

TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT AGREED BETWEEN THE UK AND THE NI GOVERNMENTS

Political progress in Northern Ireland is bound to be impeded so long as violence and intimidation continue: and the purpose of internment, and of the Army's measures which are directed impartially at violence from whatever quarter, is to restore to Northern Ireland the necessary degree of stability for further political advance.

The border is not at issue. Nor is the constitutional position of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom and, within this framework, the principle of a democratically elected assembly based on universal adult suffrage.

But the reform programme which has been and continues to be carried through and to which both the Northern Ireland Government and the United Kingdom Government are fully committed, together with increased opportunities for participation by representatives of the minority on the lines suggested in Mr Faulkner's recent initiative, have pointed the way forward. In discussion between the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland and United Kingdom Ministers it was agreed that it would be helpful if the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland were to invite the Home Secretary to arrange as soon as the security situation has sufficiently improved talks under his chairmanship with the Northern Ireland Government, representatives of both sides of the Northern Ireland Parliament and other representatives of the majority and minority communities.

The purpose of these discussions will be to see what agreed ways and means can be devised, within the constitutional and democratic framework, of giving representatives of the minority as well as of the majority community in Northern Ireland an active, permanent and guaranteed role, in the life and public affairs of the Province.