern Ireland acceptable to both communities.

The elected representatives of the people of the United Kingdom as a whole will have the opportunity to express their views when Parliament debates the agreement shortly.

6. Is the agreement not the first step on the slippery slope to Irish unity?

Answer

No. The agreement commits the Irish Government to acknowledging the rights and identity of unionists. It commits the two Governments to the view that any change in the status of Northern Ireland would* only come about with the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland; and that the present wish of a majority is for no change. This is the most formal commitment to the principle of consent made by an Irish Government, and should provide reassurance to unionists.

[Note: *The agreement says "would" not "could".]

7. The agreement establishes special channels for conveying the nationalist minority's views to the British Government. Why is nothing comparable proposed for the unionist majority?

Answer

The question is not comparing like with like. The unique arrangement we have made with the Irish Government reflects the position of a minority which ^{some of} looks to Dublin to express its aspirations. The unionists by definition identify with the United Kingdom; they have, and will continue to have, ready means of access to the British Government, including unionist Members of Parliament in Westminster; and the Government pays close attention to their views.

8. Why has Her Majesty's Government failed to secure the abolition of Article 2 of the Irish Constitution?

Answer Questions about the Irish Constitution should be put to the Irish Government. The agreement is the outcome of a thorough process of negotiation in which each side had to take account of the constraints on the other. What is significant is that Article 1 formally commits the Irish Government, like the British Government, to the position that the status of Northern Ireland will remain as it is so long as a majority there so wishes.

9. This agreement seems to have something for everybody in Ireland except Ulster Unionists. Are there any concessions at all to fundamental unionist concerns in this agreement?

Answer The agreement is designed to promote peace and stability, to the benefit of all of the people in North and South. There is also much in it which should be especial value to unionists. For instance, Article 1 confirming the status of Northern Ireland; the intensified security co-operation provided for in the agreement and already beginning to take place; and the Irish Government's acceptance of the validity of the unionist tradition in Ireland. [The Taoiseach has also stated his Government's intention to accede to the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism].

10. Twelve years ago, the loyalists in Northern Ireland defeated an Anglo-Irish agreement based on power-sharing and a Council for Ireland. Won't they do the same this time?

Answer I believe that the great majority in Northern Ireland have a deep longing for peace. The Government have made a decision that action is necessary to support the democratic process in Northern Ireland and that it would be damaging and even dangerous to do nothing. Indeed, the two major unionist

parties recognise in their policy documents that it is necessary to take action to accommodate the nationalist tradition. This agreement tries to accommodate both traditions. I am determined that it should work, and work to the benefit of all.

11. The clear implication of this agreement is that the RUC has failed to discharge its duties fairly and even-handedly in the past. Are you not, therefore, accepting nationalist criticisms as valid?

Answer We have always had full confidence in the RUC and all the security forces. I hope that following the agreement the minority community will increasingly share that confidence.

12. The UDR are a particular reassurance to unionists in a minority position in border areas. Will you guarantee that the role of the UDR as a bulwark against IRA assassins be maintained in these areas?

Answer The UDR will not be disbanded. They are brave and dedicated people who have a major role in providing security in Northern Ireland. I recognise that there are difficulties in the Regiment's relations with the minority the community. The Government keep the role of security forces including the UDR under review in the light of community relations as well as operational needs. Improvements will continue to be made.

13. What guarantees have you got from Dr FitzGerald that the South will cease to provide a haven for IRA fugitive terrorists?

Answer No doubt there are fugitive terrorists in the South, as in the North. On both sides of the border strenuous efforts are made to catch them. One of the main purposes of the agreement will be to enhance the co-operation against terrorism which already takes place between North and South. Article 8 of the

agreement foresees further consideration by the two Government in the Intergovernmental Conference of the question of fugitive offenders. [Moreover, the Taoiseach has announced his Government's intention to accede to the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism.]

14. What proposals does the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland have for encouraging a return to devolved government in Northern Ireland?

Answer

The Government remain committed to a return to devolved government in Northern Ireland as the best basis for political stability. We will do all we can to identify a scheme of administration acceptable to both sides of the community. We hope that the political parties in Northern Ireland will respond constructively to the opportunities this agreement offers, and will help to work out satisfactory proposals for a newly devolved administration.

15. Do you still reject the Forum Report?

Answer

The British Government welcomed many positive elements in the Forum Report. We welcomed such principles as the clear acceptance that political change requires consent, the commitment to the politics of peaceful persuasion, and unqualified opposition to violence and those who support violence. We welcomed the recognition and respect which the Report gave, on the part of nationalists, to the distinctive identity of Northern Ireland unionists including their loyalty to the United Kingdom.

(If pressed again on the "three illustrative models"): I have already said that I welcome many of the innovative features of the Report. But I do not think anyone would expect the British Government to endorse it in its entirety.

16. The agreement falls far short of the options in the New Ireland Forum Report

Answer

Let us concentrate on what the two Governments have agreed. The agreement represents the outcome of prolonged and serious negotiations. The arrangements it embodies are unique, reflecting both the closeness of the Anglo-Irish relationship and the special problems of Northern Ireland. The New Ireland Forum's meetings and reports helped to create the climate in which these negotiations became possible. The new agreement accords with the spirit of conciliation which characterised much of the Forum Report.

PART II: Other Questions

1. Question to the Prime Minister Is this agreement not meaningless?

Answer

No single agreement is going to resolve the problems of Northern Ireland. This one is a useful step forward. It promotes the development of closer and more systematic co-operation between the British and Irish Governments without affecting the position of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom. The agreement is also a useful step on the road to reconciliation between the two communities in Northern Ireland.

The essence of the agreement is in two elements. It incorporates formal Irish recognition that the status of Northern Ireland will remain as it is so long as a majority of the people there so wish, and that the present wish of a majority is for no change. It also incorporates formal British recognition that the Irish Government may advance views and proposals on aspects of Northern Ireland affairs and commits both Governments to make determined efforts to resolve any differences between them.

2. Question to the Taoiseach This is all promises. It is full of commitments "to study" and "to consider" etc but it is short of actual concrete measures to end alienation. After months of build-up to this Summit aren't the results really an anti-climax?

Answer

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No. This agreement marks a new stage in the development of the Anglo-Irish dialogue, giving the Irish Government for the first time a formal role in relation to Northern Ireland, involving systematic arrangements for resolving

we must only

differences on the problems of Northern Ireland and a new level of co-operation between North and South. It will make a real difference to nationalists in Northern Ireland by providing new means for the expression of their identity and giving new scope for the expression of their aspirations. It would be selfish and irresponsible of us to withhold the progress involved here for the minority in Northern Ireland, merely for the sake of ideological concerns.

As to alienation, the problems of nationalists in Northern Ireland have been focussed on politics, security, human rights and the law. All of these problem areas have been provided for in this agreement, and of course the very first meeting of the Conference will address all of these areas, notably the especially difficult area of relations between the minority community and the security forces, on which progress is already taking place.

Obviously this agreement cannot resolve all the problems of Northern Ireland. But the agreement is an important stage in the search for peace and stability. What it does is to provide within a new context the basic legal and institutional machinery through which the two Governments can fulfil their commitment of November 1984 to work together for the accommodation of the rights and identities of the two traditions in Northern Ireland. The new arrangements established today are, so far as I know, unique. This reflects the special nature of the Northern Ireland problem.

3. Question to the Taoiseach

Can you really say that this agreement is based on the Forum Report? Does it not fall substantially short of joint authority, the least of the options proposed by the Forum?

Answer

The Irish side throughout these negotiations based their approach on the Forum Report. The necessary elements for progress proposed in Chapter 5, paragraph 2 of the Forum Report are all accommodated in today's agreement. I believe above all that they are reflected in the commitment of the two Governments to work together for the accommodation of the rights and identities of the two traditions in Northern Ireland on the basis of the new arrangements and the shared priorities established by this agreement. You will recall, moreover, that the Forum Report indicated the openness of the participants to discuss all other views which would contribute to political development, ie views other than the three particular options set out in the Report. The purpose of any negotiation is to reach an accommodation of views and the British and Irish Governments have achieved that in this agreement.

4. Question to the Prime Minister

The Agreement
Is not setting Northern Ireland apart from the rest of the United Kingdom by giving another country a part in government there?

Answer

There is a unique situation in Northern Ireland because of the division within the community. The agreement reaffirms the present status of Northern Ireland and makes clear that Her Majesty's Government remain responsible for the decisions and administration of government there.

5. Question to the Prime Minister

The agreement says in Article 2(b) that "Determined efforts shall be made through the Committee to resolve any differences". In the context, these are differences relating to views and proposals which the Irish Government have put forward on matters relating to Northern Ireland. What does this provision mean?

Answer

Let me start by emphasising the desire of both Governments to implement the agreement in a spirit of co-operation and goodwill. That being so, we are not starting off in the belief that we shall continually confront differences; the whole point of meeting together will be to find common ground, bearing in mind that the sentence you quote speaks of serving "the interest of promoting peace and stability". But if there are differences, both sides will work hard to resolve them, recognising that each Government retains responsibility for the decisions and administration of government within its jurisdiction.

6. Question to the Taoiseach

Will you now hold a referendum on Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution?

Answer

The changing of Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution is not a part of this arrangement. I would again draw your attention to Article 1 of this agreement. That provision involves a formal, solemn and joint reaffirmation by the two Governments of the principle of consent. It will be perfectly obvious that the overwhelming majority of Irish nationalists determinedly reject the use of force or threat of force in seeking to realise the aspiration of Irish unity. This was a basic principle of the Forum Report and a point strongly emphasised at the time. This agreement puts the principle of consent beyond question and therefore gives a clear reassurance to unionists.

7. Question to the Taoiseach

Is this agreement the first step on the road to British disengagement and a united Ireland?

Answer

Article 1 explains that any change in the status of Northern Ireland would only come about with the consent of a majority in Northern Ireland. It also recognises

that consent does not at present exist. If in the future a majority wished for and formally consented to a united Ireland, the two Governments would introduce and support legislation in the respective Parliaments to give effect to this.

8. Question to the
Taoiseach

Doesn't the agreement maintain all the ambiguities in the Irish nationalist approach to Northern Ireland. Haven't you and Mrs Thatcher simply agreed to differ on this point so that there is no real concession to unionist concerns?

Answer

This agreement involves a formal, solemn and joint reaffirmation by the two Governments of the principle of consent. That is something new - something special - and something which I am sure unionists will welcome. That principle is now clearly beyond question.

Furthermore the agreement makes clear the rejection by both Governments of any attempt to promote political objectives by violence or the threat of violence: this is a concern basic to constitutional nationalism in Ireland and it was a concern highlighted in the Report of the New Ireland Forum.

What both sides must do, and this is also explicitly recognised in the agreement, is to continue their efforts to reconcile and to acknowledge the rights of the two major traditions that exist in Ireland. For our part we have made it clear that we have no designs on the rights of unionists. We accept and acknowledge their Britishness. While we shall by dialogue seek to persuade, we respect and will respect their reasons for opposing Irish unity.

Perhaps most important of all, this agreement offers both communities in Northern Ireland a new opportunity to rebuild society - free from the tensions, the turmoil and animosities of the past - and to participate fully in the structures of government. I believe that unionists, no less than nationalists, fervently seek in Northern Ireland just such an opportunity.

9. Question to the Prime Minister Is the concession of a major role for Dublin not an admission of the failure of British and unionist policy in Northern Ireland over the past sixty years?

Answer

No. I am concerned with the future, not the past. The agreement shows that the two Governments are determined to work together in seeking peace and reconciliation in Ireland.

10. Question to the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister The agreement represents a betrayal of the nationalist cause and the abandonment of the goal of unity.

Answer

This is more a question for the Irish Government. But as the agreement makes clear, if at any time in the future a majority of the people of Northern Ireland formally consent to unity, then the two Governments will take the necessary steps to bring it about.
[Additional points for the Taoiseach: This means that other considerations would not constitute obstacles to Irish unity if the principle of consent was satisfied. There is no abandonment of the aspiration to Irish unity, to be achieved peacefully and by democratic means.]

11. Question to the Taoiseach The Preamble speaks about diminishing the divisions in Northern Ireland? Isn't the real division the division of Ireland? What does this agreement do to end partition?

Answer

It is not the division of the territory of Ireland in my view which is the fundamental problem. Unity cannot be achieved and partition ended by erasing a line on a map. The basic division which we face is that arising from the competing identities and conflicting loyalties of nationalists and unionists in Ireland. That means that we can only proceed through persuasion and agreement as the Forum Report emphasises.

The immediate priority must be to improve conditions on the ground for the nationalist minority in Northern Ireland; this has been a fundamental concern of my Government and it is a concern which is overriding in this agreement.

It is very important to note that this is the first formal agreement in which the British Government commits itself to introduce and support legislation to give effect to their desire for Irish unity, if a majority of the people of Northern Ireland should formally consent to this.

12. Question to the Taoiseach Is this not yet another effort to make Northern Ireland work on the basis of a purely internal solution?

Answer

No. This agreement gives the Irish Government for the first time an important role in relation to Northern Ireland. In the agreement, the British Government accepts that the Irish Government will put forward within the new Conference views and proposals on matters relating to Northern Ireland and, in the interest of

peace and stability, undertakes with us to make determined efforts to resolve differences. By providing these practical arrangements through which the two Governments can work together for the accommodation of the rights and identities of the two traditions, the agreement acknowledges the obvious reality that the Irish Government is involved in efforts to promote peace and stability in Northern Ireland.

13. Question to the Taoiseach The Leader of the Opposition in Dublin has called Northern Ireland a failed political entity. Is this agreement not propping up this failed political entity?

Answer

So far as I am concerned we are talking about new political structures in Ireland; measures which accommodate the identity of Northern nationalists; measures which provide for the first time an important role for the Irish Government in the affairs of Northern Ireland; measures which put unionists and nationalists on an equal footing. I am interested in working for peace and stability. I am not interested in the question of whether Northern Ireland has or has not been a failure. So far as I am concerned these arrangements meet the requirement of the Forum. They transcend the context of Northern Ireland. They will benefit people in both North and South.

14. Question to the Taoiseach Why should the rights of unionists be placed on a par with those of nationalists given that nationalists represent the overwhelming majority of the people of the island of Ireland?

Answer

My immediate concern is to ensure that the rights of the nationalist minority in Northern Ireland are respected; this is an essential feature of the agreement and of the Chequers Communiqué of last year. Article 1

reiterates the principle of consent in relation to unity. In this we have acknowledged a fundamental political reality; unity - true unity between all the people of Ireland - cannot be achieved by force, or coercion or subjection. Each of the two traditions must acknowledge and accommodate the concerns and the rights of the other; were the Irish nationalist tradition to seek supremacy or domination over unionists, the result would be even greater division and turmoil in Ireland.

15. Question to the Taoiseach Some of the proposals under consideration by the Conference may have application in the Republic. What does this mean?

Answer

It simply means that certain measures taken in Northern Ireland - eg those designed to improve relations between local communities and the police force - may be found to have relevance and value outside the strict context of Northern Ireland. They might for example, be seen to be of value in the South and indeed in Britain and be applied, as the case may be, in either jurisdiction.

16. Question to the Prime Minister How will the agreement improve the human rights situation in Northern Ireland?

Answer

The Government has introduced many major improvements in recent years to ensure that human rights in Northern Ireland are protected as effectively as possible. The answer to your question is in the agreement. Article 5 in particular provides that the Conference will discuss measures in this field.

17. Question to the Prime Minister Do you now propose to introduce legislation:

- a. giving the vote at local elections to Irish citizens resident in Northern Ireland;

b. permitting the use of Irish as an official language;

c. enabling the Irish tricolour to be flown from City Hall, Belfast and other public buildings in Northern Ireland?

Answer

All these matters are among those for consideration by the Conference. I should not anticipate that discussion.

18. Question to the Prime Minister

The agreement means that the Irish Government will be able to interfere with the work of the security forces in Northern Ireland. This will greatly undermine their morale and efficiency.

Answer

There is no question of interference, and the Intergovernmental Conference will have no operational responsibilities. It will be to everyone's advantage to establish a systematic means of taking account of the Irish Government's views about security matters. I very much hope that this will reassure the minority community. The co-operation foreseen in the agreement will not be all one way. The agreement will intensify security co-operation between the authorities in both parts of Ireland and this should be greatly welcomed by all who wish to defeat terrorism.

19. Question to the Prime Minister

Are you not in Article 6 giving Dublin a right of veto on matters fundamentally affecting the security and well-being of the people of Ulster?

Answer

No. As Article 6 makes clear, the Irish Government may put forward views and proposals on the role and composition of various bodies appointed by the Secretary

of State for Northern Ireland and his Departments. It does not give the Irish Government a veto but every effort will be made by both sides to resolve any differences which may emerge.

20. Question to the Taoiseach What concrete commitments have you got in relation to changes in RUC policy, practice and structure? What concrete changes do you believe are necessary to ensure minority confidence in the RUC?

Answer

This agreement (Art 7) indicates that the Conference will address matters relating to RUC policy issues as well as serious security incidents and forthcoming events. This would include, for example, parades and processions.

The two Governments see the need for a programme of special measures to improve relations between the security forces and the nationalist people. The Conference will also consider the composition and role of the Police Authority. The first meeting of the Conference will consider measures which would underline respect for the rights and identity of nationalists as well as unionists on the part of the police.

21. Question to the Taoiseach In the context of this agreement, would you be free to criticise the RUC as you have done in the past or would you not be obliged to bear some of the blame in the event of another tragedy?

Answer

The commitment of the Irish Government and of the British Government is to make this Agreement work in relation to all matters within its scope and that very much includes the police.

22. Question to the Prime Minister Are the SDLP now expected to support the RUC and to encourage Catholics to join the force?

Answer

Everyone should support the security forces. It has long been the wish of HMG to see more members of the minority community joining the RUC. We hope, following the agreement, that this will happen more and that the SDLP will feel able to encourage Roman Catholics to join.

23. Question to the Taoiseach What concrete commitments have you got on the disbandment of the UDR? Is the regiment going to be phased out?

Answer

The UDR is a major concern to us and to the nationalist community in Northern Ireland, who have often seen it more as a focus of division than of harmony between themselves and the unionists. At the same time, it has considerable importance to unionists, particularly in isolated rural areas. I recognise that there are many honourable men and women in the UDR and I condemn without reservation the campaign of murder against them. Changes have already begun in relation to the UDR's contact with the public, which is where the main problems have arisen. The first meeting of the Conference will review progress. In particular it will consider the application of the principle that the UDR operate only in support of the civil power, with the particular objective of ensuring as rapidly as possible that, save in the most exceptional circumstances, there is a police presence in all operations which involve direct contact with the community. The Conference will furthermore consider ways of underlining the policy that the UDR discharge their duties evenhandedly and with equal respect for the unionist and nationalist identities and traditions.

24. Question to the Prime Minister Will you now move towards a general amnesty in Northern Ireland? Will prisoners with indeterminate sentences now be given a definite date for release?

Answer Those possibilities do not arise from the agreement itself. Any question of speeding up release from indeterminate sentences, if the agreement led to a real reduction in violence, would be for the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

25. Question to the Prime Minister Why are mixed courts highlighted in the agreement?

Answer Other ideas, such as extradition and the harmonisation of the criminal law, are also mentioned in the same Article of the agreement.

26. Question to the Taoiseach Do you contemplate new legislation to facilitate extradition of IRA offenders? Will you accede to the European Convention?

Answer I have said that it is the Irish Government's intention to accede as soon as possible to the European Convention. The communiqué has committed the two sides to work for early progress in relations between the security forces and the minority community in Northern Ireland, ways of improving security co-operation between the two Governments and seeking measures which would give substantial expression to the aim of underlining the importance of public confidence in the administration of justice. It is against this background that the Irish Government has announced its intention to accede as soon as possible to the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism.

27. Question to the Prime Minister Will the agreement not encourage the Provisional IRA in their murderous campaign?

Answer One of the main effects of the agreement will be that the British and Irish Governments will strengthen their co-operation in the fight against the men of violence. [The Provisionals have already denounced the agreement, which hardly suggests that they feel encouraged by it.]

28. Question to the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach Will you now accept that the electoral success of Sinn Fein and the PIRA's campaign of violence including attacks on British cities, have brought both of you together in this agreement today. Is this not confirmation of the success of the ballot box/armalite strategy?

Answer Absolutely not. This agreement is a rejection of terrorism. We are seeking to build up hope for the future, where the IRA have sought only to destroy. We are seeking peace and reconciliation, where the IRA have brought only strife, turmoil and tragedy. This agreement will reinforce the position of all who seek peace and stability by constitutional means.

29. Question to the Prime Minister Where will the Secretariat be located and how will it be staffed?

Answer The Secretariat will be very small. Its function will be to service the Intergovernmental Conference which will [normally] meet in Belfast, and to act between meetings as a channel of communication. [The Secretariat will be located in Belfast.]

[Note: this answer is subject to the outcome of continuing negotiation with the Irish.]

30. Question to the Taoiseach Will the permanent Irish Ministerial representative have direct contact with the nationalist community in Northern Ireland?

Answer

The role of the Permanent Irish Ministerial Representative will be to implement the agreement on behalf of the Irish Government, as joint chairman of the Conference. This will not alter the Irish Government's freedom to maintain contact with people in Northern Ireland.

31. Question to the Taoiseach There are four vacancies still outstanding on the Police Authority? Are these to be your nominations? Is this marginal number of vacancies which has been set aside for your views an indication of what consultation will mean in practice?

Answer

The Irish Government will be putting forward views in relation to all present vacancies on the Police Authority for Northern Ireland as well as in relation to any vacancies which may arise in future. The precise number of vacancies which may happen to exist at the present time is less important than the Agreement's recognition that the Irish Government may put forward views and proposals on the role and composition of this body and that there is an obligation on the two sides to make determined efforts to resolve any differences in the interest of peace and stability.

32. Question to the Taoiseach You have a say in appointments to a number of bodies in Northern Ireland. Are Northern nationalists now expected to co-operate with these bodies as they are currently structured and to accept their legitimacy?

Answer

In presenting views on appointments and other matters relating to these bodies, the Irish Government will

naturally be taking account of nationalist concerns and priorities. But my objective will be to ensure that all of these bodies adequately reflect the concerns of the entire community.

33. Question to the Prime Minister Do you expect the SDLP to support this agreement and to participate more in the political life of Northern Ireland?

Answer We hope that the nationalist community as a whole will see this agreement as evidence that progress can be made by constitutional means.

34. Question to the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach Do you now expect the SDLP to enter the Assembly?

The agreement makes it clear that both Governments support a policy of devolution which would command widespread acceptance throughout Northern Ireland. The question of whether the SDLP should enter this or any future Assembly is a matter for that party to decide.

35. Question to the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach The reports that the United States Government will offer a large sum for expenditure in Ireland suggest that Her Majesty's Government entered into the agreement in order to obtain US financial support.

Answer The agreement has been concluded on its merits. We naturally hope that friendly states, including the United States, will welcome it.

[N.B. Article 10(a) says that the two Governments will consider the possibility of securing international support for the promotion of economic and social development in Ireland. It is preferable not to be drawn on the meaning of this until US offers of money have been made.]

36. Question to the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach Is it part of the package that the Irish Republic will modify its policy of neutrality?

Answer No.

NB: The next two questions would arise after a United States announcement

37. Question to the Taoiseach Will contributions from America (and Europe) be matched by a contribution from the Dail?

Answer

Any funds made available by the United States and the member states of the European Community are intended to be specifically international expressions of support for the work of promoting reconstruction and reconciliation in Ireland. This is separate from the efforts of the Irish and British Governments, so that the question of my Government contributing to the Fund, as such, does not arise.

38. Question to the Prime Minister Why is the British Government not contributing to the Fund when the United States Government is offering \$.... million?

Answer

The British Government already makes a massive annual contribution to the Province which is now running at around £1.5 billion per annum.

39. Question to the Taoiseach Since the review provision applies only to the operations of the Conference and not to the declaration on status, have we not recognised Northern Ireland without obtaining a corresponding guarantee that future British Governments will continue to accept that we have a policy role in Northern Ireland?

Answer

Article 1 of this agreement incorporates the principle of consent enshrined in the Report of the Forum and accepted in communiqués by successive Heads of Government in both countries. It also incorporates the agreement of the two Governments to support Irish unity in the event there is consent to that aim.

The two Governments have entered into this agreement determined to make it work, but experience may show that adjustments are desirable to the role and nature of the Conference's activities. The Review Clause will enable the two Governments to make such adjustments.

40. Question to the Prime Minister Is such an agreement possible without legislation?

Answer

Yes. The agreement is fully consistent with statute law relating to Northern Ireland.

[Note: This answer is subject to the further consideration being given by the Law Officers Department to the question whether the agreement could be subject to judicial review.]