

IN PLACE OF PARAGRAPH 4 OF JD8

4. In confirming its wish, and its commitment to ensure, that Northern Ireland should remain in the United Kingdom unless and until that might cease to be the wish of a majority of its people, and that it would be wrong to change that status without the consent of such a majority, the British Government affirms nonetheless that it would have no selfish strategic or economic interest in retaining Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom against the wishes of its people; that its primary interest is to see peace, stability and reconciliation established by agreement among all the people who inhabit the island; and that it will work together with the Irish Government to achieve such an agreement which will embrace the totality of relationships. At the same time, the British Government:

- (i) accepts and acknowledges that if, but only if, a majority in each part of Ireland freely expressed the wish that there should be a united Ireland then this should come about;
- (ii) confirms accordingly that the future status of Northern Ireland should only be determined on the basis of consent, North and South, of the people living in Ireland;
- (iii) acknowledges that a significant minority of the people of Northern Ireland wish for, either immediately or at some time in the future, a united Ireland and that they have the right to pursue that outcome from a basis of parity of esteem, by peaceful and democratic means and without impediment;
- (iv) confirms its wish to see agreement reached between the people of the island of Ireland, North and South, on

SECRET and PERSONAL

arrangements, structures or institutions to which all the people living in Ireland could give assent and support;

- (v) confirms that such arrangements, structures or institutions may, as of right, take the form of agreed independent structures for the island as a whole;
- (vi) confirms, in particular, that if, in the future, a majority of the people of Northern Ireland clearly wish for and formally consent to the establishment of a united Ireland, it will introduce and support legislation to give effect to that wish;
- (vii) acknowledges, accordingly, a binding obligation to work to implement without impediment any measure of agreement on future relationships in the island of Ireland whether of this character or any other which the people living in the North and South respectively may themselves freely determine and consent to;

and accordingly hereby acknowledges the legitimacy of claims to rights of self-determination made by the people of the island of Ireland, North and South. The British Government believes that the people of Britain would wish, in friendship to them, to encourage the people of the island of Ireland, North and South, to reach agreement on how they may live together in concord, harmony and partnership, showing respect for their diverse traditions and fully recognising the special links and the unique relationship which exists between the people of Britain and Ireland. The British Government will seek, consistently with the foregoing, to encourage, assist and enable such agreement over a period through a process of dialogue and cooperation based on full respect for the rights and identities of both traditions in Ireland.

LINES TO TAKE

There is no question of HMG engaging in talks or negotiations with those who use, support or threaten violence to advance their political objectives, but we would naturally look with interest at anything the Irish government would show us - not to do so would be silly, but whether we would be impressed by it would be a different matter.

Does this mean that the British Government will soon be having peace talks with Sinn Fein?

The position is perfectly plain - we will not engage in talks or negotiations with those who use, support or threaten violence to advance their political objectives.

In what circumstances would you talk to them?

There would be no question of that until the violence has been brought to an end and that has been clearly demonstrated for a sufficient period.

Has John Hume been acting as a go-between for the British Government?

Absolutely not. Hume's talks with Adams are entirely a matter for him. He has not been acting, either directly or indirectly on behalf of the British Government.

But has not HMG connived with Hume in this process. Did he give a tip-off about this initiative in Downing Street the week before last?

There has been no conniving in any respect. I have already said, and so has Patrick Mayhew, that Mr Hume's talks are a matter for him. As to a "tip-off", that is absurd. When I saw Mr Hume recently we discussed the political and security situation in Northern Ireland and he told me, as he has said publicly, that he was hopeful about progress in talks with Adams. I was interested to hear his views.

Will you accept the Hume/Adams report?

As I understand it the statement Hume and Adams issued at the weekend talked about a report being forwarded to the Irish Government. I believe that no report has yet been received.

Will you accept the report when it is forwarded to you by Mr Reynolds?

If the Taoiseach comes to me with any proposals which he feels that he and the Irish Government can support then we would of course consider them very carefully.

Hasn't this scuppered the political talks process?

There is no reason why the Hume/Adams statement should be an obstacle to political progress in Northern Ireland. We are committed, as is the Irish Government, to doing what we can to encourage the constitutional parties in Northern Ireland to build on the foundations laid in previous talks to make the progress which I think is possible.

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FROM: O J THOMAS, DES(L)
DUBL/MA/41988
Could Sinn Fein join those discussions?

PS/S
(MR)

The talks are between the British and Irish Governments and the main constitutional parties in Northern Ireland. All the participants have made it clear that Sinn Fein has excluded itself from the process by continuing to support the use of violence to further its political aims. That has not been changed by the Hume/Adams statement and on Monday the people of Belfast once again had to endure destruction at the hands of the IRA.

* Refer via Liaison(L)
+ via Liaison(L)

MEETING WITH O HUIGINN: JOINT DECLARATION INITIATIVE (J.D.I)

As will be seen from the attached note for the record, much of my meeting with O Huiginn last Friday concerned the JDI. He gave me the attached (much improved) text (JD.8). He also made it clear that the Irish government, while not resiling on the commitments to further work on overt political development, remains focussed on the JDI. This gives rise to both substantive and handling issues.

2. Matters have been greatly complicated by the Hume/Adams demarcho, which O Huiginn mentioned as an unlikely future possibility. Whatever Hume/Adams have in mind it is apparently not JDI: O Huiginn told me that while Hume had approved it, it would not be shown to the Provisionals in advance of Hume's reaction.

4. On substance, on the evidence of this text (even though it is not acceptable as it stands), we may be close to something which it would be wrong to reject. This depends on a number of factors: