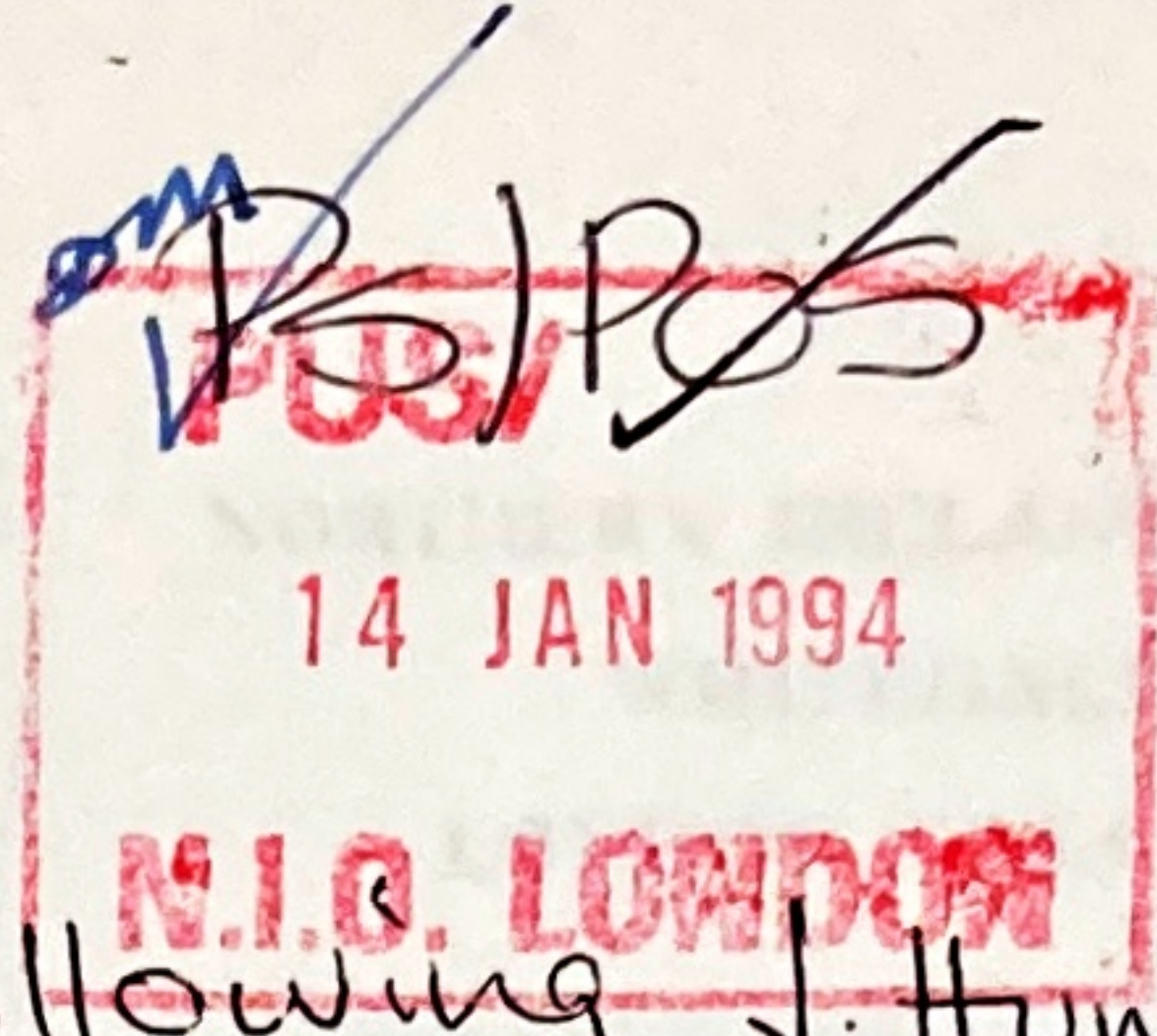


Mr Daniel

F.J.D

The final version.

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 14 JAN 1994

 N.I.O. LONDON

P.02

14-1-94 No. 10. Line following J. Hume meeting.

Mr John Hume MP called on the Prime Minister and Mr Michael Ancram MP, Minister of State, for 40 minutes.

The Prime Minister welcomed the strong support which Mr Hume had given to the Joint Declaration. The Prime Minister stressed that Northern Ireland remained at the top of his agenda. He had invited Mr Hume to call, and would keep in close contact with leaders of the constitutional parties in the period ahead.

He and Mr Hume agreed that an end to violence would bring enormous benefits. Peace would open the prospect of a large increase in investment, and therefore of more jobs and greater prosperity for all the people of Northern Ireland.

The Prime Minister and Mr Hume agreed on the importance of pressing ahead with the 3-stranded talks process. Mr Ancram met representatives of the Ulster Unionist Party yesterday, and will meet members of the Social Democratic and Labour Party on 24 January as part of his continuing exchanges.

The Prime Minister reiterated that there was no need for clarification of the Joint Declaration. It spoke for itself. What was needed was a positive response from Sinn Fein and a permanent end to violence.

Along with other Ministers, your Secretary of State saw a draft of the Declaration, including the words in question, before it issued.

...can well appreciate that this phrase might have raised a few eyebrows amongst your colleagues though Ministers have used it, I believe, at least since 1990 and possibly 1988. However, with an explanation of the context and meaning that was to be imparted, I hope that you, and they, are reassured. It is of course for you to decide when and how to review the definite implications of any contingency. Nevertheless, as you say, it is worth bearing in mind that a change in Northern Ireland's constitutional position is hardly likely to be on the agenda for the foreseeable future, a fact widely recognised and accepted by Irish Ministers in public statements.