

FROM: PETER MAY
POLITICAL AFFAIRS DIVISION
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cc PS/Michael Ancram (DENI, B&L) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Mr Fell - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Legge - B
Mr Williams - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Wood (B&L) - B
Mr Maccabe - B
Mr Brooker - B
Mr Daniell - B
Mr Quinn - B

PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B

UUP: THE BATTLE FOR HEARTS AND MINDS

The UUP are clearly currently laying the foundations for a prolonged propaganda battle with the DUP over the merits of their respective approaches to political development, the Joint Declaration and working with Government. Local newspapers are reporting that Jim Molyneaux will spearhead a series of Province-wide meetings for the Party faithful, clearly designed to set out their position, assuage fears that grassroots Unionists may have, and prevent any slippage in support to the DUP.

2. In advance of those meetings, Glengall Street have issued briefing notes for all Councillors and constituency officials, setting out the assurances given by the Prime Minister about what the Joint Declaration does not contain, reflecting that as Unionists they are not satisfied with the content of the Declaration, nor with the process which led to it, but arguing that to pick and choose parts of the Declaration would play into the hands of the IRA because the onus was now on them to accept or reject it. The briefing notes also argue that the disclosure of HMG contacts with the IRA has in part led to the mistrust with which the Declaration has been received in Northern Ireland, and that the Government must

now work to regain "the trust of the Ulster people". In his New Year message, Mr Molyneaux makes clear his renewed commitment to the Ancram Round. The text of the message is as follows:

"The greater number of Ulster's citizens have firmly established their determination to remain within the United Kingdom, and thereby denied the IRA its objective.

It is the duty of the two Governments to reject the demands of terrorists and prevent them blocking the restoration of accountable democracy which is the basic right of British citizens.

In the New Year I shall take the lead in increasing the tempo of Michael Ancram's talks with Northern Ireland parties which began in September and over which the IRA can have no veto."

3. Mr Molyneaux has also gone onto the offensive in criticising the DUP. He said, on Christmas Eve, that "a Northern Ireland Select Committee was one step in the right direction and it was achieved, not by ranting, but by political persuasion by the Ulster Unionists in the House of Commons". He added that "you must make a choice between my effective, constructive leadership and the posturing of others". These are unusually harsh words from Molyneaux about the DUP. He normally lets Maginnis and others take the lead in political point scoring. It is one indication of the seriousness with which he is taking the DUP's campaign to whip up opinion against the Joint Declaration.

[signed PM]

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