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ULSTER YOUNG UNIONIST COUNCIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE: 1 OCTOBER 1994

DRAFT OUTLINE SPEECH FOR MICHAEL ANCRAM

Introduction

Glad to have received invitation. Believe first occasion when Minister has addressed your annual Conference.

2. In accordance with the overall theme of this Conference I have been asked to speak to you about the relationship between Great Britain and Northern Ireland as we move towards the year 2000 - which is now only 6 years away.

3. The present relationship between Northern Ireland and Great Britain is a strong one and a close one. There are many strands which bind Northern Ireland with the rest of the United Kingdom. These reflect ties of kin, culture and comradeship in peace and war. These connections reach back into history and work in both directions; no relationship works properly if it is totally one sided. Today I shall look at some of the different aspects of the relationship and suggest how they might develop in the near future.

Constitutional link

4. Relationship between Northern Ireland and Great Britain reflected most fundamentally in the constitution - Northern Ireland's status as part of the United Kingdom. HMG stands by the Union; firm commitment to the constitutional guarantee. That is the present. The future is entirely in the hands of the people of Northern Ireland. The present position will only change if the majority of the people in Northern Ireland want it to change, but not otherwise.

5. Fully aware of fears and concerns amongst Unionist community about Northern Ireland's constitutional future. Can reassure you that these fears are unfounded. Statute law provides that the

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constitutional status of Northern Ireland will not change without the consent of a majority of people in Northern Ireland. Also recognised in international law. Reaffirmed in the Joint Declaration.

6. 1986 Anglo-Irish Agreement recognised that the present wish of the majority of people of Northern Ireland is for no change in its status. At the last General Election parties favouring the constitution of the Union secured some 65% of the vote.

7. Government wholeheartedly committed to upholding the democratically expressed wishes of the people of Northern Ireland. Will uphold their present status so long as it is their wish [quote from Prime Minister: Speech Blackpool Conference October 1993] [Recent quote from Prime Minister on 31 August following announcement of IRA ceasefire when asked about persuading Ulster Unionists that their best future lies in an united Ireland]. Quote from Molyneaux "No shift on HMG's attitude to further constitutional position".

8. Suggestions that Government's commitment to the relationship is lukewarm. Refer to criticism of statement in the Joint Declaration that the Government has "no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland". Quote Prime Minister's article in the Irish News on 25 February 1994.

9. Prime Minister's personal commitment unmatched. Importance of relationship epitomized in Northern Ireland's place at the top of the Government's domestic agenda.

10. Government committed to Northern Ireland. Supports economy and deploys British troops, who will continue to support the RUC for as long as the threat requires.

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11. Looking to the future. Believe that Northern Ireland's constitutional status as part of the UK is likely to remain for the foreseeable future. Future in the hands of the people.

12. Also accept reality that a sizeable minority aspire to a united Ireland. Government recognises legitimacy of both aspirations provided they are pursued by peaceful and democratic means. Again looking to the future - this reality is not going to change and so must be faced and accepted. Government hopes that in the future Northern Ireland will develop a more diverse society with respect for both traditions.

Security

13. Further strand of relationship between GB and NI has been the duty of the Government to protect citizens of Northern Ireland - as it would protect citizens of any other part of UK if they were subjected to terrorist attack. This has involved troops from all over the UK, including of course substantially from within Northern Ireland itself, serving tours of duty in Northern Ireland. While regret circumstances, this has been a strong link between Northern Ireland and Great Britain for the past 25 years. The Government remains committed a firm and resolute response to all acts of violence.

Ceasefire

14. In the future, I hope Northern Ireland will share the peace enjoyed by Great Britain. As in the rest of the United Kingdom political objectives must be pursued by exclusively peaceful means. The principles set out in the Joint Declaration - democracy and consent must prevail.

15. These principles apply equally to both communities in Northern Ireland. We have called upon all paramilitary groups to cease violence for good. The announcement on 31 August by PIRA that they

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had called a complete cessation of "military operations" is very welcome. Quote Irish Times Leader of 1 September; welcome but need caution. No flags to celebrate - "no accolades for those who have decided to desist from murder". It is time the so-called "Loyalists" also realised that nothing is achieved by violence. Hope for the sake of all the people of Northern Ireland, all terrorist violence will come to an end for good. The commitment by the IRA must be matched by events on the ground. We will play close attention to that.

16. No secret deals for peace, no private assurances. Everything above board open and public.

Political Development

17. We very much hope that as we move towards the year 2000, it will be possible to achieve a comprehensive political accommodation which attracts widespread support across the community in NI.

18. HMG believes that such a settlement will need to address not only relationships between the different sections of the community in Northern Ireland, but also its relationships within the island of Ireland and also between the British and Irish Governments. Reality is that focussing only on the internal settlement and the relationship with GB will not command widespread agreement.

19. HMG remains convinced that the best way of achieving a settlement lies in the Talks process which began 3 years ago. - Ancram round - 3 of 4 parties - to explore basis on which we might come together for further dialogue - discussing Government's ideas for giving further focus and direction.

20. Also bilateral discussions with Irish Government working on Joint Framework Document. Aim to achieve shared understanding of the elements of a political settlement which, in view of

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2 Governments is likely to form basis of agreed settlement. Purpose is to provide basis for further multilateral talks between all the main NI parties and the two Governments. No question of imposing a solution, key is agreement and consent.

21. At present in NI there is a "democratic deficit". Unlike rest of UK, limited opportunity for locally elected representatives to take responsibility for government of NI. Too much power vested in Secretary of State. In future, hope that agreement can be reached on new institutions which increase local accountability and provide an appropriate role for representatives from both main parts of the community. NO return to regime supported by one side and not the other. By year 2000 I hope that local democracy in Northern Ireland is stronger and flourishing.

22. Other elements of a settlement will need to reflect other aspects of NI's wider-relations - mutually acceptable understanding of those important constitutional matters known to be at issue; new arrangements for contact, co-operation and working together within the island of Ireland; and new arrangements between the two Governments. No question of joint authority but no reason why should not have some North/South body or bodies to general good of both parts of Ireland Executive functions. David Trimble quote.

23. No timescale - need time and patience. Must be achieved by agreement [Referendum ref to PM announcement]. If this peace endures then strong rational grounds for hoping and expecting a much better future for NI.

Economic policy

24. A third strand of the relationship between NI and GB, concerns economic ties. HMG working to improve economic prospects for the whole of the UK including NI. Economic outlook for NI is considered the best for a number of years.

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X 25. [Contribution from Central Secretariat on examples of economic ties eg investment by GB firms in NI plus any examples of NI based firms investing in GB.]

Y 26. Looking towards the year 2000 - [Section on Peace Dividend]

27. [? Section of shared UK relationship with Europe]

Social Policy

Z 28. All these various strands of relationship are worked out through people. Individuals and organisations. For the UK to develop and move forward to year 2000 we need to develop the talents and skills of all the people, including those in NI. Need for greater equity between two main communities in NI - improve social and economic conditions of areas of need, regardless of where they are located. TNS MBW initiatives.

A 29. Respect for both sets of aspirations. Needs to be reflected in tangible ways (? eg Irish Street Names)

B 30. Ties of kinship. Movement between NI and GB. In past tendency to move to GB for education, training jobs [Statistics?] In a peaceful future NI, hope these people from NI at present in GB will feel able to return to NI to contribute to its future prosperity and that those from rest of UK will also share in this. Hope movements between NI and GB will increase, to benefit of UK as a whole.

Peroration

31. As we move towards the year 2000, the future of NI is in the hands of the people of NI. HMG will resolutely support you. Will do everything in our power to assist you reach a settlement which will herald a future of peace, prosperity and political stability.

None of every

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examples of economic
examples of NI based
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None of this will be easy but I confidently believe that there is every hope that agreement on a new beginning for all Northern Ireland's main relationships including those with Great Britain, is in prospect.

A permanent cessation of violence creates real
opportunities. I have already talked about the prospect of
political agreement and progress which opens up. New economic
opportunities, too, will come forward and help us
build on the recent good economic performance. Inward
investment, trade, and tourism offer the prospect of major
long-term job gains. CBI estimates of some 30000 new jobs are
in line with our own. A good number of the jobs gained should
be of real quality - managerial, technical and professional.
Many, particularly in tourism, will be in areas where
opportunities in the past have been few. New jobs, too, will
be in wealth-creating sectors reducing dependence on public
sector. Income generated in the economy will increase, so
prompting further growth. In short, with Government, business
and the community working together, the year 2000 can see a
peace dividend of economic progress for all.

SPD
22 September 1994

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