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From the Private Secretary

8 December 1993

**JOINT DECLARATION: VIEWS OF THE DEFENCE SECRETARY**

As Mr. Rifkind cannot attend the Prime Minister's meeting at 0900 on 9 December, I asked his Private Office for his comments on the papers circulated by the Cabinet Secretary on 7 December. They have relayed his views as follows:

- the Defence Secretary is broadly content with the text as now amended, though not enthusiastic;
- he has some concerns about the tone and language (not specified in detail);
- however, he is ready to accept the judgement of those who have been involved in the negotiations, and will give full support to his colleagues if they decide to proceed on this basis.

I detected a sense that Mr. Rifkind might feel that we have made too many concessions to the Irish in the negotiations. I told his Private Secretary that virtually all the concessions made since the last Ministerial discussion had come from Ireland; and that I hoped that this would emerge fairly clearly from the further papers which you will be circulating today.

I am copying this letter only to Sir Robin Butler and will ensure that the Prime Minister sees it before tomorrow's meeting.

**RODERIC LYNE**

Jonathan Stephens, Esq.,  
Northern Ireland Office.