

CCPC
Byss



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
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Stephen Wall Esq
10 Downing Street

23rd December 1991

Dear Stephen,

PIRA "CEASEFIRE"

You told me that the Prime Minister has agreed to speak to the Taoiseach tomorrow morning, and that the Taoiseach wished to discuss the implications of the IRA suspension of hostilities over Christmas. I enclose briefing accordingly.

The Taoiseach will probably wish to reassure himself that the British Government will not dismiss the suspension out of hand, thereby signalling to PIRA that they have no alternative but to press ahead with the "armed struggle". Mr Haughey may, of course, go further and seek to exploit the suspension to argue the merits of his alternative approach to the problems of Northern Ireland. The briefing is designed to reassure the Taoiseach on the former point; while damping down any more grandiose ideas. In particular, should Mr Haughey suggest that a significant public gesture be made in response to the suspension, this should be resisted. To do otherwise would terminate our chances of advancing the current political development process with Northern Ireland's constitutional politicians and lead to considerable dismay, both in the Province, at a time when the security situation there is brittle, and more widely.

I am copying this letter and enclosure to Richard Gozney (FCO), Simon Webb (MOD) and to Sonia Phippard (Cabinet Office).

Yours aw,
Tony
A J D PAWSON