

Roderic Lyne Esq CMG
Private Secretary to
the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A

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JOINT DECLARATION: PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH MR MOLYNEAUX

Against the likelihood that the Prime Minister will speak to Mr Molyneaux, I attach at Annex A a speaking note for the Prime Minister to use in that meeting and two copies of the latest text of the Joint Declaration (JD15) at Annexes B and C.

The Prime Minister will wish to show Mr Molyneaux this latest text, but there is a judgement to be made about how far we should direct Mr Molyneaux's attention towards the specific amendments, both Irish and British, which are underlined in the version at Annex B. If he judges it best he could use the document at Annex C which has the underlinings removed, but which nevertheless, preserves the square brackets around the alternative versions of the explicit constitutional guarantee and around paragraphs 10 and 11.

The Prime Minister's objectives for the meeting might be

- a) to seek to maintain Mr Molyneaux's acquiescence, if not his endorsement, for the Joint Declaration while making it clear that it is the Government's intention now to make the Declaration;

- b) to point out to Mr Molyneaux the improvements that have been made in the current text - with his help;
- c) to explain that there is advantage in the Declaration being made whether or not any confidence can be placed in the hope that the Taoiseach has entertained that it will lead to a cessation of violence;
- d) to tell Mr Molyneaux that the Government intends to make clear before Christmas that we will be undertaking consultations on the footing that the Government now believes that the time for a Northern Ireland Select Committee has come and we envisage inviting the House in the New Year to agree to its establishment; and
- e) to underline the Prime Minister's continuing commitment to the Talks process as a whole (partly in order to emphasise that an "internal settlement" focusing solely on Strand One would be unlikely to receive the broad support which would be necessary for it to succeed).

The latter point is important, because Mr Molyneaux took away from his last meeting with the Prime Minister the idea that we might be prepared to move forward on Strand 1 alone now. This would be fatal to the Talks process and, because any local Assembly would not in these circumstances have nationalist support, would be likely to prove unworkable in practice.

ANNEX A

SPEAKING NOTE

Grateful for opportunity to speak to you again about the Joint Declaration. Useful meeting in Dublin on Friday, and I now believe that we have a text we can live with. Your Michael Ancram has also asked me to enclose the attached paragraph which is the result of your phone conversation with him earlier this evening.

A copy goes to John Sawers and Melanie Leech.

JONATHAN STEPHENS

The Irish are considering our preference for the new para 12 instead of the existing paras 10 and 11 which talk about the permanent cessation of violence. I believe they may go along with us on that, but that they may - probably in the event of the IRA announcing a cessation of violence - announce unilaterally that they will establish such a Convention.

Not looking for your agreement to this text. Realise that you have been as helpful so far as you have been able. Would like, however, to feel that you were able to acquiesce to our making the Joint Declaration.

My own judgement is that there is now considerable advantage in a Declaration being made whether or not any confidence can be placed in the hope that the Taoiseach has entertained that it will lead to a cessation of violence.