

FROM: PUS  
3 APRIL 1991

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cc. PS/Paymaster General [2]  
PS/Minister of State [3]  
PS/Sir K Bloomfield [4]  
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Mr Deverell [8]  
Mr Thomas [9]  
Mr McNeill [10]  
Mr Petch [11]  
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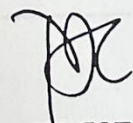
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THE PROVISIONALS AND POLITICAL MOVEMENT 23699A

I attach a paper reviewing the current state of the Provisionals and political movement. It has been prepared by Mr Marsh, in agreement with and Mr McNeill.

2. Its broad conclusion, which must be right, is that work towards a ceasefire has largely halted for the present and no immediate change is in prospect.

3. The paper reports the falling away of activity by intermediaries in recent weeks (including those sponsored by the two Archbishops) and for what it is worth Mr Sidney Bailey, the doyen of the Quaker movement, told me that this was very much the message he and his colleagues were getting from their Northern Ireland contacts.

4. Quite apart from the security dimension of the political development talks process (on which I am in touch with the Chief Constable and the GOC) we shall need to keep a close watch on any political impact on Provisional Sinn Fein. As the Secretary of State knows, my own concern is that while any entry by Sinn Fein into the talks process would be unthinkable even if a ceasefire were announced tomorrow it will be desirable to avoid slamming the door too loudly in Sinn Fein's face, looking ahead. The basic message enunciated in the Secretary of State's "British Presence" speech is still there and there could be occasion as the talks process itself unfolds for some repetition, though the timing and expression of it would have to be very carefully judged.



J A CHILCOT

3 APRIL 1991

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