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NORTHERN
IRELAND OFFICE
21 DEC 1993

SIL DIVISION

[FROM O THOMAS cc: Messrs Bell, Daniell and Beeton - 20.12.93]

DUSB/3961/10.9A
FROM: J M LEGGE
20 December 1993cc PS/PUS (B&L) - B
Mr Fell - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Steele - B
Mr Leach - B

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (B&L) - B

JOINT DECLARATION - POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE SECURITY FORCES

I mentioned briefly to the Secretary of State on Friday evening the need to undertake some "contingency planning" (a term probably best avoided with the Chief Constable) on measures which might be taken to lower the profile of the Security Forces - and ultimately possibly to reduce force levels - if the political process following the Joint Declaration develops positively. I have also discussed this with PUS and the GOC.

2. A good deal of work has already been done in the context of previous possible IRA ceasefires, and not surprisingly the Army have already been reviewing the steps which might be taken to reinforce the peace process in the light of a cessation of terrorist violence. The GOC would welcome an early discussion to review the need for further work, but he feels that this would best be done on a "top down" basis, with the Secretary of State taking the initiative. Given the Chief Constable's known sensitivities on anything that can be regarded as operational, I think this makes sense. PUS concurs.

3. I therefore recommend that, at tomorrow's Operational Briefing, the Secretary of State should propose to the Chief Constable that they should meet, together with the GOC, PUS and myself to discuss the way forward for the Security Forces in the light of reactions to the Joint Declaration. As to timing, the pace of events at the

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moment does not suggest that we need to arrange a meeting before or during the Christmas break, but I suggest that it would be prudent to plan for a date early in the New Year (subject, of course, to developments - either way - in the meantime).

MR THOMAS [1] - B

MR BELL [2] - B

MR BERTON [3]

Signed JML

Last week PUS (in passing) asked me to put together some initial thoughts on "what if peace ...?" I have tried my hand at the attached and would welcome suggestions, particularly if there are omissions, by mid-day tomorrow if possible. PUS was talking possible meeting before Christmas so I would like to get something to him by close tomorrow.

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(SIGNED)

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20 DECEMBER 1993
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