

C O N F I D E N T I A L

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DRAFT PASSAGE FOR LETTER TO FATHER FAUL

You mentioned the possibility of a permanent ceasefire on the part of the Provisionals being linked with the release of prisoners. The Government's stance on an end to violence is well-known. The Secretary of State welcomed the Christmas ceasefire. He went on to say that there could be no better news on the eve of the New Year than that the message that terrorism cannot be allowed to succeed may have taken root and that recognition had dawned that there was no future for terrorism. But it remains the case that the Government cannot engage in negotiations with any organisation which has not renounced violence. It is for the Provisionals to realise the futility of their actions; if they were to do so the Secretary of State is already on record as stating that the response would be found to be flexible and imaginative.

I think that there has been a great success and is having an ever increasing effect in bringing families away from support of terrorism. Prisoners would like more contact with their families and the more they would be to desert the cause of terrorism, get out of prison and live normal lives.

By way of example, you and Mr Steele that I think should be further extended. In addition to the parole of Christmas and Easter I believe another parole should be given in April (after Easter). This would have a shattering effect on the Provisionals and their back groups. I wish to recommend that the age for lifers for getting parole should be brought down to eleven or even ten years served. I would like to recommend an increase in the release of lifers, especially women. (e.g. Mrs Mary Free who is in Naghaberry).

I am willing to have the parole system for long-term prisoners improved, i.e. prisoners serving from 15 years to twenty years. They should be allowed parole within the last 18 months to 2-3 years depending on the length of the sentence. This is very important for their families and it would help their behaviour within the prison. Again compassionate parole should be extended to include grandparents, uncles, aunts and parents-in-law.

By the way of knowledge there is a direct link between the news of 100 lifers being released on parole and the three day cease-fire of the Provisionals at Christmas. It might be possible through pressure

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