

SECRET AND PERSONAL

FROM: Q J THOMAS  
DUS(L)

cc Mr Cooke [2]  
Mr Rickard\* [3]  
Mr Beeton [4]  
Mr May\* [5]  
File [6]

PS/PUS (L)

BRITISH DECLARATION

We discussed yesterday the possibility of constructing a British version of the Joint Declaration.

2. It remains a likelihood that whatever Nally produces at his meeting with Sir Robin Butler tomorrow, drawing no doubt on drafting from Archbishop Eames, Ministers will find the Joint Declaration in this form unacceptable. Equally all the signs are that the Irish side are entirely concentrating on this, and dragging their feet on the Liaison Group paper.

3. The matter is not helped by the surrounding publicity and the way in which the Taoiseach is talking it up, and the way Irish briefing suggests that there may be some link between Hume/Adams and Spring's principles and, by implication, the Taoiseach's separate and distinct peace process. (Incidentally HM Ambassador Dublin is lunching with Martin Mansergh tomorrow. I suggested that he might register that, just as one of the things which fatally wounded Hume/Adams was premature publicity, so the Taoiseach's turning of a focus on his own initiative would not enhance its prospects. I also suggested that he might enquire further about the famous Irish paper for the Liaison Group, and point out that British Ministers would find it increasingly hard to understand the lack of an Irish response given the public remarks Irish Ministers were making about the need for British Ministers to show imagination etc.)

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4. The attached draft is based on the alternative version of paragraph 4 which was prepared in the context of the Joint Declaration and which the Prime Minister gave provisional approval to. I have adapted it somewhat, partly to take account of language which Ministers subsequently approved in the Irish version of the Joint Declaration (before Mr Molyneaux vetoed it) and also to reflect Mr Spring's first and fifth principles, and what is said about consent in the Brussels Joint Statement, thereby working in Articles 2 and 3.

5. All in all this amounts to quite a forward position, though the whole nationalist surround of the Irish Joint Declaration has been muted. It may even go further than would be necessary to interest the Provisionals. One of the difficulties about proceeding unilaterally is that there is no way in which we can test out a text on the Provisionals, while remaining faithful to our principle to undertake no negotiations. By contrast the JDI approach enables the Irish side to take the strain of exploring access to all language without our getting our hands dirty.

6. If we knew that there was no alternative route to peace (and that may become clear quite soon), we might be seeking to interest Ministers in the possibility of showing a text of this kind to the Irish side. But the problem is the way that Irish Ministers have now talked up a separate 8 distinct peace process and, by mentioning peace by Christmas, have focused attention on the next meeting between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach.

7. The attached draft has some duplication etc but I have erred on the side of including a variety of formulations to serve as a quarry. If it becomes of serious interest we can slim it down.

(SIGNED)

Q J THOMAS  
DUS(L)  
9 NOVEMBER 1993