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PUS/703
27 JUN 1994
NIO LONDON

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

24 June 1994

Dear Roderic

SINN FEIN "PEACE COMMISSION" REPORT

I attach the 50 pages or so of this report. On a very quick skim, the key points that stand out are:

- this does not appear to be Sinn Fein's response to the Declaration: the report is described as 'one of the elements which is helping to inform our response';
- the report is divided into three main sections: an historical account of Sinn Fein's peace strategy in the form of a compilation of statements, articles and speeches already on the record; a commentary on (selective) quotes from the various statements made by the Irish and British Governments since 15 December; and an account of the submissions made to the Commission;
- the introduction summarises views received both in qualified support of the Declaration and critical of it. It reports a number of submissions (up to 48% on some interpretations) calling in various ways for the IRA to end violence. It concludes with a list of issues 'which we feel are of interest and need further debate and discussion';

THE SUNDAY INDEPENDENT REPORT

Line to take

- What the people of Ireland, North and South, unionist nationalist, want to hear from Sinn Fein is that IRA violence be at an end, and for good. This report does not tell them that.
- the submissions presented to Sinn Fein reflect a wide range of opinions, although obviously they are not a balanced cross-section. A number of respectable individuals and groups have made submissions.

I attach a line to take. We should continue to emphasise that only a permanent end to violence will do, that the two Governments stand together behind the Declaration and that nothing is waiting on Sinn Fein.

At the same time, we should not be instantly dismissive of the report. It can be seen as part of a 'softening up' process to prepare the rank and file for a policy shift. The attached line says that we will study the views expressed to Sinn Fein carefully, which can be defended on the grounds that some perfectly respectable groups have contributed views.

A copy goes to John Sawers and Melanie Leech.

SIGNED

JONATHAN STEPHENS

SINN FEIN PEACE COMMISSION REPORT

Lines to Take

- What the people of Ireland, North and South, unionist nationalist, want to hear from Sinn Fein is that IRA violence is at an end, and for good. This report does not tell them that.
- We will examine the views expressed to Sinn Fein, but as Dick Spring said in Corfu: "The key to peace prospects is a permanent cessation of violence." There is no daylight between the two Governments on this.
- The two Governments, with the main constitutional parties, will continue to pursue a comprehensive settlement through the Talks process. No-one has a veto on this process. Sinn Fein can join it - if there is an end to the IRA violence for good, and an end to its justification. They can join in or stay out, but they cannot stop it.
- Both Governments stand by the Declaration. It is a statement of principles: for democracy and consent; against violence and coercion. We will continue to build on the principles in the Declaration.

Up to 50% of submissions call for end to violence?

- The fact is that the overwhelming number of people in Ireland, North and South want an end to violence now - more than 90% of those polled in February for the Sunday Independent and the BBC.

hcc:

PS/Secretary of State (L&B)
PS/Michael Ancram (L&B)
PS/Sir John Wheeler (L&B)
PS/PUS (L&B)
PS/Mr Fell
Mr Legge
Mr Thomas
Mr Bell
Mr Watkins
Mr Williams
Mr Wood (L&B)
Mr Brooker
Mr Daniell
Mr Maccabe
Mr Caine
HMA Dublin
Mr Archer, RID

The following is the text of a speech by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Sir John Wheeler, G.C., at the meeting of the Foreign Policy Committee, in the House of Commons, on Tuesday, 22 April 1954.

*Reference to your letter
dated 14.4.54 to the
(see L. 2. 2. 2. 2.)
R.H.*