

NIO PRESS STATEMENT

27 November 1993

The public should not be misled by this published text. No-one has been authorised to conduct talks or negotiations on behalf of the Government with the Provisionals, Sinn Fein or any other organisation perpetrating or supporting violence for political ends.

At the end of February this year a message was passed on to the Government from the IRA leadership. It was to the effect that the conflict was over but they needed our advice as to the means of bringing it to a close. The Government obviously had to take that message seriously, though we recognised that actions not words would be the real test.

The Government had already made it publicly clear what had to be done by those who used or threatened violence for political ends. If they wanted to enter into talks or negotiations with the Government, there first had to be a genuine ending of violence.

The Government accordingly responded to the IRA's request for advice. The response reinforced and spelt out in a private message what the Government had consistently said publicly. There had first of all to be a genuine end to violence. It also repeated the constitutional guarantee.

The text now published contains the wording of instructions given by the Government for the transmission of that response. As the text makes clear, the response provided the advice that had been requested. It continues to reflect the Government's policy, which has again recently been made clear by the Prime Minister and by the Secretary of State.

The IRA have not delivered the ending of violence envisaged in their original approach. They have continued to inflict untold misery and grief upon the public. It is for them to explain this. There can be no excuse for such terrorism. Their duty is to end it at once.