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Transcript of Press Conference given by the Northern Ireland Prime Minister, Mr. Brian Faulkner, after the tripartite meeting at Chequers between the Taoiseach, the British Prime Minister and the Northern Ireland Prime Minister. 28th September, 1971.

Q. Is there likely to be any relaxation in the internment policy as a result of these talks?

A. I think our statement makes the position of the three Prime Ministers on this perfectly clear. We said that it was our determination to end violence, internment and other emergency measures as quickly as possible. And you will clearly see from that what our priorities are. The first priority is to bring the violence to an end. Having brought the violence to an end, I don't want to have anyone interned for a day longer than is absolutely necessary, and all three Prime Ministers are agreed upon that.

Q. Mr. Faulkner, did these talks achieve anything?

A. Yes, I think they did. First of all, I would like to say something straight to the people of Northern Ireland, about that. I went to these talks saying that the constitutional position of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom was not for negotiation. It wasn't negotiated and the communique that we have issued makes it perfectly clear, I think, that we each respect the others point of view on this - mine that there shall be no change in Ulster's constitutional position within the UK, Mr. Heath's that he stands firmly behind the Ireland Act 1949 which says that there can be no change in the position of Northern Ireland unless they want it changed and Mr. Lynch's, in which we respect his point of view, that he would like to see an all-Ireland 32 County Republic. But then, Mr. Lynch joins Mr. Heath and myself in condemning utterly, violence as a means of political pressure of any kind. So, I think, this was an achievement and I would like to say something to the people of the rest of the United Kingdom, England, Scotland and Wales in this too. I left home at about half past four on Sunday evening. Between then and 5.30 p.m. that evening, there were 31 incidents in Northern Ireland, and I think you gentlemen

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have got details of them in front of you, and if you have, you will see that of those 31 incidents, no less than 19 of them were directed against British troops. This is where I was in a different position to the other two Prime Ministers, in that it ~~was~~^{is} in my area that people are being murdered, that property is being blown up, and we are suffering this campaign of violence. The men of violence are not anti-Ulster, they are anti-British. So, in answer to your question 'has anything been achieved', yes, I think this has been achieved. I think a better understanding has been achieved too between Mr. Lynch and myself and perhaps all round.

Q. Did we not know all these things before these talks took place?

A. I am not at all sure that we did. Let's recognise this.

It is 45 years since the Prime Ministers of, then, the Irish Free State, then, Northern Ireland and then the United Kingdom got round the conference table - and that was James Craig, Mr. Cosgrave and, I think, Stanley Baldwin. So it was surely something of an achievement that the three Prime Ministers met. It indicated the recognition by all of us of the gravity of a situation of violence and our determination to end it. So, my answer is yes, something was achieved.

Q. Can we expect any new political initiatives at all following these talks?

A. Not specifically following the talks. But I did make it very clear last week in a statement issued on behalf of my Government that we shall be issuing a consultative document prior to the debate, for which I put down a motion when Parliament rose in July - and that debate will take place, I hope, this month of October. We shall put down a consultative document and we shall argue in that consultative document the merits, or otherwise, of a change in the voting system of an enlarged House of Commons, of an enlarged and perhaps, reformed Senate. I cannot give you the details of these things until we produce our consultative document but we have indicated that these will be discussed. We also indicated that we would like to see the broadest possible

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spectrum of Cabinet Government in Northern Ireland. But we indicated the principle of collective responsibility and the fact that men cannot sit round the Cabinet table unless they are agreed on basic principles - indicating perfectly clearly that people who believe in an Irish Republic cannot sit round the Cabinet table with people who believe in Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom but that this certainly does not rule out the possibility of having people, perhaps sitting round the Cabinet table, who are not members of the political party that forms the majority. I tried to indicate my sympathy to this point of view when I appointed^a/former Chairman of the Labour Party, David Bleakley, as my first Minister of Community Relations.

Q. How soon can those measures be put into action?

A. If we decided that Parliament should be extended, this would require an amendment of the Government of Ireland Act, which is an Act of Parliament over here at Westminster. Therefore, there would have to be an amendment of that Act and it would be in the hands of the British Parliament how quickly that was done. If we took the decision that it should be done, we would like to see it done very quickly indeed. The question of the method of election to the Northern Ireland Parliament is something that is in our hands and it could be done quickly, but I must emphasise that, of course, on one particular radical departure, more radical than anything that has been attempted in Mr. Lynch's area or in Mr. Heath's area, this question of Committees of Parliament - half of them chaired by opposition members - I have already put this on the table at Stormont and we shall be acting on this as soon as Parliament resumes next month - immediately in fact.

Q. Your first priority is to end the violence in Northern Ireland. You say that all three parties are seeking to achieve this aim. Did Mr. Lynch at this meeting express any willingness to play his part in ending violence by taking appropriate action within the Republic against known terrorists? And when do you envisage such an end to the violence being brought about?

A. Mr. Lynch signed this communique that has gone out and this communique undertakes to use active steps to bring the violence to an end as quickly as possible. But I must say quite openly and fairly that I said to Mr. Lynch that I was very concerned that there was not adequate control over gelignite on his side of the border, that it

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was obtained too easily in his area and then used in Northern Ireland. And you had an indication of that this morning when some men attempted to bring gelignite across the border and then fled back into the Republic. I told him I was very concerned about the existence of training camps in Eire and that I was satisfied that there were such training camps for men of the IRA. In fairness to Mr. Lynch he told me that he has recently tightened up on the control of explosives but he took my point. I don't think that I misquote him in saying that he is very anxious to tighten up on this if it is at all possible.

Q. Is there any place, Mr. Faulkner, in the Government at Stormont for the elected representatives, for people like John Hume? In the House of Commons last week I heard Mr. Fitt make his offer that he would enter a broad based Government if the internment question could be got over. This seems to be the kernel of the whole settlement. Can you envisage Mr. Hume and some of the people who are regarded as moderates, broadly people opposed to violence, elected representatives of the minority entering this broad-base Government?

A. Well I understand both Mr. Hume and Mr. Fitt want to see a 32-County Ireland separated from Great Britain. I said in answer to a previous question that I can't foresee such people sitting around the Cabinet table with people who believe as I do that Northern Ireland must remain within the United Kingdom. So my short answer to your question is that I cannot see such people sharing a Cabinet with people who believe in the union of Northern Ireland with the rest of the United Kingdom. But, of course, from Mr. Hume's own lips himself, he has said that as far as he is concerned, he would not sit round the Cabinet table with Unionists.

Q. Could I have a supplementary to that? It was recognised in the Commons, in the House of Commons, that the minority leaders could have the aspiration of unity in the long term but Mr. Hume and others have said to me that in the immediate present they would be willing to get a settlement within the Six. And even Mr. Lynch, I think, would accept a settlement within the Six. But, surely, there must be at some stage a movement towards a settlement within the Six in the long term. Did you discuss this at Chequers?

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A. I don't know what you mean by a settlement within the Six

Q. - settlement on a new broad base Government within Northern Ireland leaving the long term question for -

A. Ah yes. You see one of the things that I have already proposed is that we should have this entirely new and radical system of Committees at Stormont and that half of those should be chaired by members of the Opposition. It does not matter to me what the political outlook is of those members of the Opposition. They can be Republicans. It does not matter what they are. If they are members of the Opposition they can chair these Committees. Therefore, within the present constitutional framework I am absolutely content that that should happen. When it comes to the actual Cabinet it is a different matter.

Q. You indicated quite clearly your first priority is the end of violence. But half an hour ago Mr. Lynch said that there could be no end to violence nor, in his opinion could there be any political advance before internment is ended. Isn't this a totally irreconcilable - which come first chicken or the egg - point of view?

A. Well I don't know that you quote Mr. Lynch absolutely correctly. I heard him very clearly myself on radio ten minutes ago on this very point and that was not what he said. It was clear to me that Mr. Lynch agreed with me that the first priority is to end the violence.

Q. Did you detect on the part of Mr. Heath any impatience with the two Irelands of the progress being made - or lack of progress being made?

A. I detected from Mr. Heath throughout absolutely firm support for the position of the Northern Ireland Government. Mr. Heath and I were on the same team.

Q. There is a lot of emphasis on political reconciliation. How can there possibly be any political reconciliation when you have the Opposition MPs adopting their present attitude. Can you foresee any progress on that point?

A. Of course, I am very disappointed that they are adopting this attitude because you will remember, I am sure, that the present Opposition MPs gave a guarded welcome to my Committee proposals in the first week in July and that we sat round the conference table there and then. And, they undertook to debate them further in October. But they then decided to abstain from Parliament weeks

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before there was any question of internment and abstained from Parliament on quite other issues that were not related to the Government of Northern Ireland at all. They abstained from Parliament because they objected to the army shooting two civilians dead in the city of Londonderry. What we mean by political reconciliation there is that there should be political reconciliation within Northern Ireland and that people should get round the conference table and should discuss that. And, certainly, my firm impression is that public opinion in Northern Ireland would say to all members of Parliament - get round the conference table, talk rather than have this shooting continue.

Q. You indicated that there is a need to re-establish harmony and cooperation in Northern Ireland. I am wondering if any agreement was reached on the methods by which that can be done.

A. I think its perfectly fair to say that all three Prime Ministers are very keen that people should discuss the whole situation. That is to say people in positions of responsibility within Northern Ireland should discuss what needs to be done. And I interpret that as meaning that members of Parliament in Northern Ireland including members of the Government, heads of trades union organisations, heads of industrial organisations, heads of the churches, should all be prepared to take part in responsible discussions and try to find ways and means of harmonising the Ulster community.

Q. Mr. Faulkner, outside the Unionist Party, which political group do you think could share responsibility with yourselves. You have mentioned two names in the SDLP who obviously are irreconcilable on this in that their aim is a united Ireland and therefore they could not possibly share Cabinet responsibility with you. Whom do you see could share Cabinet responsibility with the Unionist Party?

A. You are asking me to indulge in a little bit of party political boosting and we are not involved in an election campaign at this moment but I think I made it very clear when I formed my first cabinet that I felt that David Bleakley, a former chairman of the Northern Ireland Labour Party, and a very active member of that party was suited to sit in my cabinet,

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and I still feel that. Maybe there are others in his party in the same way - I don't know - but basically what I was saying was that people who sit around the cabinet table must not differ on any basic and fundamental principle - and a very fundamental principle, perhaps the most fundamental principle in Irish politics, is the constitutional position of the country.

Q. Mr. Faulkner, Mr. Bleakley in fact has resigned, among other reasons, because of disagreement about the policy of internment. It does still seem to be true that the elected leaders of the Opposition are unwilling to engage in the talks that you want to have as long as that policy of internment remains unchanged. Do you see any tactical way out of that?

A. Well, you know, I have stated my priorities quite clearly and the first is to end violence - and whilst I want to see people round the table discussing political initiatives, the taking of life and the saving of life is even more important than that. And I am utterly convinced that by locking up men that were involved in the campaign of violence I was taking from the streets the possibility of additional murder and I would not be prepared to in any way weaken on this and to put back people whose openly expressed aim is to murder people in Northern Ireland including troops, police and civilians. So that that is the priority.

Q. Prime Minister, does the suggestion in the communique of possible further meetings like the one that has taken place, does that suggest any right being given to Mr. Lynch to have a say in the affairs of the North?

A. No, it doesn't. But it is perfectly clear that if you deal with the security situation itself that Mr. Lynch has a very important part to play because as the members of these illegal organisations are not only campaigning in his territory but organising themselves in his territory and therefore there might be a reason for us to get around the table to discuss some development in that connection.

Q. But on the other hand do you think Mr. Lynch sitting down with yourself and Mr. Heath implies a greater degree of recognition of the Government of Northern Ireland by the Southern State than has been given to you before?

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A. I think that we have made this absolutely clear in the opening paragraph of our communique today where we say that each recognises the other's situation insofar as the constitutional position of Northern Ireland is concerned and that means what it says.

Q. You say that the end of violence is the number one priority at the moment and internment cannot be ended until this is done first. Can you be more specific about this? What do you mean by an end to the violence exactly? Do you mean an end to the terrorism? Do you mean an end to all street rioting and for how long, for what period of time would this have to take place before you would find it possible to release the internees and move on to political conversation?

A. The last time that there was internment in Ireland was in 1962 when there was internment in Northern Ireland and when there was internment in Eire. Mr. Lynch, as he reminded me yesterday, was a member of the Government in Eire that interned people at that time. I think it was a matter of weeks after the IRA campaign had ended then that both Governments released the internees. So that I would hope that if the violence came to an end they would be very quickly indeed out of this kind of preventive detention, for that is what they are suffering at the present time - preventive detention. You asked me what I mean by the end of violence. I think it must be perfectly obvious to everybody what is meant. It means an end to the bombings, an end to the murderings, an end of the ambushing and obviously if it ended tonight and they said it was ending tonight you would not let everybody out tomorrow, you would give it a day or two to see what was happening.

Q. Prime Minister, talking about possible developments in the situation in the south I was wondering if there might be any possible amendment to the present extradition treaty which would allow the Republic of Ireland to hand over people who cannot be handed over at the moment because they are ~~wanted~~ wanted for political offences?

A. We had some discussion about this kind of thing and I think the news reports today indicate that there are three men who broke bail in Northern Ireland and who are in the Republic and who, I understand, have been arrested and will be brought

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before the courts in the Republic on an extradition order made from our side. I hope that they will be able to come to Northern Ireland and that this is an example of what can be expected in future.

Q. Did you discuss possible legislative amendments to the Ireland Act and how soon can that be implemented?

A. No, we did not discuss legislative amendments to the Ireland Act at all. But the consultative document that the Northern Ireland Government will be producing in the matter of the next few weeks will argue the merits of enlarging the Northern Ireland Parliament, House of Commons and Senate. If it was agreed that this should be done that would require an amendment of the Government of Ireland Act of 1920. We mentioned that consultative document at our discussion so I suppose, to that extent, you could say we discussed an amendment of the Act, but that was the only respect in which we did discuss it.

Q. Did not Mr. Lynch make quite clear to you that in his opinion the only way violence could end in Ulster was for you to give sufficient representation to the SDLP - that they should be a viable alternative to the IRA in the eyes of the minority? Is not this totally contradictory to your opinion that since the SDLP will not talk until internment ends? Is this not perhaps totally contradictory to your point of view where you say the first priority is to end the violence?

A. No. One thing that Mr. Lynch made absolutely clear to both Mr. Heath and myself was that he could not speak for the SDLP.

Q. Mr. Cooper has said to me himself - he is a Protestant - he has said that he is totally against violence. I am just wondering is there any place at all even for men who have publicly expressed themselves against violence who are willing to talk in terms of the long term thing, in the broad base Government that seems to be accepted in the House of Commons debate to which I listened to last week. There seemed to be acceptance in the debate for a broad base Government but you seem to rule out any possibility of an elected representative of the SDLP ever serving in the Northern Ireland Cabinet, even if he rules out violence?

A. Yes. The violence does not really enter into it - except that, of course, if anybody supported violence they obviously would not be in a Northern Ireland Government. I do

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not suppose they would be in Mr. Lynch's Government either. What I have said perfectly clearly is that people who believe that Northern Ireland should be separated from Great Britain and united with the Republic differ on a basic principle and therefore cannot be around the Cabinet table with Unionists. This is absolutely clear.

Q. Did you get the impression from Mr. Lynch that he would do anything to attempt to get the Maudling talks which have been called on the road by way of using what influence he has with the SDLP to persuade them to come to the conference table on some compromise arrangement without discussion on internment or something like that?

A. I said in answer to a previous question that Mr. Lynch made it very clear that he could not speak for the SDLP. I also think it is perfectly fair to say that Mr. Lynch would like to see people around the conference table as quickly as possible.

Q. Even before internment ended?

A. As quickly as possible. Let's leave it there.

Q. On the other question that you raised earlier, you mentioned two security matters you raised with him. He told you his answer to the one on the gelignite. You did not tell us what he said or what he indicated about the training camps south of the Border.

A. He reckons that his police are very watchful about this kind of thing, that if they come upon training camps they would apprehend the people.

Q. On the very same point Mr. Faulkner did you reproach Mr. Heath on the same lines saying that a large quantity of gelignite seems to have been stolen in England from scantily guarded quarries and places like that? A lot of gelignite seems to have been stolen in England, not so much as in the Irish Republic.

A. I am absolutely satisfied that the part of the United Kingdom where the gelignite is most carefully watched at the present time is Northern Ireland. We have tightened up on it to a much greater extent than any other part of these islands. We have made our feelings about the control of gelignite very well known to the British Government long before this and I have discussed it in detail with Mr. Heath long before this and various measures have been taken to control gelignite in this part of the United Kingdom.

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Q. What would you say has changed as a result of the last two days?

A. A better understanding of each others point of view.

A realisation of the gravity of the situation in Northern Ireland from a social point of view, from an economic point of view.

A determination to cooperate to end the violence as rapidly as possible.

Q. Would you concede the style and make up of Government needs change in Northern Ireland?
Would you concede that past Government in Northern Ireland for 50 years has been defective?

A. I can see that the Government of Ireland - the make up - needed a change.

Q. But you are talking in terms of a new style of Government.

A. Wait a minute. I am not talking in terms of a different style of Government. I have only formed one Government in Northern Ireland and the one that I formed had in it a former chairman of one of the principle opposition ^{parties.} Since I have been Prime Minister I have indicated very radical proposals for sharing power in Parliament with members of the Opposition. If you regard this as a change in the form of Government then I suppose I would have to say that present conditions persuade me that this is a sensible thing to do. I do not criticise my predecessors where over the last 50 years they were dealing with an entirely different situation. I think it is not generally recognised in Britain, and indeed, not in the Republic that Northern Ireland has within the last year gone vastly ahead of the rest of the British Isles in a huge administrative shake-up. England, Scotland and Wales are following us on local government reorganisation. The Republic is following us on local government reorganisation. We have acted, and we have established the new boundaries. We have cut down the number of local government areas from some 70 authorities to 26. These will all be in existence before the end of next year. When that happens, Parliament will have much more power. And in order to deal with that, members of Parliament will have much more work to do. That is one reason why I have felt that it was necessary to strengthen

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Parliament, through, for instance, the Committee system. But it is perfectly obvious to me that if the whole Ulster community is to respect the Northern Ireland Government, and to cooperate with us, they can't all expect to be party political members of my party - the Unionist Party. So, I have tried to indicate that I wanted to broaden the basis of my Government as much as it was possible to do so within having people around the table having the same principles. That's why I brought David Bleakley in.

Q. Mr. Faulkner, Mr. Heath said this weekend, before entering the talks, that he saw grave dangers of a civil war which would sweep Ireland. What is your position on this development, and what dangers do you see in the use of what seems to have been a bazooka in Andersonstown, and to the developments among the loyalist community of a third force. ~~Are~~ these dangers leading towards civil war - an escalation of the conflict, do you think?

A. Let us deal with the second one first. I don't myself believe that there is any danger of the development of what is called a third force in Northern Ireland, and by this people mean a force that is not under the control of the forces of law and order, either army or police. All the talk that there is in the community about the need for a third force is bred of a sense of frustration. People who are living in a war situation in Northern Ireland at this time, seeing houses bombed, seeing people murdered, and saying to themselves 'but we are doing nothing about this' 'What can we do' and so they are offering their services. Later this week the Minister for Defence, Lord Carrington, will be in Northern Ireland, and I have had lengthy discussions with him over the last two days about strengthening the Ulster Defence Regiment. He will be talking about that. He has lifted the ceiling on that regiment, and I believe that many thousands of people will take the opportunity to join that regiment and to help in the security drive by protecting key points and doing road checks and that kind of thing. Now, I think that this will enable people who feel a sense of frustration to serve the country in one of the forces of law and order.....

Q. Would this not represent a danger to the stability of the community?

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A. Of course, if there was a third force that was not under the control of the forces of law and order, it would be a dreadful thing, and I have said very clearly that anybody who has any notion of forming such a force, if there is any evidence of them doing so, very strong action will be taken against them by the forces of law and order - and they had better heed that warning. But there will be no need for this. If people have the opportunity to serve the community in the existing forces of law and order, that I believe they can do. The development of the use of an anti-tank gun, or whatever it was this morning, is something that I have not had any opportunity yet to discuss with the security chiefs in Northern Ireland, but I am certain they take it seriously, as they take every development in the campaign seriously.

Q. Would you favour the use of machine guns by the security forces?

A. They are using them already.

Q. Mr. Faulkner, would you take part in future talks with Mr. Heath, Mr. Lynch and the leader of the SDLP, Mr. Fitt?

A. When I talk to Mr. Fitt and his colleagues I don't need to have either Mr. Heath or Mr. Lynch with me. I was round the conference table with Mr. Fitt and his colleagues in the month of July this year. I am still at the conference table and I would welcome talks with them. They can come back tomorrow if they like. But, I don't need to have the other Prime Ministers present. Let's not confuse this. You have a meeting of Prime Ministers or you have a meeting of members of Parliament. You don't have both at the same time.

Q. Prime Minister, under the internment system, there is a review or appeals body. If it recommends to you the release of a number of internees, are you likely to accept this recommendation?

A. Almost certainly accept it. It would be quite an extraordinary thing if the Minister of Home Affairs did not accept the recommendation of the Advisory Committee of three very responsible people.

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Q. Mr. Lynch has been telling you about what he is doing about gelignite and training camps and matters of this kind. Can you tonight pronounce yourself satisfied with security arrangements south of the Border?

A. Far from it, and I have told Mr. Lynch that I am not satisfied. That is why I hope he will have another look at them.

Q. Mr. Faulkner, did you discuss at all at Chequers ~~whether~~ the possibility of interning extreme Protestants. Do you think such an action might help to restore the trust of the Catholic community?

A. We didn't discuss this at all, nor did we discuss the religious make-up of anybody who has been arrested in Northern Ireland. I take the view, and the British Government take the view, that you intern people, you detain people, and you subsequently intern them if you have evidence that they are engaged in illegal activity against the State. And if you are so persuaded, you lift them, no matter what their religious or political outlook may be. That is our policy and that we will stand by.

Q. Would you say that any concessions were made during these past few days by anybody on any important issue?

A. I don't really think that any of the three of us sought concessions. Therefore, no concessions were made.

Q. Prime Minister, can you foresee the day when there will be what has been described as community government in Northern Ireland?

A. You could presumably only have a community government if you have a government that proportionally represented parliament. Now, if you were to have such a government at the moment, you would be bound to have in it for instance, Ian Paisley. I assume you would have in it Bill Craig, because he represents his group, you would have in it some Unionists, you would have in it some Nationalists, you would have in it some SDLPs and I think the only group~~s~~ you couldn't have someone in on that basis would be the Northern Ireland Labour Party, because they have only got one member at Stormont. But if you had a government - and people have talked about using the Swiss system in Northern Ireland - proportional representation in the Cabinet - if you have such a government in Northern Ireland it would be made up in the way that I have just indicated to you.

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I doubt whether such a government would last for ten minutes, never mind a week.

Q. Well, if you take it from that, Prime Minister, that there is to be a change in the face of the Government - that it would have to be then, presumably, some kind of nominated government, rather than what you might describe as elected Government.

A. Well, I'm sufficiently optimistic still to have some faith in the stated views of people. There was a very strong indication about two years ago that something like 70% of the minority - the religious minority in Northern Ireland, didn't want to change the constitutional position of the country. They would, therefore, presumably support political candidates who shared that point of view. Therefore, I would hope that you would get such people, believing, as I do, in keeping Northern Ireland within the UK, and perhaps being free to join a government.

Q. Can I take it, therefore, Prime Minister, that before any changes would be put through, even PR, that there will be an election in Northern Ireland?

A. Oh, you certainly couldn't have PR until you have an election, because PR demands an election. If you are saying to me 'will there be no general election in Northern Ireland until you have made changes' I can't answer you on that, because a Prime Minister must be free to call an election at any time.

Q. Going back to an election, Prime Minister, do you feel that any proposals for a broader-based government could well alienate even further the forces within Unionism itself. I'm thinking of the extremists like, Mr. Paisley and Mr. Craig - give them more support - in which you could well be facing a lot of opposition from them in an election?

A. My first attempt at a broader based government was the bringing in of Mr. Bleakley. I had tremendous support throughout the community for that - nowhere more so than from Unionist people up and down the country. So I have no fears in that respect. But, I think you ought to put the question to the men you named - Messrs. Craig and Paisley. They are reasonably operative with their voices.

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Q. On the very same topic, Mr. Faulkner, are you confident that your consultative document will have the mandate of the people who elected you and the Government - that is the grass-roots Unionists of whom we always hear so much?

A. Before coming into my present office I was Minister of Development. One day, I proposed that we should centralise housing, and that we should reform local government, and I was told that both of these things would bring down the Unionist Party because, as you put it, the grass-roots people would not support me. They did support me. I think they fully support what we are doing in these matters. I feel confident that any decisions we take as a result of the consultative document will have the full support of the Unionist Party in the country.

Q. Prime Minister, did any discussion take place today or yesterday about the future location of future talks - Dublin or Belfast - were they suggested or discussed?

A. No discussion at all about that. But we did find Chequers very comfortable.

Q. Obviously after the talks the people of Northern Ireland are keen on some sort of message - some sort of hopeful message if possible from the talks. What would your message be at this moment?

A. First of all, that insofar as Northern Ireland's position within the United Kingdom is concerned, that is absolutely secure and it is very obvious from these talks that there isn't going to be any sell-out on Northern Ireland. Secondly, that the three Prime Ministers have proclaimed their determination to use everything at their command to bring the violence to an end quickly, and then to make progress. I think that should be the message, and it should be a message of hope.