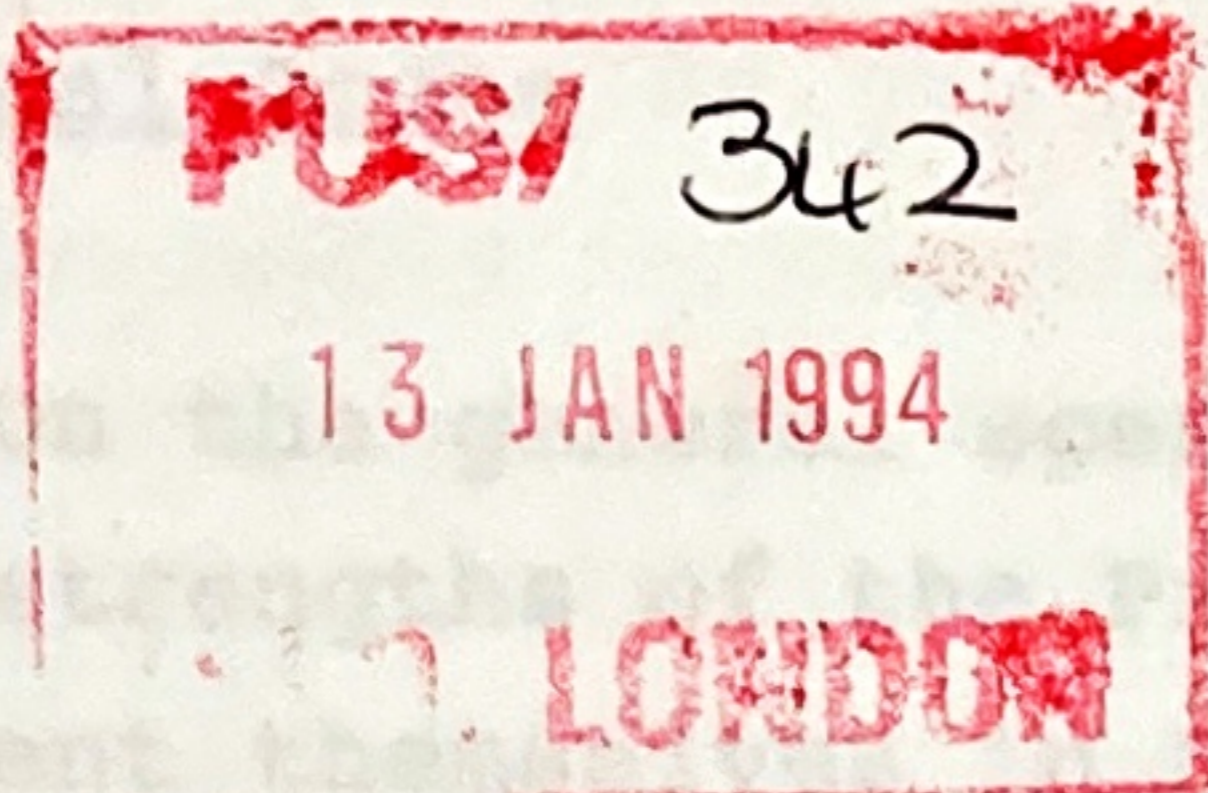


FROM Q J THOMAS, DUS(L)  
13 January 1994  
DUSL/MR/44435

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE(L&B)

- D.B./1
- cc PS/Michael Ancram(L, B&DENI)
  - Rathgael House-MUFAX
  - PS/PUS(L&B)
  - PS/Mr Fell
  - Mr Legge
  - Mr Bell
  - Mr Watkins
  - Mr Williams
  - Mr Deverell
  - Mr Brooker
  - Mr Daniell
  - Mr Maccabe
  - Mr Rickard
  - Mr Archer RID/FCO
  - HMA Dublin
  - Mr Beeton
  - Mr S Quinn
  - Mr Caine, PROL
  - Mr Wood(L&B)



**JOINT DECLARATION AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT:  
VIEWS OF MR O HUIGINN**

I had lunch with Mr O hUiginn yesterday. We discussed both the Joint Declaration and political development. In summary, he remains optimistic that the Joint Declaration has radically changed the terms of trade for the Provisional Movement: he believes there is a good chance that they will abandon violence after further vacillation but, if they do not, their support would be greatly narrowed and the basis of their campaign will more obviously be "fascistic". Though he expressed no difference of view in substance on our attitude to political development, he expects no real movement on his side until after the IGC. But in the meantime the DFA will do further preparatory work on the unfinished business on the "Joint Framework Document". The explanation for this, at which Mr O hUiginn hinted, was that the coalition partners had in effect carved up "peace" and "talks" between them. For the moment Mr Reynolds remained centre-stage with efforts to induce the Provisional Movement to give up violence; once there was full engagement with the Talks process Mr Spring and the DFA

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would take the lead. As to "deadlines" the implication was that the Irish side might be ready to assume an answer by default if the Provisional Movement had not reached the point of abandoning violence by the time of its Ard Fheis in February.

Detail

General Scene

2. On the general scene Mr O hUiginn remains hopeful. One of the strengths of the Provisional Movement was their ability to present themselves in the guise of the legatees of an unbroken Republican tradition. Even if the Joint Declaration did not induce them in the short term to abandon violence, Mr O hUiginn believed that it had disrupted that claimed continuity. The Taoiseach had succeeded in presenting the case in terms of consent in a way which appeared to be wholly supported in constitutional Nationalist circles. If the Provisional Movement fought on it would be more clear than before that the basis of their campaign was fascistic. Though there might not be a firm deadline, Mr O hUiginn believed the Irish side would be ready to draw the conclusion that the Joint Declaration had in effect been rejected if there were no move to abandon violence by the time of Sinn Fein's Ard Fheis in February. If they accepted the Joint Declaration there would obviously be a wholly new scene in which Talks would play a significant part. If there was a rejection then the Irish side agreed we should concentrate on the Talks.

Joint Declaration

3. We agreed that while there had been some differences in emphasis in statements from the British and Irish Governments it was important that they were seen to be standing together, and above all avoided any criticism of each other. Mr O hUiginn explained that the Taoiseach's speech, which I praised, had been

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intended to present a balanced picture while bringing out the Nationalist-friendly aspects of the Joint Declaration. The Taoiseach believed this was necessary to secure the right result that might also correct an initial emphasis on aspects of the Declaration which were reassuring to the Unionists which the British side had more obviously stressed.

4. Mr O hUiginn explained that the Taoiseach was anxious to do all he could to maximise the chances of success and that he remained hopeful. But equally if there were a rejection Mr O hUiginn believed that the Taoiseach would be "vengeful", describing this as one of his authentic political characteristics.

5. I explained that British Ministers had obviously been anxious to do all they could to secure Unionist acquiescence in the Joint Declaration. They were now emphasising the balanced nature of the package, as indeed had Mr Molyneux.

6. The most obvious difference in emphasis between the two sides had been on the issue of "clarification". The differences might be more apparent than real. As agreed by the Secretary of State, I gave Mr O hUiginn a copy of the letter Mr Adams has apparently sent the Prime Minister. I brought out that it was obviously not a request for clarification and that in some ways it might pose more difficulty for the Irish side than for us. I showed him the terms in which we might advise replying, though making it clear that Ministers had not yet decided whether a reply would be appropriate. It might be that we had more to gain by getting a reply on the record than by refusing to enter into correspondence. Mr O hUiginn wanted to consult others about the letter and to check whether the Taoiseach had similarly been approached. We agreed to speak on the phone today.

Talks

7. On Talks, I spoke to and reinforced the messages in the Secretary of State's letter to the Tanaiste. In doing so I made the following points:

- (i) At the public level, we would maintain, as had the Taoiseach, commitment to the Talks process. At the right moment, to be judged by Ministers on both sides in consultation, we might wish to increase the pressure on the Provisionals by indicating that the train was moving out of the station. The moment for this might not have come yet;
- (ii) meanwhile, privately, we should continue and conclude our work on the Joint Framework Document initiated last September. The train should be getting up steam even if only privately at this stage. There was no need to wait until the IGC on 28 January to carry this work forward;
- (iii) we understood the difficulties the leak of the Irish paper in the Irish Press on 29 November 1993 had occasioned. As the Secretary of State's letter had made clear we would be happy to work to secure an agreed document on the basis of the existing text. In answer to a question I explained that we were not proposing to produce a new British paper, but that we should now work hard jointly to negotiate an agreed text. We would do all we could to secure confidentiality though Mr O hUiginn acknowledged that the problem had been on his own side;

(iv) the absence of engagement from the Irish side would inhibit Michael Ancram's bilateral exchanges with the parties. Without knowing more about the Irish side's views on North/South issues in particular those discussions were inevitably driven towards an internal agenda. This was not what we wanted nor, at some level, what Mr Molyneaux might want. But if we were to continue the 3-stranded approach and to secure a return to multilateral talks there had to be some reassurance to all parties that an agreed outcome was possible. All the parties agreed to this and that the two Governments had a vital role in setting the framework.

8. In response Mr O hUiginn said that there was no disagreement of substance between the two Governments on any of this. The only differences concerned tactics and timing. He did not expect any real movement until the Secretary of State and the Tanaiste were able to discuss these matters at the IGC on 28 January. The Taoiseach was now away for 5 days. He hinted at problems of management within the coalition with the implication that the Taoiseach would for the moment dominate the scene concentrating on "peace" whereas the Talks, when the Irish side fully re-engaged, would be very much led by Mr Spring and the DFA. On the other hand, in response to my insistence that there was a real job of work to be done between the two sides in private which would take time, Mr O hUiginn said that they would be giving real thought to the Joint Framework Document. (The Irish side would "suck their pencils".) He implied that if it were clear that the Provisionals were not renouncing violence, the Irish side might not only be ready to respond but would actually themselves be anxious to make the running and to push things forward very quickly.

9. On a familiar theme Mr O hUiginn emphasised that any outcome would need to be "deep". The spirit of the Joint Declaration was the need to provide reassurance on the basis of parity of esteem: there should be security for both communities whatever the constitutional outcome, the principle of consent being the fulcrum. I asked whether, in saying we needed something deep, he was suggesting something going further than the leaked Irish paper of 29 November. Mr O hUiginn confirmed that he did not have that in mind: he acknowledged that must represent the outer limits of what the Irish side would push for.

10. On the Irish Press paper, following up what the Secretary of State had said in his letter, I said that there were clearly things in it which were unacceptable but that we had taken some reassurance that we were in the same ball-park. I mentioned that, as he would know from Liaison Group meetings, a number of aspects of the paper were clearly problematic. I mentioned in particular the proposed role of the IGC in overseeing (monitoring and guaranteeing) Strand 1 and Strand 2 Institutions. This was both politically unacceptable and bureaucratically grotesque in that one party to a bipartite structure (North/South Institutions) would in effect also be in an appallate role in relation to its operations. Nonetheless in reality it was inconceivable that the British and Irish Governments would not discuss the way Strand 1 and Strand 2 Institutions were working if they were felt to be going badly wrong once they were established.

11. In further elaboration of the theme of "going deep" Mr O hUiginn mentioned the idea of assembling a "Boyne Charter" comprising a somewhat unspecific package of measures, no doubt somewhat Nationalist tilted but reflecting "parity of esteem". I asked if he had a draft, and he said not. It was not clear to

me, and perhaps not at this stage to him, whether he was describing a possible outcome from the Talks process or something which the two Governments might produce to provide a further framework for the Talks. He clearly had in mind the political symbolism perhaps involving the signing ceremony at the River Boyne with measures subsequently being tested in referenda. I said that it was an interesting idea. I noted the paradox that the Joint Declaration had recorded the British Government as having as its principal concern the fostering of agreement among the people on the island of Ireland so that anything the two Governments did would need to be on a basis designed to secure support and approval from both traditions.

12. I asked Mr O hUiginn about the story by "Gulliver" in the Irish Press on 9 January to the effect that the Irish Government were considering side-stepping the difficult issue of reform of Articles 2 and 3 and so on by bringing forward a new Constitution. He smiled ruefully and said that a number of his colleagues were itching to re-write the Constitution. This may link up with Mr O hUiginn's hint that at the right moment the Irish side might surprise by the extent to which they themselves may wish to take the initiative to push things forward. Mr O hUiginn also stressed, in a theme we have heard before, the extent to which the Taoiseach had been working, and so far with apparent success, to effect a major change in the mind-set of Fianna Fail party.

13. Our discussion was extremely friendly emphasising on both sides the need to continue the process of working together exemplified by the Joint Declaration. Having said that, I believe it would be difficult to secure any real movement from the Irish side on the Talks process before the IGC on 28 January.

[SIGNED]

Q J THOMAS  
13 January 1994  
OAB 6447