

FROM: TONY BEETON
TPU
19 JANUARY 1994

cc	Mr Brooker	- B
	Mr Daniell	- B
	Mr Leach	- B
	Mr Marsh	- B
	Mr Maxwell	- B
	Mr Perry	- B
	Mrs McNally	- B

MS HARRISON - B

PRIVATE MEMBERS MOTION: 21 JANUARY 1994

Your note of 14 January 1994 commissioned briefing material for the Secretary of State to use during a debate on private members motion on Northern Ireland which is to take place on Friday 21 January 1994.

2. The Secretary of State will use the opportunity in his speech to make our bull points on the Joint Declaration, I have therefore omitted them and confined my briefing to lines to take.

3. I anticipate needing to add something on Friday morning to take account of any reactions to the Secretary of State's speech to the Trinity College Dining Club on Thursday evening.

(signed)

TONY BEETON
TALKS PLANNING UNIT
19 JANUARY 1994

RN/SIL/22700

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LINES TO TAKE

Will the British Government meet Sinn Fein to clarify or discuss the Joint Declaration?

There is no question of Representatives of the British Government holding talks with Sinn Fein in advance of a cessation of violence.

Will you clarify the Declaration?

The PM has already said that he and the Taoiseach have both made clear that the Declaration is not an invitation for re-negotiation. But the PM and I have gone to great lengths in the House and beyond it to ensure that the joint declaration is fully understood, and shall go on doing so.

But there is no backdoor into negotiation. We will not be drawn into attempts to shade the meaning of the Declaration or muddy the waters in the guise of clarification.

Mr Adams should stop shilly-shallying around. The real issue which needs clarifying is when will the IRA stop the violence.

What about reports that Irish officials will meet Sinn Fein?

The two Governments are at one: there can be no renegotiation of the Declaration. There will be no change in our policy that we shall hold no talks with Sinn Fein until violence has been brought to an end. I understand the Irish Government have confirmed that their policy also remains unchanged.

Have you had an approach from Sinn Fein/Gerry Adams seeking clarification/asking questions?

The PM received an unsigned letter on Mr Adams' headed paper, dated 7 January 1994. It is being considered and no response has yet been made.

We have received no other communications from Mr Adams or Sinn Fein.

Is there a time limit for the Provisionals to respond to the Joint Declaration - Jim Molyneux says the end of January?

We have said, and so has the Taoiseach, that it is reasonable to be patient while the Provisionals consider their decision. Patience is not too great a price to pay for peace.

The Joint Declaration has no time limit. It is a statement of principles intended to stand the test of time.

I want an end to the violence as soon as possible - today. I accept they will want to consider this very carefully. But the world will not stop still for them - Michael Ancram is meeting the parties to carry the talks process forward.

We shall judge Sinn Fein's commitment to peace against their actions, and those of the IRA. The Declaration is there and the opportunity remains. I hope that they will take it.

If they do not, and if the violence continues, what will you do then?

I think that people everywhere, including many who have given their support to Sinn Fein in Northern Ireland in the past, would find it difficult to forgive them for denying the chance of peace. They would find themselves more isolated than before, facing a people and Government as determined as they ever have been to end terrorism.

Introduce new, tougher, security policies?

The full range of our policies to combat the effects of terrorism - not security policies alone - would continue to be measured against the threat posed. We have always had, and would continue to have, policies which we judged were right in all the circumstances.

SINN FEIN DOSSIER

There is little new in this account. Much of it is a re-run of Sinn Fein's press briefing of 2 December. This is just another attempt to muddy the waters, and divert attention from the real issue - when will Sin Fein take the opportunity presented to them by the Joint Declaration to renounce violence and join the democratic process in Northern Ireland.

In my Statement to the House of Commons on 29 November I said:

"There has for some years been a means of communication by which messages could be conveyed indirectly between the Government and the IRA leadership,"

and that

.."the links have existed for some 20 years, and they have shown their value."

There has been no attempt to obscure that fact.

The Statement, and all the documents published with it, dealt with the authorised exchanges consequent upon the message from the IRA leadership in February 1993 which stated that 'the conflict is over but we need advice on how to bring it to a close'.

IRISH BROADCASTING BAN

These exchanges were not negotiations. The responses spelt out the Government's consistent, publicly stated position. There were no authorised meetings between representatives of HMG and the Provisionals.

It was acknowledged in the Statement that

"there were probably two instances over the past three or so years where unauthorised contact was made by somebody in an official position."

I also repeated to the House on 2 December that

"there is no question of there being anybody who is authorised to conduct talks or negotiations with Sinn Fein or the IRA, or with any other organisation which either perpetrates or justifies the use of violence."

It is useful to have a means of communication by which messages can be exchanged indirectly between the Government and the Provisionals. For that chain to

function its secrecy must be respected. That remains the position of the British Government.

I made clear in an answer to a PQ (written answer 9 December) that the Government

do not propose to divulge any further information about messages sent or received or to comment further, save to give the assurance that any communications from HMG will be consistent with their publicly stated policies.

We are talking about a chain of communication here. My comments relate to messages authorised by HMG to be fed in at one end of that chain. [If pressed: Distortions can occur within a chain of this nature when intermediaries are involved.]

We should not forget what is really at stake here. Sinn Fein are trying to avoid the responsibility they have to renounce violence. The JD is a fair and balanced document which promotes the interest of all sections of the community in Northern Ireland while compromising no principle.

FROM: C. HARRISON
CONSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL DIVISION
12 JANUARY 1991

IRISH BROADCASTING BAN

The Irish Government has made clear in their statement that broadcasters will continue to have to observe the requirements imposed on them under section 18 of the Broadcasting Authority Act.

Was HMG consulted about this decision?

The decision is a matter for the Irish Government. The Irish had informed us that this issue was under review.

Will HMG now withdraw its own restrictions?

The National Heritage Secretary was already reviewing the way in which the broadcasting restrictions are operating, in view of concerns which had been expressed. That review is continuing.

How can HMG now justify maintaining its restrictions?

There is substantial public support in the UK for the principle that terrorists and their apologists should not enjoy the same unfettered access to the broadcast media as those who are committed to, and respect, the standards and restraints of peaceful democracy.

Material from SPOB on Security and Mr Maxwell on economic prospects are also attached and will be included as supplementary briefing.

Briefing from SIL on the Joint Declaration is still awaited.

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