

FROM: TONY BEETON
TALKS PLANNING UNIT
13 OCTOBER 1993

cc Michael Ancram
(via Mr Stephens) [2]
PS/PUS (L&B)* [3&4]
Mr Thomas [5]
Mr Deverell* [6]
Mr Cooke [7]
Mr Rickard* [8]
Mr Glyn-Jones+ [9]
Mr May* [10]
File [11]

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE,
(Mr Stephens) [1]

JOINT DECLARATION: DISCUSSION WITH PRIME MINISTER, 14 OCTOBER

The Secretary of State will meet the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary tomorrow to discuss the Joint Declaration Initiative. In his minute to the Prime Minister of 12 October the Secretary of State set out the background and identified the main issues for decision together with his recommendation. These were -

- a) that an amendment to the text to include the constitutional guarantee was a political imperative,
- b) that Mr Molyneaux should be briefed on Privy Council terms before we return to the Irish,
- c) that other handling issues would need careful consideration, and
- d) that the Prime Minister might wish to widen the circle of knowledge before final decisions were taken.

2. The arguments supporting these recommendations are fully developed in the Secretary of State's minute and annexes. It may be worth noting that the Foreign Secretary has been reported (UK

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MIS New York Tel No 3567, 30 September) as telling Mr Spring that he believed "the idea of a Joint Declaration was the right route and we would like it to bear fruit". There also remain a number of detailed points arising from the course of action which the Secretary of State recommends.

a) Briefing Mr Molyneaux

It is difficult to see how the aims of a discussion on Privy Council terms with Mr Molyneaux can be achieved without giving him a pretty full account of the proposed Joint Declaration, if not sight of the text itself. Arguably he should also be given a clear idea of the contents of the intelligence assessment (Annex B to the Secretary of State's minute to the Prime Minister) which establishes the basis for our judgement that the Joint Declaration can secure an end to the Provisionals' violence. The actual briefing would need to be carefully scripted: there is some awkwardness about briefing Mr Molyneaux before we go back to the Irish Government about an initiative which the Taoiseach sees as his own, and which has involved the Irish Government in indirect negotiations with the Provisionals. The attached speaking note suggests a possible way through this.

b) Other handling issues

These fall into two classes: those which have to do with managing the process within the United Kingdom system, and those which will require agreement with the Irish Government.

i) Of the former, the most immediate considerations are when security force commanders, especially the Chief Constable and the GOC, should be told what is going on;

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and whether a slightly wider group of Ministers needs to be involved in the decision-taking.

ii) With the Irish an important pending issue, if things proceed, will be to pin down the timing of the Provisionals' cessation. Our objective should be to do what we can to secure the cessation before the Declaration is made, although it is rather more likely that the Provisionals themselves see the making of the Declaration as a trigger for their cessation (albeit that their private agreement has been given in advance). Secondly, we should need to seek answers to a number of questions about the terms of reference of the proposed Convention; and, finally, secure their agreement to joint lines to take on the questions which will be asked after the Declaration has been made - not least on how much of the process is to be avowed. The Anglo-Irish Agreement provides a model for this when officials drafted an extensive package of questions and answers for the then Prime Minister and Taoiseach.

3. In addition to the speaking note for the Secretary of State to cover these points, I attach, at Annex A and B, a Background Paper and a Brief History which provide further context and could be employed as material for briefing other Ministers if the Prime Minister decides to widen the circle of knowledge. Also attached at Annex C is an expanded version of the illustrative sequence of events which was included in the Secretary of State's paper to the Prime Minister.

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4. Mr Cooke has contributed to, and is content with, the speaking note.

(SIGNED)

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