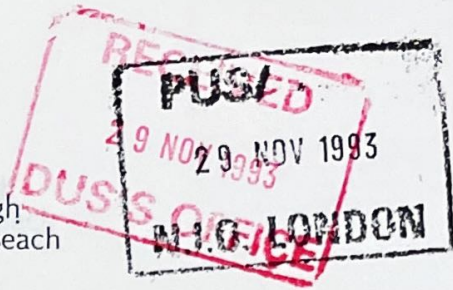




29th November, 1993

Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach



PERSONAL & SECRET

The Right Hon. Mr. John Major,
Prime Minister.

Dear John,

1. cc PS/sofs (Mr Stephens)
PS/Michael Ancram
PS/Mr Fell
Mr Thomas
Mr Cooke
Mr Rickard
Mr Beeton
Mr May

2. PUS to see

Thank you for your letter, and for sending Robin Butler across to explain your position.

The thrust of the draft document you sent me is completely altered from the one which you and my officials worked over for some months and which has the balance capable of achieving peace. I do not see any prospect of the new proposal working. At this late stage we should not be trying to start again from scratch, bringing to nought eighteen months of patient work. We will let you have our formal response after tomorrow's Cabinet meeting. As you know, the very first document sent to you in June was a proposal of the Irish Government, and in the course of discussion our officials improved and refined it to take on board the many legitimate points made by your side. We have further incorporated a lot of material given to me by Archbishop Eames, which would make the document more acceptable from the Protestant and Unionist side. We feel we have now gone as far as it is possible to go. As you know, my objective is peace, not propaganda exercises directed at the paramilitaries.



Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

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I do not accept as credible the reasons for not proceeding with the joint declaration as originally envisaged. With regard to fear of some indirect taint from Hume/Adams, the weekend's revelations surely speak for themselves.

As for the damage caused by the leak of the Irish paper, again you now have experience of revelations emanating in the first instance I understand from the Rev. William McCrea, who obviously had it from official contacts.

I have spoken this morning to a close confidant, who is in close contact with the Loyalist paramilitaries, who assures me that the language of Loyalist backlash does not represent their views and their position. This person now knows of the contents of the document, and in his judgement it would not lead to the feared backlash, when it is explained in full.

In all the circumstances I still strongly believe that the only course of action is to rise above a multiplicity of attempts from various quarters to stop the initiative in its tracks, and we should not allow ourselves to be blown off course. The public at large in these islands and around the world will applaud our efforts. The prize is big enough to overcome present difficulties.

Yours sincerely,

Taoiseach.