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FROM: TONY BEETON
TALKS PLANNING UNIT
16 DECEMBER 1993

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N.I.O. LONDON

- cc PS/Michael Ancram (L,B&DENI) - B&M
- PS/Sir J Wheeler (L,B&DFP) - B&M
- PS/Mr Atkins (L,DOE&DED) - B&M
- PS/Lord Arran (L&B) - B&M
- PS/PBS (L&B) - B
- PS/Mr Fell - B
- Mr Thomas - B
- Mr Legge - B
- Mr Bell - B
- Mr Deverell - B
- Mr Lyon - B
- Mr Steele - B
- Mr Watkins - B
- Mr Williams - B
- Mr Wood (L&B) - B
- Mr Brooker - B
- Mr Cooke - B
- Mr Daniell - B
- Mr Dodds - B
- Mr Maccabe - B
- Mr Rickard - B
- Mr May - B
- Mr Brearley - B
- HMA Dublin - B
- Mr Archer, RID - B

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (L&B) - B

JOINT DECLARATION - FOLLOW-UP LINES TO TAKE FOR PMQs ETC

I attach a revised set of lines to take for the follow-up to the Joint Declaration. These are based on the material supplied earlier by Roderic Lyne (not to all). In the first instance it is a design for use at Prime Minister's Questions, but they should be regarded as the script or quarry for all briefing and comments today.

(signed)

TONY BEETON
TALKS PLANNING UNIT
16 DECEMBER 1993
OAB EXT 6564

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NORTHERN IRELAND BRIEFING LINES 16 DECEMBER
JOINT DECLARATION

Basic line to take

- The co-operation of the Irish Government will be very important. The Joint Declaration set out a clear challenge to the Provisionals. They should give up violence for good, and show that they have done so. The way would then be open for them to enter the political arena as a democratic party under the law.
- This challenge has had strong and wide support from the House of Commons, Church and Community leaders, and from people across the United Kingdom and internationally [President Clinton]. It is now up to the Provisionals to decide. They will never have a better opportunity to opt for a peaceful future. All those who are sympathetic to the Nationalist tradition should urge them to take the democratic path, and help to build a better life for all the people of Northern Ireland.
- The Joint Declaration clearly and explicitly protects the democratic rights of unionists. It does not weaken or undermine the union. It reaffirms the Government's constitutional guarantee [that the status of Northern Ireland will not be changed without the consent of the majority of its people]. It takes no steps in the direction of joint authority of the British and Irish governments over Northern Ireland. Nor does the British Government, in the Joint Declaration, subscribe to the "value" of a united Ireland. The British Government's position on this has not changed. We shall respect the wishes of a greater number of the people of Northern Ireland. We shall not seek to persuade them to accept a united Ireland.

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- The essence of the Joint Declaration is that it offers fair treatment to both sides of the community in Northern Ireland, with the support and encouragement of both the British and Irish Governments.

- The co-operation of the Irish Government will be very important in helping to bring peace to Northern Ireland. But the Joint Declaration does not give the Irish Government a new role in the internal affairs of Northern Ireland. Although, as the Anglo-Irish Agreement recognises, they do have a legitimate interest.

Will PIRA be allowed to keep their weapons? Will there be an amnesty?

- There is no question of "allowing" people in any part of the United Kingdom to hold weapons illegally, or in other ways of departing from what is clearly laid down in law.

- The provisionals must commit themselves to a permanent cessation of violence. This is not negotiable, and we are not talking of a temporary or conditional ceasefire.

- A permanent end to violence means that those concerned must accept that they have no need for weapons, but will live peacefully under the law and will pursue their aims exclusively by democratic means.

- The law will continue to be applied. Those who have committed crimes will be subject to it. So will those who are found illegally in possession of weapons.

- There are precedents in the United Kingdom for 'amnesties' to allow people to surrender illegally held weapons. But we have no plans to introduce one in Northern Ireland now.

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- Our 5 November message to the Provisionals [published in the House on 29 November] spelt out to the Provisionals that one of the purposes of exploratory dialogue with them would be to examine the practical consequences of the ending of violence.

Amnesty for prisoners?

- There are no political prisoners in the United Kingdom. People convicted of crimes will continue to be sentenced by the courts.

- There will be no secret deals or bargains with terrorists as a price for their evading violence.

How will the IRA's decision be announced and judged?

- We are waiting for one straightforward act from the Provisionals. That is implementation of a decision to end violence for good, and to take up our proposal that they should opt for a peaceful democratic future.

- It is not for us to say how the Provisionals should announce their decision. The responsibility for implementing it will rest with them. But we are confident that it will be clear to us whether or not a decision is being carried out. A wide range of information will enable us to form that judgement.

- The proper basis for verification is simple. The violence must stop. It must stop completely and it must be seen to have stopped.

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Further meeting between John Hume and Gerry Adams?

- This is a matter for Mr Hume. There is nothing in the Joint Declaration to be negotiated with the Provisionals. They have seen the position clearly set out in the Joint Declaration. They must now give a clear answer to the question: will they bring an end to violence? This is not a matter for negotiation.
- In the House of Commons on 15 December, Mr Hume expressed his strong support for the Joint Declaration. If he chooses to see Adams, we hope that he will put only one point to him: will you accept the Joint Declaration and give up violence for good, for you will never have a better opportunity?

What will the "preliminary exploratory talks" with Sinn Fein discuss?

- Before these happen Sinn Fein must renounce violence, and demonstrate that over a period of three months. The preliminary talks would not be talks on Northern Ireland's political future. They would be talks about how, building on the confidence established by a cessation of violence, Sinn Fein could enter the political process. But we shall not determine the precise agenda for those talks until a cessation of violence is clearly in effect.
- The 5 November document set out the purposes for exploratory dialogue. These were:

- 1) to explore the basis on which Sinn Fein would come to be admitted to inclusive political talks process to which the British Government is committed but without anticipating the negotiations within that process;

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2) to exchange views on how Sinn Fein would be able over a period to play the same part as the current constitutional parties in the public life of Northern Ireland;

3) to examine the practical consequences of the ending of violence.

Self-determination: must there be simultaneous referendums? What does "concurrently" mean? Does this give the Republic of Ireland a say in how and when Northern Ireland's future is determined?

- The future of Northern Ireland is for the people of Northern Ireland to determine. The Joint Declaration does not specify how they should do so. It accepts that there should be concurrent processes in the North and South of Ireland respectively. That means that the processes would run in parallel. They would not have to be simultaneous

- [If presented] There is nothing in the Joint Declaration to prevent an exercise in self-determination being conducted in Northern Ireland at any time. Nor does the Declaration say that self-determination must be by referendum, though a referendum would be a likely way of achieving this.

Will the means of self-determination be a matter for discussion in the three stranded Talks?

There are many substantive issues for the Talks process including, naturally, how the acceptability of its outcome is determined.

(If pressed) What do you see as the likely outcome of the process?

Northern Ireland will remain part of the United Kingdom while that is the majority wish. There would be new arrangements for

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Statement by Dick Spring TD

Government in Northern Ireland which were widely acceptable to all the people there, as well as new arrangements for developing co-operation between Northern Ireland and the Republic and building on the close links and common interests between the two Governments.

What will be the next steps in the three stranded Talks process?

We shall be seeking to intensify work on the Talks process. Michael Ancram will continue his bilateral contact with the parties and the Governments will continue their work on a framework for a lasting settlement. The Downing Street Declaration is an important contribution to that. It reinforces and complements other work that is going on between the two Governments on Strand 3 issues and clarifies out mutual understandings of the constitutional issues involved. As I have already said the Government remains ready to bring forward proposals of its own to give focus and direction to the Talks process if that would be helpful.

The first step towards building up the nation's wounds, and the first step towards a just and lasting peace. Since I began by quoting President Abraham Lincoln, it is perhaps fitting that I should continue by referring to a statement issued within the last hour by President Clinton in which he said:

"In this season of hope, the call for peace on earth has a special resonance in Northern Ireland. No side which claims a legitimate stake in the future of Northern Ireland can justify continued violence on any grounds. I call on those who would still seek to embrace or justify violence to heed the words of Paul and cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light."

What has happened today has a simple, yet profound significance. The British Government has declared, in a way that puts it beyond all doubt, that they are not the enemy of Irish national aspirations. The Irish Government has declared that we are not the enemy of Gibraltar rights and aspirations.

These two simple statements can mean one thing and one thing only. Whatever justification may have been claimed for an armed struggle which had as its goal to drive Britain out of Ireland no longer exists.

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