

PREM 49/2070

CONFIDENTIAL

10 DOWNING STREET

THIS FILE MUST NOT GO OUTSIDE 10 DOWNING ST

FILE TITLE: SITUATION		SERIES: IRELAND
PART BEGINS: 14 February 2001		PART: 90
PART ENDS: 01 MARCH 2001	CAB ONE:	

LABOUR ADMINISTRATION

PART 91 CLOSED ON 1/3/01

~~PREM 49/2070~~

PART
CLOSED

DATE CLOSED	1/3/001
--------------------	---------

Series : IRELAND

Title : Situation

Part : 90

Date	From	To	Subject	Class	Secret
14/02/2001		Ch.Staff	M McDowell note: US/Ireland	U	0
14/02/2001	SS/NIO	PM	Tactics for Today	C	0
14/02/2001		Cab Off	Thales - Announcement in Northern Ireland	U	
15/02/2001	LP	PM	Northern Ireland District Council Elections	C	0
15/02/2001	Ch.Staff	NIO	Northern Ireland: Sinn Fein	C	0
16/02/2001	SS/NIO	PM	Northern Ireland : next steps	C	0
16/02/2001			Northern Ireland - Latest Texts for PM meeting	U	0
16/02/2001	Ch.Staff	NIO	(T) Northern Ireland : Conversation with the PM and the Taoiseach	C	0
19/02/2001	SS/NIO	PM	Northern Ireland: Next Steps	C	0
19/02/2001	NIO	NIO	Discussion with Brian Cowen, 19 Feb	C	0
19/02/2001	First Min/NI Assembl	PM	Negotiations with Sinn Fein and the SDLP	U	0
19/02/2001	HS	SS/NIO	"On the Runs" : Pre-conviction pardons	C	0
19/02/2001	NIO	NIO	Today's 6:00pm Meeting with SDLP	C	0
20/02/2001	NIO	Ch.Staff	Prime Ministers Phone Conversation with the Taoiseach	C	0
20/02/2001	SS/NIO	PM	Northern Ireland: The Next Few Days	C	0
20/02/2001	NIO	NIO	Conversation with Daithi O'Ceallaigh	C	0
20/02/2001	NIO	NIO	PM's Meeting with Trimble and Hume/Mallon	C	0
21/02/2001	Ireland/HME	Ireland/HMA	Taoiseach's Comments on Peace Process	R	0
21/02/2001	NI/Assembly	PM	UUP views on peace process	U	0
21/02/2001	SS/NIO	PM	Overnight thoughts from Dublin	C	0
21/02/2001	SINN FEIN	PM	Bloody Sunday - Saville Inquiry	U	0
21/02/2001	NIO	Ch.Staff	Northern Ireland: PM's Meetings this Morning	U	0
22/02/2001	NIO	NIO	PM's Meeting with David Trimble, 21 February	C	0
22/02/2001	NIO	Ch.Staff	Northern Ireland: General and District Council Elections	U	0
23/02/2001	NIO	NIO	Next steps	C	0
23/02/2001	NIO	NIO	Developments overnight	C	0
23/02/2001	PM	SINN FEIN	Murder of Francisco Notarantonio	U	0
23/02/2001	NIO	NIO	Meeting with Brian Cowen, 22 February	C	0
24/02/2001	FA/PS	FCO	(M) PM's talks with President Bush, Camp David, 23 Feb: Northern Ir	C	0
26/02/2001				C	0
26/02/2001	NIO	NIO	Meeting with David Trimble - 23 February	C	0
26/02/2001	NIO	FA/APS	Current state of NI peace process - Letter from Billy Armstrong, UUP	U	0
26/02/2001	NIO	NIO	Conversation with Daithi O'Ceallaigh	C	0
26/02/2001	NIO	NIO	Conversations with Daithi O'Ceallaigh over the weekend	C	0
26/02/2001	NIO	Ch.Staff	State of opinion within the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)	U	0
27/02/2001	SS/NIO	PM	Drumcree - Meeting with Trimble	C	0
27/02/2001	NIO	NIO	Conversation with Daithi O'Ceallaigh: Further delay in discussions be	C	0
27/02/2001	NIO	NIO	Conversation with Sir Reg Empey	C	0
27/02/2001	Ch.Staff	NIO	Northern Ireland Oral PQ's Wednesday 28 February	U	0
27/02/2001	NIO	FA/APS	Northern Ireland Oral PQ's Wednesday 28 February	U	0
28/02/2001	SS/NIO	PM	Meeting with the Taoiseach Tonight	C	0
28/02/2001	FA/PS	NIO	(M) Northern Ireland: PM's Dinner with the Taoiseach	C	0
28/02/2001	Ireland/HME	Ireland/HMA	Taoiseach's Questions	R	0
01/03/2001	Ch.Staff	PM	Northern Ireland - Dermot Gallagher will meet Adams tomorrow even	C	0
01/03/2001	Teahon	Ch.Staff	From Dermot Gallagher, Possible Package (based on May agreemen	U	0



Department of the Taoiseach
Roinn an Taoisigh

76
—

To/ Chuig: Jonathan Powell

From / Ó: Dermot Gallagher
Secretary General

Confidential

Date/ Déta: 1/3

Subject / Abháir: _____

Pages/ Líon lómán na leathaneach/: 2 including this

Message / Teachtaireacht :

Many thanks for your suggested amendments, which improve the text and which I have taken on board.

I have added a sentence on demilitarisation, taken from the May text. However, as it will form part of the statement by the two Governments, it will need some adjustment (ie to relate it to re-engagement). I also left out the ²⁰⁰¹ June timeframe, which was in the May text, and substituted the vaguer "in the period ahead". You might have a better formula!

Please Note: Privileged / Confidential information may be contained in this facsimile and is intended only for the use of the addressee. If you are not the addressee, or the person responsible for delivering it to the addressee, you may not copy or deliver this to anyone else. If you receive this facsimile by mistake please notify us immediately by telephone. Thank you.

Nótaí: Is féidir eolas príbhleideach / rúnda a bheith sa bhfaics seo, atá dírithe ar an seolaf amháin. Muna tú an seolaf, nó an duine froagrach as an bhfaics a cur chuig an seolaf, níl sé ceadaithe é a chóipeáil nó a thabhairt d'éinne eile. Má fhaigheann tú an faics seo tré thimposte cuir scéala teileafóin láithreach chulgáinn. Go raibh maith agat.

Phone / Telefón : 6194092 / 6194105
Fax / Facsimhír : 6621019
E-mail : dermot_gallagher@taoiseach.irlgov.ie

Secret

Possible Package (based on May agreement)

Putting arms beyond use

IRA to re-engage actively with IICD with a view to agreeing an acceptable scheme for putting arms beyond use. IICD to issue positive reports on progress on resolving the issue of arms ^{within a few weeks,}

Inclusivity

David Trimble to respond positively to call by two Governments on the operation of the North-South Council.

Policing

Two Governments announce that they will be working intensively to achieve broad agreement on the new policing arrangements, in keeping with Patten, at the earliest possible date.

OTRs

[This issue to be addressed ~~on basis of approach already agreed.~~

Demilitarisation

^(to be agreed)
[Initial measures ^(to be agreed) to be implemented within weeks. ~~Consistent with the level of threat, this would be followed by rolling programme.]~~

From: Jonathan Powell
Date: 1 March 2001

PRIME MINISTER (by fax)

cc: John Sawers
Bill Jeffrey

NORTHERN IRELAND

Dermot Gallagher will meet Adams tomorrow evening in Dublin. He will put to him the attached package plus the implementation committee if they still want that. He will make it clear we are heading towards a round table meeting on Tuesday with the aim of achieving the mini deal. wants to talk to you tomorrow evening.

We saw the two Davids today and John Reid is seeing David Trimble tomorrow (I attach Bill's note). In essence any deal is better than none for Trimble. He is less worried about a rebellion in the UUP now than about electoral disaster. They claim to have been told by Seamus Mallon that the SDLP can now sign up for policing, and there is other collateral for that belief. John will try to establish whether that is true in his meetings in Belfast tomorrow.

Tuesday is our last chance before the election to get an agreement on NI. If we fail we need a fallback plan to get Trimble through the elections - putting the agreement into review etc.

VP

JONATHAN POWELL

CLOSED UNDER THE
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
ACT 2000

CLOSED UNDER THE
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
ACT 2000

REM 49/2070/1

Nota
date 9/13/01

Secret

Possible Package (based on May agreement)

Putting arms beyond use

IRA to re-engage actively with IICD with a view to agreeing an acceptable scheme for putting arms beyond use. IICD to issue positive reports on progress on resolving the issue of arms within a few weeks.

Inclusivity

David Trimble to respond positively to call by two Governments on the operation of the North-South Council.

Policing

Two Governments announce that they will be working intensively to achieve broad agreement on the new policing arrangements, in keeping with Patten, at the earliest possible date.

OTRs

This issue to be addressed.

Demilitarisation

Initial measures, to be agreed, to be implemented within weeks. [In addition, the British Government would, subject to its assessment of the level of threat at the time, on which it will continue to consult regularly with the Irish Government, take further substantial normalisation measures in the period ahead.]

Secret

Context for package on previous page**1. Decommissioning**

(a) The two Governments, as part of a statement announcing overall agreement on a package, would call on all paramilitary groups to engage fully and actively with the IICD. They would state that this will, as a first step, make it possible for the IICD to consider whether, as envisaged in their May statement, "there are any further proposals for decommissioning schemes which offer the Commission greater scope to proceed in more effective and satisfactory ways with the discharge of its basic mandate". The Governments would further state that they expect an early report from the IICD on this matter, with a view to further rapid progress being made on the issue of arms thereafter.

(to agree how arms will be put beyond use in future use of.)

(b) A responding and strong IRA statement would announce that organisation's active re-engagement with the IICD in order ~~to take forward~~ the commitment made by the IRA leadership on 6 May 2000 "to resolving the issue of arms" in a way that will "ensure maximum public confidence".

(c) The IICD to issue two positive reports in fairly quick succession ^{*within a few weeks*} (a) on IRA re-engagement with a view to agreeing a scheme for putting arms beyond use and (b) ~~on the progress being achieved in the ongoing dialogue with that organisation.~~ *reporting that substantial progress has been made and that they expect agreement to be reached before long.*

2. Lifting of Ban on Sinn Féin

(a) The two Governments in their statement would, as well as calling for quality re-engagement by the IRA with the IICD, request that the current restrictions on the operation of the North-South Ministerial Council be lifted.

(b) David Trimble, in a statement, would respond positively to the Governments' call.

CONFIDENTIAL and PERSONAL

FROM: BILL JEFFREY
Political Director
1 March 2001
BJ/MR/730L)

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE(L&B)

cc PS/Mr Ingram(L&B)
PS/Mr Howarth(L&B)
Mr Pilling
Mr Watkins
Mr Fittall
Mr Kelly
Ms Bharucha
Mr Powell No.10-FAX *ETS 91r*

MEETING WITH DAVID CAMPBELL AND DAVID LAVERY

Jonathan Powell and I met David Campbell and David Lavery for about an hour earlier today. We gave them a pretty frank account of yesterday's meeting with the Taoiseach, including the likely best outcome on decommissioning.

2. Campbell reacted non-committally. He would want to talk things over with Trimble. He did, however, say that in Trimble's view the real crunch point was June, when the two Governments had indicated they expected the Agreement to be fully implemented. Unionists would not be willing to tolerate a further extension of de Chastelain's mandate beyond then if there had been no actual decommissioning. Trimble also had a real problem with our handling of Sinn Féin. Although the Prime Minister had talked of Sinn Féin bearing a heavy price if they did not deliver, it seemed to be all carrots and no stick.

3. We asked how Trimble proposed to handle the AGM on 24 March. Was there a chance that, if nothing happened on decommissioning, Donaldson and his friends would, even at this late stage, try to use the event to get UUP Ministers out of the Executive? Campbell said that he was not sure how Trimble would handle the event itself. He would be surprised if there was any significant challenge ahead of the Election. The crunch would, as he had said, come later. A lot would depend on how the Election went. Whatever happened, the UUP were likely to lose West Tyrone, East Londonderry and South Belfast, which might at least remove some of the thorns

in Trimble's side. But there were other seats to which they could aspire, including McCartney's.

4. On policing, we explained where we thought the Irish Government were coming from. Campbell said that they were hearing that the SDLP were ready to sign up. Mallon had told Reg Empey as much. It would help Trimble a great deal if we could get the SDLP to support policing and put pressure on Sinn Féin.

5. We asked about local elections. I said that some lower level UUP contacts were telling us that it would do them no good to synchronise the local elections and the General Election, since people would be confused by the two systems. We were also hearing from Chief Executives that it would create great problems in practice. Was it really important to Trimble? Campbell said it was. He discounted the signals we had had from others. Although Trimble had not mentioned the matter to the Prime Minister recently, it remained high on his priorities.

6. Campbell and Lavery agreed to brief Trimble in advance of the meeting which he is due to have with the Secretary of State tomorrow, for which I will provide a separate brief.

Comment

7. The strong – and interesting – signal from this discussion is that, rightly or wrongly, those close to Trimble believe that the party is now under control until after the Election, but that the crunch will come in June. Whether this analysis holds if Trimble has to withdraw his North/South sanction for an imperfect benefit is less clear. My guess is that Trimble's own strategy may be to get through the Election in as good a shape as he can, and only then – in order to stave off the inevitable challenge to his leadership – to harden his position distinctly, using the June "deadline" as his justification.

[Signed]

BILL JEFFREY
11 Millbank ☎ 6447

- 2 -

CONFIDENTIAL and PERSONAL

BJ/MR/730(L)-1.3.2001

CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT
MASTER



file

Filed 07/2

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

28 February 2001

Dear Paul,

**NORTHERN IRELAND: THE PRIME MINISTER'S DINNER WITH THE
TAOISEACH**

The Prime Minister gave the Taoiseach dinner this evening at Downing Street. The usual Irish contingent were present – Gallagher, Mansergh, O’Cealliaith, Dalton, Barrington. Jonathan Powell, Bill Jeffrey and I were also there.

The Irish side reported gloomily on their recent exchanges with Sinn Fein. Adams’ approach seemed to be that re-engaging with de Chastelain might just be achievable as long as there was no deadline for agreeing modalities. Trimble had told the Taoiseach that re-engagement without progress in resolving the weapons issue was no use to him. But it would be useful to have de Chastelain report that a process was in train on modalities.

The Prime Minister expressed concern about Trimble’s prospects in any election against the DUP. He faced being wiped out. Given that the big deal we had been going for now seemed unachievable, a mini-deal comprising changes on Patten agreed with the SDLP, with Sinn Fein agreeing not to cause trouble over them, might be enough. He drew a parallel with the Sinn Fein position when the Good Friday Agreement was signed – not supportive but not hostile either. But such a minideal would also have to include re-engagement with de Chastelain, even if there were no early decommissioning.

The Taoiseach agreed that a big deal was not achievable. Nor was it possible to drag negotiations out until the other side of the marching season. The mini-deal was the only possible outcome and the time available to agree it was very limited.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL



The Prime Minister's main concern was that Sinn Fein might agree to a mini-deal on their side but would demand in return what we had been prepared to offer for a big deal. The Taoiseach made clear that he was not asking for that. But Tim Dalton was equally clear that that was what Sinn Fein would demand. All agreed that unless Sinn Fein saw circumstances in which they could be isolated then they would exercise a veto, and that they should not be given that opportunity. It was essential that they be put under pressure and forced to face the prospect of the SDLP, the Irish Government and the Catholic Church signing up to a deal without them taking part. The Irish side warned of the risks of doing that, including the possibility that the whole policing package might be lost forever if policing became an election issue between Sinn Fein and the SDLP. The Prime Minister concluded that what he wanted was pressure on Sinn Fein; the goal was a deal in which they stayed a few steps behind the SDLP and did not sign up but nor did they criticise.

After lengthy discussion of the prospects, with the Irish side arguing hard for the whole policing issue to be put back to the other side of the election and the Prime Minister setting out the risks of that for Trimble, it was agreed that:

- (i) the Taoiseach should talk to the SDLP in the next 24 hours to determine whether they would be prepared to buy into a policing deal now along the lines the Prime Minister sketched out;
- (ii) the Prime Minister would talk to Trimble on what his preferences were including on whether he would be willing to put back a policing deal until after the election and settle for a "mini-deal" consisting of Sinn Fein re-engaging with de Chastelain in return for limited normalisation.

Martin Mansergh said the SDLP were considering their options on this and there were arguments both ways. He did not think the Irish Government could call the issue on their behalf but they would support the SDLP whichever way they jumped. The Taoiseach confirmed that, adding that Mallon was as strong as anyone on the need to avoid giving Sinn Fein a veto.

The Prime Minister said it was important to make sure that Adams and McGuinness were forced to go back to their supporters and show them that they were paying a price for turning down the deal that had been on offer. He believed that, with pressure, Sinn Fein could be brought to a view that they should acquiesce in a policing deal. He later conceded that it might be possible

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL



to leave policing until after the election, but only on the basis that Sinn Fein had to recognise that we would return to the issue straight after any Spring election (on which he emphasised that no decisions had been made). He confirmed to the Irish that he had no interest at all in pulling out of the institutions: nor did he think that Trimble would want to do that either. Trimble was in philosophical mode, recognising that he was going down but not minded to pull out of the institutions in an effort to save himself.

The Taoiseach brought in the demilitarisation issue: what would HMG be able to do in return for a mini-deal with Sinn Fein? He knew we could not answer that yet until we knew what Sinn Fein were willing to offer and he had told Adams as much. He added that the increased level of army patrolling in border areas was proving a sure vote winner for Sinn Fein.

The Taoiseach also raised the SDLP demand for enquiries into the Hamill, Finucane and Nelson cases. Agreement to that might be enough to bring the SDLP on board on policing: it was worth a try. Bill Jeffrey said we had offered warmer words on the issue without making a firm commitment. The Prime Minister said he would be mad to agree to this, given his experience with other public inquiries. But he would reflect.

In conclusion, the Prime Minister said that he would want to put the options to Trimble. It was a very high priority not to lose him in any forthcoming election because we (and Sinn Fein) would lose our peace process interlocutor on the Unionist side. But he was concerned Trimble might prove willing to postpone policing as the concessions already offered by the British Government would be very hard for Trimble to sell to his own party. But in the the Prime Minister's view, Trimble was making a mistake and might well not survive an election with no progress beforehand. The Taoiseach said that whatever happened now, the policing issue had to be resolved before the first new Catholic recruits joined the force on 1 September. We all knew, he commented darkly, what would happen if policing were not resolved by then. Bill Jeffrey cautioned that even September was too late, as we would not have time to set up a new Policing Board, agree on a new badge and produce them by then.

On timescales the Taoiseach said he would be leaving for Japan next Thursday, 8 March, and would not be back until after St Patrick's Day. The Prime Minister said we should aim for a mini-deal before the Taoiseach left, though the options for a roundtable with the parties were limited because of his

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL



commitment with the budget on 7 March, and the environment speech on 6 March. The best day for a round table, if one were called, might be next Monday.

Comment

All pretty gloomy.

But the Prime Minister is determined to have one more push for a minideal next week.

I am copying this letter to Richard Abel (Cabinet Office), Ivor Roberts (Dublin), Christopher Meyer (Washington) and Stephen Lander (Security Service).

Yours ever,

JOHN SAWERS

CLOSED UNDER THE
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
ACT 2000

Paul Priestly
NIO

CONFIDENTIAL



NOTED UNDER THE
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
ACT 2001

Top: COS

S JAPS
FAEARS OR
ADDRESS
BLP

PRIME MINISTER

MEETING WITH THE TAOISEACH TONIGHT

Where we are now

Last weekend, we sent the attached note to the Irish with the elements of a limited deal. Brian Cowen met Martin McGuinness on Saturday, and seems to have given him a strong message. Trimble was in serious trouble. The current Sinn Féin approach would lead to chaos. They were in effect now being offered Patten. They should offer "enhanced re-engagement" with de Chastelain. If the nationalist consensus broke up, it would be Sinn Féin's fault.

2. Yesterday, Irish officials met Adams and a few colleagues (but not McGuinness). They took him through what they meant by "enhanced engagement", with at least two positive reports from de Chastelain before Easter, the second of which would report agreement on a scheme for putting weapons beyond use. Adams rejected it out of hand. There was no point in him going back to the IRA. He was also very negative on policing. He would talk to McGuinness overnight.

3. Since then, I gather Jonathan has heard from Gallagher that McGuinness was more upbeat. Adams plans to have a long discussion with him tomorrow, and will telephone the Taoiseach before he sets off for London. My guess is that this is a device to ensure that Bertie is not conveying a definite "no" tonight.

4. Trimble seems uncannily relaxed. He told me on Friday that anything short of actual decommissioning before the Election would do him more harm than good. I doubt if he means that, but he fears coming under pressure to drop his North/South sanction for very little in return. At the moment, it is all he's got. A



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

SKP 28/10/01



more authentic signal from Reg Empey is that parking the process over the Election would be disastrous, because there would be nothing to come back to.

6. Our objectives seem to me to be:

- to manage the situation in such a way as to minimise the electoral damage to Trimble;
- to keep the institutions in being if we can, because it would be next to impossible to restore them after an Election in which Trimble seems bound to lose some ground;
- to advance the policing reforms in an orderly way, with the SDLP on board if possible.

7. If Bertie tells you that Sinn Féin are still in play for "enhanced engagement" (option A), the key judgement will be whether there is a sufficient chance of them signing up for it for it to be sensible to bring things to a head on Friday. You will need to take Bertie's advice on that. My guess is that Adams will ask for more time for consultation, and that, within limits, it will be sensible to allow this. If the message is that a mini-deal is on, but only if we offer more, you will want to consider any specific proposals on their merits. But bear in mind that anything we do for Sinn Féin impacts also on the unionists. To take the most obvious example, a public statement on OTRs would be seen as evidence that we were giving too much ground to Sinn Féin for an uncertain return.

8. If Bertie's message is that he believes he has taken things as far as he can with Sinn Féin and we should now plan for a soft landing (option B), how should you react?





9. Getting the SDLP on the Policing Board would not in itself do Trimble a great deal of good, but their holding back is doing him disproportionate harm. I therefore think your first reaction should be to encourage Bertie to lean harder on the SDLP to rise to the occasion. It will not be easy for them, particularly if they know that the wider crisis is not going to be resolved. But they should be put to the choice, and made to feel that the Irish Government really want them to jump.

10. The more difficult question is over public handling. There is now a strong expectation of a round table meeting of all the parties on Friday. If that doesn't happen, it will be seen as evidence of crisis, and things could quickly get out of control. On the other hand, we don't want a crash landing. The UUC AGM is still over 3 weeks away, and there is plenty of time for Trimble's opponents to mount an argument that in these circumstances it would be better to fight the Election from outside.

11. My advice would be that, before going any further, we should have a serious discussion with Trimble about how best to handle things in his interests. If it can be done without raising expectations to the point where there is either success or failure and nothing in between, I can see some advantage in having a round table on Friday which Brian Cowen and I could take. The alternative would be yet another series of discussions with individual parties next week, which we could announce now to take some of the steam out of the situation.

12. Slightly longer term, I think we may be heading for a formal review over the Election period. It might help Trimble if he were seen to call for one and the two Governments agreed. You could mention this to Bertie.

Policing

13. We are rapidly reaching the point where we will have to make known our intentions about the Policing Board. The Irish may be under the impression that we are considering running the d'Hondt formula even if the SDLP are unwilling.





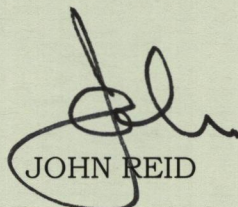
There is no harm in keeping them in a state of uncertainty about this, since it might encourage them to work harder on the SDLP. In fact, if we knew for sure that running the formula would create a unionist dominated Board, I would not want to do it. We would keep the existing Police Authority on for a few weeks for want of any alternative, and might then put in interim commissioners. The main point to get across tonight is that time is running out, and the SDLP will need to declare themselves by next week.

Suspension

14. Adams has been complaining about press reports to the effect that we are planning to suspend the institutions unilaterally as Peter did a year ago. You can assure Bertie that this is not our intention, but that, if the unionists walk away from the institutions, our first responsibility will be to provide stable government in Northern Ireland, which would probably mean the resumption of direct rule.

North South Ministerial Council

15. The Irish seem reconciled to postponing Friday's meeting, even if there is no round table.


JOHN REID



Elements of a way forward before the Election

- IRA to engage positively with the IICD for the purpose of agreeing how weapons will be put beyond use in accordance with the earlier commitment. IICD to be in a position to report early in March that constructive discussions are going on, and [by Easter] that agreement on modalities has been reached.
- Confidence building measure by the British Government in recognition of the significance of the IRA move.
- Trimble to lift ban on nominating Sinn Féin Ministers to NSMC.
- British Government to announce review of policing legislation after 12 months experience of the new arrangements in practice, and to publish revised Patten implementation plan taking account of concerns raised by the parties. Statement on murder cases in which there have been calls for independent inquiries.
- SDLP to nominate political members of the Policing Board, with the support of the Irish Government.

RESTRICTED

P1 051

JFO
cc: JS
MT
Press

28 Feb 2001
 Fm: Ashley Ray (HME, Dublin)

cc PS/Secretary of State(L&B)
 PS/Mr Ingram (L&B)
 PS/Mr Howarth (L&B)
 PS/PUS (L&B)
 Mr Jeffrey
 Mr Maccabe
 Mr Fittall
 Mr Kelly
 Ms Bharucha
 Mr Waterworth
 Mr Brett EUD,B

To: HMA

→ Mr Tatham No 10 via EUD, B

TAOISEACH'S QUESTIONS(28 FEBRUARY)

Summary

1. Taoiseach to convey views of Dáil to the Prime Minister that British agreement to public inquiries on the Nelson, Finucane and Hamill would help unlock present impasse. Ahern not hopeful about progress from the talks.

Detail

1. At Taoiseach's questions in the Dáil today, Ahern was pressed by Ruairi Quinn, Labour Party leader, to encourage the British to make a commitment to public inquiries on the Nelson, Hamill and Finucane cases. Quinn argued that this would help remove obstacles to progress, isolate Sinn Féin and force them out from hiding. While making a point of acknowledging the excellent work being undertaken by Colin Port (which had also been acknowledged by Rosemary Nelson's family in recent contact with him), Ahern agreed to press the point with the Prime Minister tonight.
2. Ahern also said that while the talks had made very considerable progress, he did not believe that a breakthrough was in sight. Pressed by Michael Noonan, Fine Gael leader, on Adams' statement that a deal was still possible, Ahern simply said that the parties needed to clarify their positions and to indicate what movement might be possible.

Comment

3. In private, Ahern told me that this last point was directed at Sinn Féin who had not offered any possible movement in their discussions with him. He had said to them that he was not prepared to press any of their points unless they indicated what they could and would deliver.

Ashley Ray

RESTRICTED

02072703426





10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff

27 February 2001

Dear Sarah,

NORTHERN IRELAND ORAL PQs WEDNESDAY 28 FEBRUARY

Thank you for your letter of 27 February. We are content with the lines proposed for Northern Ireland Oral PQs set out in the attachment to your letter.

JONATHAN POWELL

Sarah Todd
Northern Ireland Office



SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

fm
—
10/2/01
✓

SP
cc: SS

Prime Minister

DRUMCREE - MEETING WITH TRIMBLE

We met with David Trimble last week to discuss the current peace deal. During the discussions Trimble raised the issue of Drumcree, suggesting that Currin had lost the confidence of the Orange and that the Parades Commission had failed to deliver on promises made. You asked for a note which would explain the position.

I met Brian Currin recently to discuss his initiative with him. I was conscious that he had delivered to the Grand Lodge a legal opinion on the implications of the Human Rights legislation on the parades issue and I was anxious to discover from him how he now viewed his relationship with the Orange. Needless to say, he takes an entirely opposite view from Trimble, and, more importantly, is keen to continue to try to break the logjam. Unless it becomes apparent that his position has become untenable, or intelligence indicates a serious deterioration in the security picture leading up to Drumcree, my inclination is to continue to support his efforts.

Trimble mentioned that promises made to Currin by the Parades Commission have not been met. This refers back to the 'route map' which the Commission published last summer. Currin encouraged the Orange to seek clarification of the map from the Commission. This would enable the Orange to see what they had to do to secure a positive outcome. I know the Trimble camp suggested you should meet Harold Gracey (in October) to encourage him to support the 'route map'. David Campbell, Trimble's adviser, wrote to Jonathan Powell, setting out his interpretation of the map. I gather Jonathan shared this with Holland in November, who pointed out essential differences. Trimble has since met with Currin and,

CONFIDENTIAL & PERSONAL



SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

separately, with Holland, and I am sure this route map and their respective interpretations would have been discussed at one or other of those meetings. The essential difference between the two interpretations is that the Commission see the map as indicating a change in the conduct of the Orange, not just simply a "ticking of boxes". Direct dialogue is, therefore, realistically the only way forward.

Matters have moved on since last autumn and Currin is still in play. He continues to mediate to secure direct dialogue between the two groups. He has yet to achieve the breakthrough we all wish, but in my view we must continue to support him. We have learnt, to our cost, that to intervene affords both sides an easy opportunity of walking away from the process.

That said, if the situation deteriorates, then I will have no hesitation in intervening, but I do not judge that we are at that point now.



JOHN REID

27 FEBRUARY 2001

CONFIDENTIAL & PERSONAL



Rec'd already?
+



SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

Prime Minister

DRUMCREE - MEETING WITH TRIMBLE

We met with David Trimble last week to discuss the current peace deal. During the discussions Trimble raised the issue of Drumcree, suggesting that Currin had lost the confidence of the Orange and that the Parades Commission had failed to deliver on promises made. You asked for a note which would explain the position.

I met Brian Currin recently to discuss his initiative with him. I was conscious that he had delivered to the Grand Lodge a legal opinion on the implications of the Human Rights legislation on the parades issue and I was anxious to discover from him how he now viewed his relationship with the Orange. Needless to say, he takes an entirely opposite view from Trimble, and, more importantly, is keen to continue to try to break the logjam. Unless it becomes apparent that his position has become untenable, or intelligence indicates a serious deterioration in the security picture leading up to Drumcree, my inclination is to continue to support his efforts.

Trimble mentioned that promises made to Currin by the Parades Commission have not been met. This refers back to the 'route map' which the Commission published last summer. Currin encouraged the Orange to seek clarification of the map from the Commission. This would enable the Orange to see what they had to do to secure a positive outcome. I know the Trimble camp suggested you should meet Harold Gracey (in October) to encourage him to support the 'route map'.

David Campbell, Trimble's adviser, wrote to Jonathan Powell, setting out his interpretation of the map. I gather Jonathan shared this with Holland in November, who pointed out essential differences. Trimble has since met with Currin and,



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

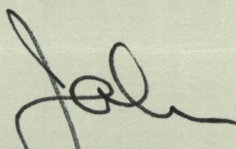


SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

separately, with Holland, and I am sure this route map and their respective interpretations would have been discussed at one or other of those meetings. The essential difference between the two interpretations is that the Commission see the map as indicating a change in the conduct of the Orange, not just simply a "ticking of boxes". Direct dialogue is, therefore, realistically the only way forward.

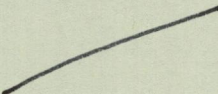
Matters have moved on since last autumn and Currin is still in play. He continues to mediate to secure direct dialogue between the two groups. He has yet to achieve the breakthrough we all wish, but in my view we must continue to support him. We have learnt, to our cost, that to intervene affords both sides an easy opportunity of walking away from the process.

That said, if the situation deteriorates, then I will have no hesitation in intervening, but I do not judge that we are at that point now.



JOHN REID

27 FEBRUARY 2001



FROM: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
CASTLE BUILDINGS
BELFAST BT4 3SG



Handwritten notes:
✓
my (w)
Sgt Joo
✓

Handwritten initials:
JAO

Handwritten notes:
Your bailiwick.
Any reason why from Carl
Wouldn't give his
assurance? I see no
reason.
fr

Handwritten notes:
FO
SS cc: JP
AC
CS
Q

Michael Tatham Esq
Private Secretary to the Prime Minister
No 10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 1AA

27 February 2001

Handwritten signature:
Dear Michael

NORTHERN IRELAND ORAL PQ'S WEDNESDAY 28 FEBRUARY

There is growing speculation in Northern Ireland that the Government may be considering combining the dates of the district and general council elections in the event of a May general election. There must be some risk that Paisley, McCrea or Robinson will seek to raise the matter during Northern Ireland oral questions on Wednesday.

The Prime Minister is still considering the recent minutes which my Secretary of State has sent him on the subject but, in the meantime, I should be grateful for confirmation that you are content with the attached lines to take, which we have prepared. The Secretary of State also owes a reply to Dr McCrea, who wrote as Chair of the Assembly Environment Committee at a time when there was speculation that the district council elections might be postponed altogether. The Secretary of State would prefer to get this letter to Dr McCrea before Wednesday afternoon in order to forestall criticism over the lack of reply. I attach a copy of the letter which the Secretary of State intends to send, unless you see a difficulty.

Handwritten signature:
Sarah Todd

SARAH TODD



FROM: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
CASTLE BUILDINGS
BELFAST BT4 3SG



Handwritten notes: 2, JS, cc, SP, AC, GS, Q

Michael Tatham Esq
Private Secretary to the Prime Minister
No 10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 1AA

27 February 2001

Dear Michael

NORTHERN IRELAND ORAL PQ'S WEDNESDAY 28 FEBRUARY

There is growing speculation in Northern Ireland that the Government may be considering combining the dates of the district and general council elections in the event of a May general election. There must be some risk that Paisley, McCrea or Robinson will seek to raise the matter during Northern Ireland oral questions on Wednesday.

The Prime Minister is still considering the recent minutes which my Secretary of State has sent him on the subject but, in the meantime, I should be grateful for confirmation that you are content with the attached lines to take, which we have prepared. The Secretary of State also owes a reply to Dr McCrea, who wrote as Chair of the Assembly Environment Committee at a time when there was speculation that the district council elections might be postponed altogether. The Secretary of State would prefer to get this letter to Dr McCrea before Wednesday afternoon in order to forestall criticism over the lack of reply. I attach a copy of the letter which the Secretary of State intends to send, unless you see a difficulty.

Sarah Todd

SARAH TODD



Questions and Answers

Q. Is the Government preparing to synchronise the district council and general elections if they are both in May?

A. I have heard the same rumours as the Honourable Gentleman but I am not going to comment on them because the Government does not speculate about the date of the General Election.

Q. Has the Government consulted the Chief Electoral Officer about the possibility of a combined poll? Can the Secretary of State confirm that the Chief Electoral Officer has advised against such a move?

A. If the Government were to consider changing the law then it would certainly want to check the practicality of any proposals with the Chief Electoral Officer before bringing them before Parliament. But we have no proposals to bring before Parliament so there is nothing more to be said.

Q. Unless the Government makes the position clear soon, won't it be unfair to the parties to change the district council election date at the last minute?

A. The position is entirely straightforward. Everyone, including the political parties, is proceeding with preparations for elections scheduled for 16 May. That date could not be changed without the agreement of both House of Parliament. The sort of arguments that the Honourable Gentleman mentions would be for Parliament to consider at the time.

Q. Wouldn't it be massively confusing for voters to have a PR election and a first part of the post-election on the same day?

A. I believe there have now been some examples of elections elsewhere in the country where two ballots have been held on the same day using different systems, but clearly this is something which the Government and Parliament would want to consider very carefully before deciding on any change.

Q. Can the Government confirm that the district council elections will go ahead in May and that there is no question of postponement?

A. I think the Honourable Gentleman may be referring to earlier speculation that the elections might have been postponed on account of the proposed review of public administration and local government. I can confirm that the government has no plans to postpone the May elections.

The Rev Dr William McCrea MP MLA
Chairman Environment Committee
Northern Ireland Assembly
Parliament Buildings
BELFAST
BT4 3XX

February 2001

The Clerk to the Environment Committee wrote to my office on 9 February to convey the Committee's congratulations on my appointment and to pursue a letter which was sent to my predecessor in November about this year's district council elections. My predecessor's Private Secretary had sent a holding reply on 30 November.

Your Committee wanted to know whether the district council elections would proceed or whether there was a possibility that the proposed review of public administration would lead to their postponement. The position is that under Section 11 of the Electoral Law Act (NI) 1962 as amended by the Electoral Law (NI) 1972, Local Government Elections have to be held every four years.

I can confirm that the Government has no plans to postpone the holding of the elections.

JOHN REID

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM: BILL JEFFREY
 Political Director
 27 February 2001
 BJ/MR/723(L)



PS/SECRETARY OF STATE(L&B)

cc PS/Mr Ingram(L&B)
 PS/Mr Howarth(L&B)
 Mr Pilling
 Mr Watkins
 Mr Fittall
 Mr Kelly
 Mr Maccabe
 Mr Alston
 Ms Bharucha
 Mr Powell No.10-FAX
 Sir Ivor Roberts HMA(D)

cc: SS
 AC
 AS.

CONVERSATION WITH DÁITHI O'CEALLAIGH: FURTHER DELAY IN
 DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN IRISH AND SINN FÉIN

Daithi O'Ceallaigh told me this morning that the meeting which he and Gallagher had planned to have with Sinn Féin in Dundalk at 1pm was not now to take place, because of the heavy snow. The airports were closed and the M1 was closed between Bannbridge and Newry. The meeting would take place as soon as weather conditions allowed.

2. He also mentioned that Dermot Gallagher had decided that it would be better not to give Sinn Féin a piece of paper with the proposals we had been discussing. Instead, he would talk them through them, sticking to the lines O'Ceallaigh had discussed with me yesterday. I said that these lines were acceptable to us, subject to the point I had made yesterday about OTRs, and to our assessment that anything less than positive re-engagement followed by two de Chastelain reports, the second of which reported agreement on modalities before Easter, would be no use for Trimble. O'Ceallaigh said that he quite understood that. The Irish themselves would be insisting on that model of re-engagement.

[Signed]

BILL JEFFREY
 11 Millbank ☎ 6447

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM: BILL JEFFREY
Political Director
27 February 2001
BJ/MR/727(L)

Top - JPB

cc JS

Pm
max jason

✓

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE(L&B)

cc

PS/Mr Ingram(L&B)
PS/Mr Howarth(L&B)
Mr Pilling
Mr Watkins
Mr Fittall
Mr Kelly
Mr Maccabe
Ms Bharucha
Mr Crawford
Mr Powell No.10-FAX
Sir Ivor Roberts, Dublin

CONVERSATION WITH SIR REG EMPY

I took a call from Reg Empey this afternoon. He rings me occasionally when things are at a low ebb as they are now, mainly to communicate his frustration with the two Governments. It was a friendly enough exchange.

2. Empey said that he had been speaking to people within his own party and the SDLP, including Mallon. None of them had any appetite for parking the major issues over the election period. He had been dismayed to read in this morning's papers that the Taoiseach was thinking in terms of parking. If we did that, there would be nothing to come back to after the Election. The two Governments were letting Sinn Féin off the hook. They were having it all ways. If the SDLP signed up to the Policing Board, within a few months Sinn Féin would be trying to extract concessions from us which the SDLP had failed to get. They were probably saving a decommissioning gesture for the Irish elections. He understood the SDLP's reasons for not jumping alone, but what this meant in practice was a veto for Sinn Féin.

3. I said that parking was a long way from being our favoured option. There were still intensive discussions going on. The Irish - and in particular Cowen - were more

CONFIDENTIAL

engaged than I had seen them, and were putting a good deal of private pressure on Sinn Féin.

4. Empey came back with more of the same. It was partly up to the UUP and the SDLP to find a solution, but parking over the Election would be a dereliction of duty by the two Governments. Sooner or later someone was going to point out that the Governments had dropped the ball. There were lunatics out there, and one day someone would get lucky. There were echoes of 1974, and no chance that if we lost things as we did last year they could be restored so quickly. Mallon was totally opposed to parking. He was still pushing for a round-table. The UUP were prepared to join in, provided it was only for a day and there was some chance of success. Were we thinking of having a round-table on Friday, as the press were speculating?

5. I said that this was still not clear. The Irish were working away in the background, and the Prime Minister was meeting the Taoiseach tomorrow evening. They would need to consider then whether there was any point in bringing the parties together at the end of the week. But Empey could be assured that we were still trying hard and had not given up.

6. Empey asked what would happen to Friday's planned meeting of the NSMC if there were political talks. I said that the talks would presumably take precedence, but that I had assumed that there might be a problem over nominations for the NSMC in any event. Empey confirmed that there would. With the BIC virtually defunct, there was no way the UUP could go to Dublin for a North/South meeting.

7. As we finished, I remarked to Empey that his message had been, as ever, admirably clear. If Trimble agreed with it, it would be no bad thing if he made the same point to Ministers. In some recent contacts he seemed to be saying that, unless we could actually deliver decommissioning before the Election, anything short of that would be positively counter-productive. I did not take that to be Empey's view. Empey agreed, and noted the point.

CONFIDENTIAL

Comment

8. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this conversation is that – even if Trimble is not doing so – Empey is evidently sharing his concerns about the present situation with SDLP colleagues. As ever, once one gets below the level of Trimble and Mallon, there is a good deal of shared appreciation of the common problems which the two centre parties face.

[Signed]

BILL JEFFREY
11 Millbank ☎ 6447

- 3 -

CONFIDENTIAL

BJ/MR/727(L)-27.2.2001

TOTAL P.04



SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

Jonathan Powell Esq MP
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AA

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
CASTLE BUILDINGS
BELFAST BT4 3SG

Added leads

Per

From reading

✓

*cc: JS
NT or
AC
AS*

✓

26 February 2001

Dear Jonathan,

STATE OF OPINION WITHIN THE ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY

Our Political Affairs Branch have been working their UUP contacts hard over the past few weeks to gauge opinion, particularly among pro-Agreement Trimble supporters.

Though it does not make for encouraging reading, the Secretary of State thought that the Prime Minister ought to see the attached summary note, particularly as context for David Trimble's reluctance to become involved in a "diluted deal" which would tie his hands, while leaving him open to the accusation that he has again been "sold a pup".

Yours ever,

Paul

PAUL PRIESTLY
Private Secretary



CURRENT STATE OF OPINION WITHIN ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY

1. Publicly the UUP Executive presented a united front after their meeting on Saturday 10 February. Trimble seems to have said enough in private to keep the hard liners happy. He is also now reported to have issued instructions to his supporters that they are to work for every UUP candidate irrespective of their personal views on the Agreement.

2. Those who have backed Trimble thus far are feeling very down. According to Sir Reg Empey's special adviser, Empey and McGimpsey, both stalwart supporters of the Agreement, feel battered and bruised: "If Adams would not accept or could not sell this deal they could only lie down and wait for a steamroller to finish the job, they had nothing left to give." Jim Wilson, the UUP Assembly chief whip and another strong supporter of the Agreement, has spoken in similar terms.

3. Part of the problem is that expectations were raised so high by press stories about the big deal which, at one point, appeared to be within grasp. According to Wilson, SDLP movement on policing would now be no more than a good news story; what the UUP needs is movement on actual decommissioning. None of our contacts believes that mere re-engagement with de Chastelain would do any good. Maintaining the present sanction on Sinn Féin Ministers is popular in the UUP; lifting it would be seen as yet another concession unless re-engagement led very quickly to decommissioning.

4. This attitude was summed up by another pro-Agreement counsellor from Castlereagh: "Attitudes have become hardened within the UUP and not even Trimble can perform another Houdini this time unless of course Sinn Féin/PIRA move immediately and without prevarication on the arms issue. The time for fudge is over." Two pro-Agreement councillors recently commented that they felt "badly



let down by the 'Blair Government'" and emphasised that it was the "Blair Government". they meant, since "its actions made it unsuitable to be called a 'British Government'."

5. There is corroboration for the general mood from contacts within the community. A Church of Ireland Minister in Fermanagh told George Howarth on Tuesday that his congregation had voted overwhelmingly for the Good Friday Agreement but, if it were re-run now, probably 70-80% would vote against. Another Church of Ireland Minister has said to a UUP Assembly member: "You cannot go on, we have had enough."

6. The debate over the general and district council elections is not over whether the UUP will lose seats but how many. Of the nine taken at the last election only East Antrim (Roy Beggs) and Lagan Valley (Jeffrey Donaldson) look absolutely safe. Trimble should hold on at Upper Bann, though he is likely to face a stiff challenge. All six other seats, including South Antrim which has already fallen to the DUP in a by election, are vulnerable to varying degrees. In West Tyrone they look set to lose to Pat Doherty of Sinn Féin – although we have now heard that Brid Rodgers of the SDLP has decided to stand in the constituency, which could divide the nationalist vote and give the seat to the UUP. Elsewhere the main enemy is the DUP. In the one seat which the UUP might have hoped to gain – North Down from Bob McCartney – selection squabbles may yet prove terminal. In selection contests more generally, pro-Agreement candidates have been in retreat. Burnside fought off a pro-Agreement challenger at South Antrim, Martin Smyth easily saw off Michael McGimpsey in South Belfast and the pro-Agreement James Cooper won the nomination to succeed Ken Maginnis in Fermanagh and South Tyrone by an unexpectedly narrow margin. The replacement for John Taylor in Strangford has yet to be selected and will face a fierce DUP fight from Peter Robinson's wife, Iris.



7. The UUP knows that it has to present a more united front to minimise DUP gains. Trimble's preference is still probably to toughen his stance without bringing the institutions down and thereby admitting, in effect, that he had been wrong to trust Sinn Féin. Since the UUC meeting on 28 October he has managed to walk this tightrope. His problem now is that an increasing number of his supporters within the party no longer think the price of staying within Government with Sinn Féin is worth paying. More ominously still, the prevailing view is that whether or not Trimble manages to keep the institutions in place until the general and district council elections the party will do so badly that he will be forced to resign as leader very soon thereafter.



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
CASTLE BUILDINGS
BELFAST BT4 3SG

10/10
SS

Mr Michael Tatham
PS/Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AA

2e - faxed?
February 2001

Sean Michael

Mr Billy Armstrong, an MLA and member of the Ulster Unionist Party, has written to the Prime Minister criticising the current state of the peace process in Northern Ireland.

Mr Armstrong is on the Executive Committee of the UUP, but he would align himself with the anti-Agreement side of the party. He is a member of both the Orange Order and the Royal Black Preceptory and has served as a part-time RUC Reserve Constable for 14 years. He has of late become more vociferous in his condemnation of the Belfast Agreement and he last wrote to the Prime Minister on 19th December at which time he also criticised the lack of decommissioning by the IRA. At that time he also reminded the Prime Minister of the British and Irish Governments' joint statement of 5 May 2000 which outlined the steps needed to ensure the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement including decommissioning.

I attach a self-explanatory draft reply for the Prime Minister's consideration and signature.

SARAH TODD

Billy Armstrong Esq MLA
Room 378
Parliament Buildings
Stormont Estate
BELFAST
BT4 3XX

DRAFT LETTER FOR CONSIDERATION AND SIGNATURE BY THE PRIME MINISTER

Thank you for your letter of 21 February 2001 in which you expressed a number of concerns you had relating to the peace process in Northern Ireland.

As I mentioned in my letter of 22 January 2000 to you I believe it is vital that we make progress on decommissioning in order to build confidence across the board in Northern Ireland. To that end I have been working intensively with the Taoiseach, the Secretary of State and the political parties in Northern Ireland.

Many people throughout the United Kingdom expressed their concerns about the early release of prisoners, but the Good Friday Agreement contained difficult elements for all sides and has to be viewed as a package. The Sentences Act provides for the recall to prison of any prisoner who breaches the terms of the licence under which he benefits from the early release scheme. The Government has not hesitated to apply these provisions when it has been appropriate to do so, and a number of prisoners have been returned to prison as a result.

I repeat what I said before. The Agreement is founded on the principle of consent. This means that Northern Ireland will remain part of the United Kingdom for as long as the majority of people in Northern Ireland wish. The Irish Government amended the Irish Constitution accordingly. The Agreement swept away the Anglo Irish Agreement, replacing it with a new British/Irish treaty which strengthened the ties between Ireland and the United Kingdom.

We all want to see Northern Ireland finally rid itself of the vestiges of 30 years of violence and terrorist activity. The Secretary of State is in regular contact with the Chief Constable who is responsible for advising on the level of threat and what is required to meet it. The Government will do nothing to jeopardise the security of the people of Northern Ireland.

CONFIDENTIAL and PERSONAL

FROM: BILL JEFFREY
Political Director
26 February 2001
BJ/MR/720(L)

✓ JB
cc: JS

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE(L&B)

cc

PS/Mr Ingram(L&B)
PS/Mr Howarth(L&B)
Mr Pilling
Mr Watkins
Mr Fittall
Mr Kelly
Mr Maccabe
Mr Alston
Ms Bharucha
Mr Powell No.10-FAX
Sir Ivor Roberts HMA(D)

CONVERSATION WITH DÁITHI O'CEALLAIGH

No sooner had I signed off my note of earlier this morning than O'Ceallaigh rang again.

2. The Irish will not now be meeting Sinn Féin until tomorrow around lunch-time. He hoped to have a piece of paper to show me later today or first thing tomorrow morning, but the outlines of it would be as follows:

- The two Governments would start a sequence by making a statement reporting overall agreement on a package; calling on all paramilitaries to engage with the Decommissioning Commission for the purpose of agreeing a scheme or schemes for putting their weapons beyond use; and indicating that they expected an early report from the Commission with a view to making rapid progress;
- this would be followed by a strong IRA statement announcing full and active engagement with the Commission in order to take forward the commitment made by the IRA last May in such a way as to maximise public confidence;

CONFIDENTIAL and PERSONAL

there would then be two positive reports from the Commission, the first within days reporting that the IRA had re-engaged and the second (which the Irish would like to see before Easter) reporting that a decommissioning scheme had been agreed and was being put to the two Governments;

on the other side of the balance, Trimble would lift his North/South ban; we would contribute "an initial package" on demilitarisation, which would obviously be a lot smaller than had been on offer for the big deal and subject to the security threat; and we would do what we had proposed on OTRs.

3. O'Ceallaigh said that the Irish assessment was that it would be very difficult for Sinn Féin to move on both weapons and policing this side of the Election. We might consider parking the Policing Board until after the Election, as we had discussed on Friday. In that case, the Irish would tell Sinn Féin – as Cowen had told McGuinness on Saturday – that the package now on offer was effectively Patten, and that if they intended signing up for it at some stage they should not rubbish it now.

4. I said that the package O'Ceallaigh had described sounded to me on broadly the right lines, save in one important respect. We would be able to carry on doing our best to resolve individual cases involving OTRs, but had seen a public undertaking, including legislation if necessary, as an element of the big deal. There was no question of this being on offer as part of a smaller deal. O'Ceallaigh noted this. It could well cause problems with Sinn Féin, since they believed they had been promised a comprehensive settlement of the OTRs problem last May. I said that there was also an immediate political dimension on the unionist side. An announcement which would be widely perceived as an amnesty might be absorbed by Trimble as part of a bigger deal. What would do him real harm now would be if we appeared to have paid too high a price for a more modest move forward.

[Signed]

BILL JEFFREY

11 Millbank ☎ 6447

CONFIDENTIAL and PERSONAL

FROM: BILL JEFFREY
Political Director
26 February 2001
BJ/MR/719(L)

✓ JPO
@JS

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE(L&B)

cc

PS/Mr Ingram(L&B)
PS/Mr Howarth(L&B)
Mr Pilling
Mr Watkins
Mr Fittall
Mr Kelly
Mr Maccabe
Mr Alston
Ms Bharucha
Mr Powell No.10-FAX
Sir Ivor Roberts HMA(D)

CONVERSATIONS WITH DAÍTHI O'CEALLAIGH OVER THE WEEKEND

I have had several conversations with Daíthi O'Ceallaigh over the weekend.

2. On Friday evening, O'Ceallaigh told me that Brian Cowen was meeting Martin McGuinness on Saturday morning, and would push him hard. I gave him a brief second-hand account of the Secretary of State's meetings earlier in the day, including his own encounter with McGuinness. O'Ceallaigh gave me a slightly different signal from before on policing, which suggested that - as we rather expected- the Irish were getting cold feet about splitting the SDLP from Sinn Féin. They were, he said, becoming more uneasy about policing. They had been asking themselves whether Sinn Féin were serious or not. If it was simply a question of timing and they intended to join the Policing Board at some point in the future, we needed to be careful about "driving them out of the water". If the SDLP joined the Policing Board and Sinn Féin did not, it would become a major, damaging issue during the Election campaign. The Irish would be very cautious about creating that sort of row. On the other hand, if Sinn Féin could not manage even modest re-engagement with de Chastelain or acceptance of policing, the Irish would have to ask if they were serious at all.

- 1 -

CONFIDENTIAL and PERSONAL

BJ/MR/719(L)-26.2.2001

CONFIDENTIAL and PERSONAL

3. I remarked that Trimble's main need was for substantive movement on weapons. If the SDLP failed to sign up for policing, it would harm him, but their signing up would not in itself have the same positive benefit as substantial progress on decommissioning. This led O'Ceallaigh to embark on a line of questioning which implied that he thought 1 April was more of an immutable deadline on policing than it actually is. Was there no way in which we could defer establishing the Policing Board for a couple of months? Couldn't some interim arrangement be made to carry things over? I said that all our planning had been based on a transition to the new accountability arrangements on 1 April. The legislation provided for this. If neither the SDLP nor Sinn Féin were willing to nominate to the Policing Board, we would have two options. The first would be to run the d'Hondt mechanism in order to put the SDLP and Sinn Féin to the choice, rather as Mallon had argued we should put Trimble to the test in 1999 by running d'Hondt and in effect challenging him not to nominate to the Executive. If this tactic failed, it would lead to a Policing Board with 10 Unionist politicians, which was obviously not what we wanted, so it was high risk. The alternative would be to find some way of carrying on without the new Policing Board, either by continuing with PANI or otherwise. But this too would be an extremely unwelcome outcome, which would require a Parliamentary Order. By far the better course would be for either or both of the nationalist parties to nominate.

4. O'Ceallaigh rang again on Saturday. Cowen had had just over an hour alone with Martin McGuinness on Saturday morning. Gallagher and O'Ceallaigh had been on the premises but not in the same room. Cowen had told McGuinness that Sinn Féin's current approach would lead at best to chaos. What they were being offered on policing was in effect Patten, give or take a little bit here or there. Trimble was in very serious trouble. Unless "enhanced re-engagement" by the IRA with de Chastelain led very quickly to the sort of statement by de Chastelain which would give real comfort to Unionists and the agreement of a scheme, Trimble would be gone and the process set back by 5-10 years. The Irish Government accepted the importance of "inclusivity" and, wanted to keep themselves, Sinn Féin and the SDLP in the same area; but if they were not going to be in the same area the problem would be Sinn Féin's. He had agreed to draw up on paper a description of "enhanced re-engagement", which officials would give Sinn Féin on Monday. They would then

- 2 -

CONFIDENTIAL and PERSONAL

CONFIDENTIAL and PERSONAL

have two days to say "yes" or "no". McGuinness had reacted roughly. He had talked a lot about Sinn Féin's having been promised Patten in full. Cowen had said that this was nonsense. The process could not stand still and Sinn Féin's current stance was not tenable. There was no guarantee that even "enhanced re-engagement" would satisfy Trimble.

5. I asked about timing. O'Ceallaigh said that he was not now going to the United States with Cowen. There would probably be a meeting between Irish officials and Sinn Féin in Dublin today, at which a text would be handed over. The Taoiseach was in Wales on Thursday, and efforts were being made for him to have a meeting with the Prime Minister on Friday in London, in the hope that the Sinn Féin position would by then be clear. I said that all this seemed on the slow side. Trimble was extremely suspicious that we were just trying to spin things out. I also registered that we would welcome a sight of any paper which the Irish gave to Sinn Féin before it was handed over.

6. I spoke to O'Ceallaigh again yesterday. By that stage he had had the note attached to my minute of Friday on next steps, which the Secretary of State had cleared on Friday evening and Jonathan Powell in America later on Saturday. O'Ceallaigh said that our text was entirely consistent with Irish thinking. We were all talking about much the same thing. The Irish would not be drafting something to give to Sinn Féin until this morning. The meeting was unlikely to be until early this evening. We should speak again during the course of today.

Comment

7. We had better wait and see how the Irish get on with Sinn Féin. Even allowing for O'Ceallaigh exaggeration, Cowen's encounter with McGuinness seems to have been unusually robust. The Irish having got cold feet about the SDLP and policing - if I read them right - is not necessarily a bad thing, if it forces them to concentrate on weapons. A satisfactory outcome on weapons would be the best way of creating conditions in which the SDLP would have little option but to sign up. We should keep the Irish guessing about 1 April. We should also be alert to the risk that all this will lead to moves by Sinn Féin which are so minimal as to be worse than useless for

CONFIDENTIAL and PERSONAL

Trimble. But there is not a great deal we can do about that (beyond warning the Irish as we have done), and we are not there yet.

[Signed]

BILL JEFFREY
11 Millbank ☎ 6447

CONFIDENTIAL & PERSONAL

From: PS/Secretary of State
26 February 2001

f

cc: See Copy Distribution List

Mr Jeffrey - O

MEETING WITH DAVID TRIMBLE, 23 FEBRUARY

Summary

- Trimble deeply sceptical about SDLP proposal for roundtable talks.
- Concern that the proposal is more about letting Sinn Fein off the hook and relieving pressure on the SDLP than a genuine attempt to resolve the issues.
- Trimble does not refuse to participate, but wants any process to be short and focused on a clear outcome.

Detail

2. The Secretary of State met David Trimble in Hillsborough Castle on 23 February to discuss the latest political developments. David Trimble was accompanied by David Lavery and David Campbell. Mr Fittall and I were also present.

3. The Secretary of State provided an update on the latest developments. Sinn Fein did not want to move on decommissioning nor to join the Policing Board. He had seen Adams and McGuinness that morning and had told them that decommissioning was the key to unlock the whole situation. The SDLP had suggested roundtable negotiations involving all of the pro-Agreement parties to resolve the outstanding issues. They saw this as a means of putting pressure on Sinn Fein and creating a political context which would enable the SDLP to come on board on policing. The Prime Minister had sought an assurance from the SDLP that in such talks they would not allow Sinn Fein to exercise a veto over progress.

CONFIDENTIAL & PERSONAL

CONFIDENTIAL & PERSONAL

The two Governments were currently talking stock. HMG saw some merit in the SDLP's proposal provided the process was short and sharp, carefully focused and involved movement on decommissioning to help the UUP. However, we were being asked constantly whether David Trimble planned to collapse the devolved institutions. We had said that we did not believe this was his intention.

4. The Secretary of State said he had made clear to Sinn Fein that the UUP needed movement on decommissioning. Sinn Fein were saying they could not achieve decommissioning on the proposed timescale, but that it might be possible to achieve IRA re-engagement with de Chastelain. John Hume had suggested it might be possible to achieve re-engagement, progress on agreeing modalities and positive reports from the Decommissioning Commission. The two Governments were due to touch base later in the day. The Secretary of State said he intended to propose a short process, out of the media spotlight, focused on an outcome which would help David Trimble. In the meantime, the issues which had been discussed with Sinn Fein were off the table since the big deal was no longer achievable. HMG would make a proportionate response to any moves by the IRA on decommissioning.

5. David Trimble said the proposal on decommissioning made to him by John Hume was "worthless". Hume had proposed that the IRA should agree to allow de Chastelain to examine the dumps which had already been inspected by Ahtisaari and Ramaphosa. This was a lot less than the proposal which had been put to Sinn Fein by the two Governments. It reinforced his opinion that the whole exercise was "camouflage" designed by John Hume to waste time.

6. David Trimble said his own analysis was that there was no prospect of a substantive move by the Provisionals on decommissioning before the General Election. A deal on decommissioning which involved something less than had been proposed by the two Governments would be worse for the UUP and he would prefer that it was not done. He would like to see the original proposal put to him by the Prime Minister implemented. A half measure would do more harm than good because it would look like no progress on decommissioning was possible. He believed it should be possible to get the SDLP to move on policing. This would have

CONFIDENTIAL & PERSONAL

CONFIDENTIAL & PERSONAL

some benefit for the UUP because they could say that a prize had been achieved in return for the pain of change in policing. Nationalists would also for the first time be shouldering part of the burden on policing. On the other hand, Sinn Fein coming on board on policing at this stage would do more harm than good. He remained very sceptical about whether Hume and Mallon had the bottle to move on policing. He believed they would use roundtable negotiations to "kick for the long grass". There were no indications that the SDLP would go into talks to make a genuine effort to achieve movement.

7. The Secretary of State said our assessment was that the SDLP intended to use the proposed talks to put pressure on Sinn Fein and obtain movement from them on decommissioning; to create a context for the SDLP to come on board on policing; and to obtain a guarantee that the UUP would not collapse the devolved institutions. He did not believe their intention was to waste time. We had been talking about a day and a half of talks at the longest. The real business would have to be done between the three main pro-Agreement parties. If we could not achieve a deal, we would be into crisis management – but the UUP would know in short order whether and what type of deal was possible. David Trimble said he saw no evidence for any of the assumptions the Government was making about the SDLP's intentions. The indications available to him did not support HMG's assessment. Seamus Mallon had refused to meet with the UUP earlier in the day to discuss the SDLP's proposal. In any case, such talks would be a high risk strategy for the UUP. Sinn Fein could refuse to move. The SDLP would be provided with an excuse for not coming on board on policing by claiming that the political situation was unstable. In these circumstances, the UUP would have no choice but to toughen their position. They would therefore be worse off. The only alternative would be for the Prime Minister to live up to his promise to extract a heavy price from Sinn Fein if they failed to move on decommissioning. He could not see any way in which the UUP would be better off by following the course of action advocated by the Secretary of State. To do so would simply let the SDLP off the hook if Sinn Fein refused to move.

8. The Secretary of State continued to try and persuade David Trimble about the merits of the proposed talks. Putting pressure on the SDLP would no longer

CONFIDENTIAL & PERSONAL

succeed in getting the party to join the Policing Board. The nationalist consensus was divided on the issue of roundtable talks – neither Sinn Fein nor the Irish were enthusiastic. Sinn Fein would not refuse because to do so would risk isolation – but they were not keen. The SDLP had therefore broken ranks. This left the Irish in a difficult position. If the UUP refused to proceed, Sinn Fein and the Irish would be let off the hook. William Fittall pointed out that the UUP would be in a worse position if it emerged that all of the other parties had been prepared to enter talks and the UUP had not. David Trimble reiterated that he saw no point in entering such talks. Progress on actual decommissioning was not on offer. Anything short of a timescale for actual decommissioning would not be enough. A bad deal would be worse for the UUP and would let all of the other parties off the hook. Even the big deal would have caused him a problem in bridging the gap between IRA re-engagement with de Chastelain and the start of actual decommissioning.

9. The Secretary of State asked how David Trimble believed we should seek to move forward. He said we should continue to press the SDLP to move on policing and should apply serious pressure on Sinn Fein about decommissioning by mobilising public opinion. The Secretary of State said we could achieve these ends through the proposed talks. David Trimble disagreed. The only basis on which the proposed talks might appeal to him was if the SDLP threatened to support an exclusion measure against Sinn Fein, or if the SDLP made clear in advance that they would come out of the talks making positive moves. His current assessment was that Sinn Fein and the SDLP saw the talks as a means of saddling the UUP with the blame for the current impasse.

10. David Lavery suggested that there might be a case for a preliminary discussion between the UUP and the SDLP to test the SDLP's position and whether they had a genuine concern about the stability of the devolved institutions which was a factor in their refusal to join the Policing Board. David Trimble said he would be prepared to meet with Hume and Mallon to test their proposal and assess whether they would be prepared to make positive moves. The Secretary of State said the Prime Minister had tried to obtain a guarantee from the SDLP about the outcome of any talks. All he could achieve was an undertaking that Sinn Fein would not have a veto and that the SDLP would be prepared in the right

CONFIDENTIAL & PERSONAL

circumstances to break with Sinn Fein. David Trimble said he was sceptical because time and again he had seen the SDLP come up with an initiative in these circumstances in order to rescue Sinn Fein. He believed HMG was "clutching at straws" but was prepared to meet with the SDLP. The Secretary of State said he would speak with Hume and Mallon and encourage them to meet the UUP.

11. David Trimble asked what Ministers were proposing to do about appointments to the Human Rights Commission. He hoped the Government would be prepared to appoint two unionists to the Commission. We were obliged by the GFA to ensure that the Commission was representative – but it had no unionists at all and at least 4/5 "Proxies". We should also change the appointment criteria to avoid excluding good candidates as we had done on the last occasion – including Brian Garrett. The Secretary of State said he would seek advice on the composition of the Commission and on how it was proposed to fill the current vacancies. **[Advice please: Ms Bharucha]**. Mr Fittall said it would be helpful if David Trimble could ensure that good candidates from the unionist tradition came forward for appointment.

12. Summing up the discussion, the Secretary of State said he wanted to be clear about David Trimble's position. His understanding was that:

- The UUP were highly sceptical of the reasons why the SDLP had made their proposal and about the potential outcome of such talks.
- David Trimble would find it useful to have an early discussion with Mallon and Hume about their proposal.
- If the two Governments decided to go ahead, David Trimble was not refusing to participate but wanted any process to be short and sharp.
- David Trimble wanted the risks of failure of such a venture to be taken into account. He could be left with no choice but to toughen his position.

CONFIDENTIAL & PERSONAL

CONFIDENTIAL & PERSONAL

- If the talks went ahead, David Trimble wanted an assurance that there was a prospect of movement by the SDLP, without any commitment that the UUP would lift their sanction on the participation of Sinn Fein Ministers at the NSMC or that he would be satisfied on the issue of decommissioning.

13. David Trimble confirmed that this was a fair summary of his position.

14. After the meeting, the Secretary of State spoke separately with John Hume and Seamus Mallon to encourage them to meet with David Trimble to discuss their proposal and provide him with reassurance about their intentions.

Signed

P G PRIESTLY

PS/Secretary of State

☎ (B) 28110

(L) 6462

cc: PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - O
PS/Mr Ingram (B&L) - O
PS/Mr Howarth (B&L) - O
PS/Mr Pilling (B&L) - O
Mr Watkins - O
Mr Alston - O
Mr Fittall - O
Mr Kelly - O
Mr Maccabe - O
Ms Bharucha - O
Mr Waterworth - O
Sir Ivor Roberts, HMA Dublin - O
Mr Powell, No.10 - E

CONFIDENTIAL & PERSONAL

CONFIDENTIAL - PERSONAL

file



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

SUBJECT
MASTER

FILED

24 February 2001

From the Private Secretary

Dear Howard,

**PRIME MINISTER'S TALKS WITH PRESIDENT BUSH,
CAMP DAVID, 23 FEBRUARY**

NORTHERN IRELAND

In their talks at Camp David, President Bush asked for the Prime Minister's views on the Northern Ireland peace process. He knew that Clinton had been heavily involved and that his role had been useful. What would the Prime Minister like him to do?

The Prime Minister said that what the US could most usefully do was to be there if he asked. At certain points the US could help - particularly with Nationalists but also with Unionists - by telling the parties that the US would bless a certain deal if agreed. If he needed help, he would phone.

The Prime Minister briefed President Bush on implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, the risks HMG had taken to secure it, and the changes for the better since then. The next few weeks would be very important. President Bush asked how large the IRA was. The Prime Minister said there were maybe 500-600 active members, but that was more than enough for planting bombs.

The Prime Minister asked President Bush to help Trimble, for instance by seeing him when he was in town. President Bush said he wanted to avoid St Patrick's Day turning into an Irish summit, but if people were passing by he might see them. He was already seeing the Taoiseach. (Rice and Hadley looked a bit glum at hearing this.)

President Bush asked about RIRA. Colin Powell said that they had received our paper on designation. Condi Rice added that the US had to go through several legal hoops before agreeing to designation but the process was on track. The Prime Minister said this would help prevent RIRA fundraising in the

CONFIDENTIAL - PERSONAL

CONFIDENTIAL - PERSONAL

- 2 -

US. President Bush said he was surprised that Americans were giving money for terrorism. Did they know that or were they just naïve. Jonathan Powell said it was a bit of each.

Comment

A useful exchange, and as a result of it we included a short passage in the joint statement. The Embassy will need to follow up on the St Patrick's Day arrangements.

I am copying this letter to Paul Priestly (Northern Ireland Office), Richard Abel (Cabinet Office) and Christopher Meyer (Washington).

Yours ever,



JOHN SAWERS

Sherard Cowper-Coles
FCO



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

John / [unclear] CD
Handle you had
see this.
A

THE PRIME MINISTER

Thank you for your letter of 10 January concerning the murder of Francisco Notarantonio and also the copy which you addressed to Peter Mandelson.

I am aware that there have been allegations of collusion made in this case, and in particular that the Force Research Unit was in some way involved. I take these allegations extremely seriously. They must be fully and fairly investigated and all necessary steps must be taken to bring those responsible to justice.

Sir John Stevens is currently conducting an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the murder of Patrick Finucane. The terms of reference of this inquiry also cover the allegations of collusion in other murders, such as that of Mr Notarantonio.

Sir John is one of the most experienced police officers in the country and he and his team have my full support in seeking to get to the bottom of these disturbing and complex events. It would be wrong to do anything which risked jeopardising the prospect of this investigation getting at the truth and bringing those responsible for the Finucane and Notarantonio murders to justice. Reaching a decision now to establish a public inquiry would undoubtedly do so.

Mr Gerry Adams MP MLA

DCO
26
AC

Michelle Tolan
for sub-...
reply for NIO
18/1



Gerry Adams MP
Sinn Féin President

January 10th

Hon. Tony Blair
Prime Minister
10 Downing St.
London

A Chara *Tony*

On October 9th 1987 65 year old Francisco Notarantonio was shot dead by a loyalist death squad as he lay in bed in his home in Whitecliff Parade, in the Ballymurphy area of West Belfast.

It was widely accepted at the time by his family and community that his killers had operated in collusion with elements of the British Forces.

In recent months reports have emerged in the media linking the British Army's Force Research Unit (FRU) with the loyalist gang which carried out his murder.

This is not the first time that the FRU have been linked to killings in the north of Ireland.

I believe a full public independent inquiry into Francisco Notarantonio's death is essential if this family are to know the truth of their father's murder and the identities of those who planned, facilitated, and carried out his killing.

The Notarantonio case also raises again the role of the FRU. Allegations, accusations and speculation abound about this organisation. Its role in the Pat Finucane case, its suspected role in many other killings, and its running of agents, spies and death squads are common currency.

There is also a need for a full independent internationally based inquiry into the role of the FRU.

I would ask that you give this your urgent and serious consideration.

I look forward to your reply.

Is mise le meas

Gerry Adams MP, MLA

PRIME MINISTER'S
CORRESPONDENCE SECTION
RECEIVED
16 JAN 2001

53 FALLS ROAD BELFAST
Sinn Féin, 53 ~~Bóthar na hIráid, Béal Fálais, Éire~~, BT12 4PD
Web: <http://www.sinnfein.ie>

CONFIDENTIAL and PERSONAL

FROM: BILL JEFFREY
Political Director
23 February 2001
BJ/MR/718(L)

Ph

to see.

*We need to discuss
The next step on this*

JL

PS. SECRETARY OF STATE (L&B)

cc Mr Pilling
Mr Watkins
Mr Fittall
Mr Kelly
Mr Maccabe
Ms Bharucha
Duty Clerk MIO urgent for
Jonathan Powell in
Washington please FAX
Sir Ivor Roberts, Dublin

NEXT STEPS

In my note this morning, I mentioned that I was putting together, for discussion with the Irish, a short note on the elements of a possible way forward, drawing on my discussion yesterday evening with Daithí O'Ceallaigh. This is attached.

2. There are one or two points to note on the text.

I have assumed that we should be bidding for agreement of modalities on decommissioning before the Election, since this is the next best thing to the big deal. It may not be essential for Trimble. My source from Lavery is his greater need is for early and encouraging de Chastelain reports about the ongoing discussions with the IRA representative. The worst outcome for Trimble would be re-engagement followed by a long silence, which would deprive him of his tough stance with Sinn Féin without putting anything much in its place. I have put "by Easter" in square brackets, because the date would be a matter for negotiation -- Easter avoids mentioning the Election but did not go down well with Sinn Féin when we were discussing the big deal;

CONFIDENTIAL and PERSONAL

I have used the phrase "confidence building measure" in the second bull point to flag up the fact that we would do something to recognise the IRA move. Like the Secretary of State, I think it would probably be the demolition of the Newtownhamilton supersangar plus some progress on individual OTR cases (but not an open-ended public commitment to deal with them all); but that would be a matter for the negotiations.

Likewise, in the fourth bull point, I have included a reference to inquiries in terms which leave open for the moment what we would actually say, and are sufficiently general to cover inquiries of the kind "Trinole is seeking from the Irish."

3. On handling:

As a first step, I propose to send the text to O'Ceallaigh for the Irish to reflect on, and discuss with us if they wish, over the weekend. I would also put to him the handling suggestions which follow.

The text has been drafted in such a way that it could, I think, be shown to the leaders of the three main parties without causing an immediate explosion, on the basis that it is a skeleton, no more, but that if all three are willing to do so on a without prejudice basis, we would move on to try to put flesh on the bones. (This is a technique that Senator Mitchell used to some effect, although the resulting deal eventually broke down.)

This could be done in a five-cornered meeting -- perhaps as early as Tuesday -- with the two Governments, the ULP, the SDLP and Sinn Féin, which for the sake of appearances might need to be preceded by a more formal session involving the small parties as well. If the five-cornered meeting got to the point of agreement on the skeleton, on a without prejudice basis, it would have achieved something.

- discussions would have to be conducted without avowing the "without prejudice" offers already made to Sinn Féin. This will inevitably involve some artificiality. More importantly, it will take time to start again from several steps back;
 - quite elaborate **rules of procedure** (running to some 44 paragraphs) had to be agreed in July 1996 before the pre-Good Friday Agreement negotiations could get under way. We have no time for anything comparable now. Yet agreeing the rules of engagement (and least bearing in mind the potential sensitivities over the role of the Irish Government) is unlikely to happen on the nod;
 - there is an intrinsic awkwardness about a process in which the British Government holds many of the cards but it is also expected to convene or co-convene the talks. Experience from 1992 and 1996-8 illustrates the advantage of an **independent chair**. Finding a suitable person who could be available within days looks like a very tall order, however;
 - earlier all party talks were about getting the devolved institutions in place. These talks would be going on in parallel with a functioning Executive and Assembly. If they can be kept brief, as Mallon envisages, this may be no more of a problem than it has been during previous intensive bursts of proximity discussions. But anything more prolonged would risk creating a **creeping paralysis for the devolved institutions**, with consequences for good Government in Northern Ireland. This would be exacerbated by the likelihood that, for logistical reasons, Parliament Buildings itself would have to be used for the talks (there is no decent space now from Castle Buildings and Hillsborough is not well adapted for this sort of exercise).
4. Underlying all of this is the more fundamental issue of how inclusive talks can help achieve movement on issues where: (a) the key cards are in the hands of a small number of the participants; (b) the trade-offs are not obvious; and (c) the player with the cards on the single most sensitive issue - weapons - will greatly dislike the forum and will say that, in any event, it is a matter for the IRA not for them.

- CONFIDENTIAL and PERSONAL.

Irish advice. If their view is that exposing the fact that part of our plan was for the SDLP to sign up on policing would drive Sinn Féin away, we would need to proceed more circumspectly, perhaps by dropping the SDLP element off the list for the moment, and then, as it were, adding it back on at the end. The Irish themselves seem to be deeply schizophrenic about this. My sense is that Cowen and O'Ceallaigh have just about persuaded themselves that breaking the pan-nationalist consensus on policing is a lesser evil than losing everything, but I am not sure that that is necessarily Gallagher's (or even the Taoiseach's) position. One thing we could do to help is to emphasise, in all our contacts with the Irish and the SDLP, that we would not exploit an SDLP/Sinn Féin split politically, and would present it as Sinn Féin not yet being as persuaded as we want them to be, but free to join in as soon as they are ready. (Some way down the track, if we are lucky, this may incidentally get us into the territory of amending the Police Act to make it possible for the process for making political nominations to the Board to be re-run before the next Assembly elections.)

5. For the moment, is the Secretary of State content for me to send the text to O'Ceallaigh on the basis I have described? (To save time, I am copying this to Jonathan Powell in Washington, in case he has any views.)

[Signed]

BILL JEFFREY
11 Millbank ☎ 6447

- 1 -

CONFIDENTIAL and PERSONAL

BJ MR 715(1)-23.3.2001

HOW WOULD WE MANAGE A NEW INCLUSIVE TALKS PROCESS

1. The SDLP have proposed that all the pro-Agreement parties should be brought together by the two Governments to break the political impasse and renew the Agreement by pursuing a comprehensive agreement on **decommissioning, policing, demilitarisation and guaranteeing the inclusivity of the institutions**. Mallon has said publicly that a conclusion should be reached "within a week".
2. The SDLP's proposal is clearly designed to divert the immediate pressure on them to make a decision on joining the Policing Board. An optimistic reading would be that they are genuinely trying to create a new context which would give them cover for an otherwise highly risky move. More likely they calculate that Sinn Féin obduracy and the imminence of elections mean that the talks will founder, absolving them of the need to make a hard choice.
3. Experience of all party talks in the long run up to the 1998 Agreement has created folk memories, expectations and – in the case of the SDLP and the smaller parties – nostalgia for that sort of process. But there are some major pitfalls which would need to be avoided:

particularly in a pre-electoral period, **Trimble would be very exposed if he agreed to a process which visibly had the Irish Government discussing internal Northern Ireland business, such as the details of policing legislation and security installations**. One reason for the elaborate three stranded nature of the earlier negotiations was to meet unionist sensitivities over the role of Dublin. The SDLP proposal that the two Governments should jointly "initiate and direct" this new process will be very problematic for Trimble who has, in any event, already responded publicly by observing that the idea sits ill with the Taoiseach's recent statement that "the time for hard decisions had come":

- **it is one thing for the Government, privately and unavowedly, to discuss normalisation and legislation on OTRs and policing with Sinn Féin, quite another to open up such sensitive areas to wider and much more leak-prone discussion**. Transgressing on issues bearing on the Chief Constable's (and GOC's) operational responsibility for assessing the threat and determining the necessary security response would be unacceptable in this wider forum;

(6) **What should HMG's realistic objective be?** There is no reason to believe that this process will unlock the wider deal. Should we be aiming for re-engagement with de Chastelain plus SDLP nomination to the Policing Board or is that (a) unachievable and (b) worse than no deal for Trimble? Or should we just aim to sign up the SDLP on policing? Or should this simply be seen as a way of trying to engineer a soft landing, keeping the institutions in place in the absence of a deal until after the election? If the last of these would the talks need to bridge at some point into a formal review of the Agreement?

Elements of a way forward before the Election

- IRA to engage positively with the IICD for the purpose of agreeing how weapons will be put beyond use in accordance with the earlier commitment IICD to be in a position to report early in March that constructive discussions are going on, and [by Easter] that agreement on modalities has been reached.
- Confidence building measure by the British Government in recognition of the significance of the IRA move.
- Trimble to lift ban on nominating Sinn Féin Ministers to NSMC.
- British Government to announce review of policing legislation after 12 months experience of the new arrangements in practice, and to publish revised Patten implementation plan taking account of concerns raised by the parties. Statement on murder cases in which there have been calls for independent inquiries
- SDLP to nominate political members of the Policing Board, with the support of the Irish Government.

FROM: BILL JEFFREY
Political Director
23 February 2001
BJ/MR/716(L)

✓
PC
to CA
J

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE(L&B)

cc

PS/Mr Ingram(L&B)
PS/Mr Howarth(L&B)
Mr Pilling
Mr Watkins
Mr Alston
Mr Fittall
Mr Kelly
Mr Maccabe
Ms Bharucha
Mr Powell No.10-PAN *cc JS*
Sir Ivor Roberts HMA(D)

*I must see
Bette asap.*

DEVELOPMENTS OVERNIGHT

Summary

- Irish ready to agree to a short, focussed round-table discussion, but would prefer a few days to prepare the ground.
- Irish officials sketch out mini deal, which seems on right lines but is probably over-ambitious about our contribution.
- Cowen abroad until Thursday morning.
- Discussions continue. Further advice coming on next steps later today.

Detail

2. Daithi O'Ceallaigh gave me a read-out yesterday evening on the meetings Irish Ministers had had with the SDLP, Sinn Féin and the UUP after our session with Brian Cowen yesterday morning. I had the impression that the Taoiseach was involved in all three of them, and certainly in those with Sinn Féin and the UUP.

CONFIDENTIAL and PERSONAL

3. The SDLP had made their case for a round-table meeting, which might take place over quite a short period. In O'Ceallaigh's view, they had no idea what they would take into such meeting or hope to emerge with. Hume seemed to think that he could force the other parties to agree something. They had taken an even tougher line on policing than O'Ceallaigh had expected.

4. With Sinn Féin, Cowen had taken a very strong line, to the effect that, if they did not do something, they would have nothing to come back to after the Election. But if there had been any doubt about whether the big deal was on, Adams had dispelled it.

5. Trimble had spent most of the time attacking the SDLP. He had asked persistently whether the Irish thought the intransigent Sinn Féin position was "time limited". Were they just playing games and delaying things, or were they never going to move? The Irish response had been to the effect that they thought that the Sinn Féin leadership was serious about making progress both on weapons and on policing, but faced serious internal difficulties. The Irish had taken the sense from the discussion that Trimble's bottom line requirement was for the IRA to engage with de Chastelain in a process which led rapidly to the agreement of modalities, with positive statements from de Chastelain about the quality of the engagement - what we have intended to describe among ourselves as "re-engagement with attitude". (I checked with David Lavery this morning that this is, in fact, a fair account of Trimble's position.)

6. O'Ceallaigh said that, after the three meetings, there had been wash-up discussions with the Taoiseach and Cowen and among officials themselves. They were not opposed to a round-table, but would like it to be relatively short - perhaps no longer than a day - and focussed, with a reasonable chance of success. On the basis of what Trimble had said, he and Gallagher now thought there might be the possibility of a little deal, which could take us through from here until after the Election, and might give Sinn Féin time "to do what they should do". The ingredients of such a deal might be IRA re-engagement with de Chastelain, the withdrawal of Trimble's North/South sanction, and sufficient movement from us (by implication on inquiries) to get the SDLP on board for policing. If the SDLP did come on board, the Irish

CONFIDENTIAL and PERSONAL

Government would back them publicly ("we would do whatever the SDLP did") and there would then be a reasonable chance of persuading the Catholic Church, if not perhaps the GAA. He thought it would take about a week to put something on these lines together, after which there could be a round-table.

7. I said that our Ministers were hoping to move more quickly than that. Time was running out, and Trimble was already suspicious that the SDLP proposal was just a delaying tactic. Both the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State had Questions in the Commons on Wednesday. We had been thinking of a round-table meeting led by the Secretary of State and Cowen on Tuesday, with things coming to a head and Prime Ministerial involvement later in the week. O'Ceallaigh said that he did not rule out moving as quickly as that, but the Irish would prefer to use a round-table meeting to bless a deal which had already been largely pre-cooked privately. He also thought it would take a few days to bring the SDLP round. Although it was not a decisive factor, another problem was that Cowen was out of the country from Monday morning until early Thursday, on EU business and then on Security Council business in Washington. Cowen was hoping to meet Adams on Saturday.

8. I asked O'Ceallaigh whether there was any chance of Sinn Féin signing up to "re-engagement with attitude", and in particular having the IRA follow through to the point of agreeing modalities before the Election. O'Ceallaigh said that Adams had not ruled this out, although he had seemed a little taken aback when they had mentioned it. In a further conversation with O'Ceallaigh this morning, I asked him how, on the model he had described, Irish officials saw Sinn Féin reacting on policing. O'Ceallaigh said he did not really know. They would certainly not sign up for the Policing Board, and probably attack the SDLP mercilessly, but it was possible that they could be persuaded to take a more neutral approach. There were dangers in creating a division between the nationalist parties.

9. I reported all this to the Secretary of State and Jonathan Powell yesterday evening. The Secretary of State had had more evidence of Trimble's suspicions that we were all just trying to delay things. We agree that this argued for moving quickly, and - at the very least - careful handling of Trimble. He has spoken briefly to Trimble earlier in the evening, and had told him that our discussions with the Irish had

CONFIDENTIAL and PERSONAL

assumed that any round-table would be brought to a head before the end of next week. More generally, the Secretary of State's reaction was that the Irish were obviously intent on pursuing their own agenda, as well as the SDLP's, on policing and inquiries. We should be clear with them that they could not expect the kind of promise the SDLP were looking for on inquiries. (I made this point firmly to O'Ceallaigh this morning.) There might be an effort to get us to offer to the SDLP what we had promised Sinn Féin, but we should be careful to stick to the areas that had already been discussed with the SDLP. We might offer a review of the legislation, but stop short of any promise to legislate. As regards Sinn Féin, our contribution should be proportionate to their offer. Jonathan Powell's reaction was that, provided we did not waste too much time, there was something to be said for trying to put together a mini deal before getting all the parties together. The Prime Minister would probably find it easier to make time available at the beginning of the week than at the end.

10. I am planning to talk to O'Ceallaigh again this afternoon. I agreed with him that it might be sensible to try to write down the elements of a deal on the lines we had discussed, to ensure that we were both talking about the same thing, and think a bit further about process. I am dictating this note now to get it into the system as quickly as possible, and will follow up with more considered advice on next steps later in the day.

[Signed]

BILL JEFFREY
11 Millbank ☎ 6447

hfe

From: PS/Secretary of State
23 February 2001

JRO
FAXED
cc JS

cc: See Copy Distribution List

Mr Jeffrey - O

MEETING WITH BRIAN COWEN, 22 FEBRUARY

Summary

- Cowen non-committal on SDLP proposal for roundtable negotiations.
- Irish emphasise that any talks process must not focus solely on isolating Sinn Fein and bringing the SDLP on board on policing. This approach would not work.
- Irish would seek a high price even for a mini deal. Trimble must lift NSMC sanction, guarantee stability of the devolved institutions and accept nationalist demands on policing.

Detail

2. The Secretary of State met with Brian Cowen and Liz O'Donnell in Dublin on 22 February to discuss the political situation in Northern Ireland. Irish Ministers were supported by Daithi O'Ceallaigh, Declan Kelly, Gary Ansbro and Ray Bassett. Sir Ivor Roberts, Bill Jeffrey, Tom Kelly and I were also present. The meeting was good-humoured and business-like throughout.

3. The Secretary of State provided the Irish with a read out from the Prime Minister's meetings with David Trimble and the SDLP on 21 February. David Trimble was in a precarious position. The unionist community was drifting away from the GFA. The key issue for the UUP was progress on decommissioning. Trimble was suspicious that concessions were being made to the SDLP and Sinn Fein on policing issues. He was tempted to toughen the UUP's position and had a

range of options open to him - from UUP Ministers refusing to attend the NSMC, through to collapsing the devolved institutions.

4. The Secretary of State said the meeting with the SDLP showed that the Party recognised that we had met their concerns on policing issues. There was still a gap on inquiries – but we continued to look for a form of words to meet their concerns. On decommissioning, the SDLP recognised that Sinn Fein were being intransigent and that this created significant difficulties for the UUP. They were concerned about the risk that David Trimble would collapse the devolved institutions. This made them reluctant to join the Policing Board. But at the same time, they were looking over their shoulders at Sinn Fein. They were also concerned about being a minority of 3 out of 19 members on the Board. The SDLP therefore wanted all the outstanding issues to be dealt with comprehensively in a process of roundtable negotiations involving all of the pro-Agreement parties. HMG believed this was a constructive suggestion. David Trimble was sceptical about such an approach, believing it would let Sinn Fein off the hook and provide an excuse for the SDLP not to move on policing.

5. The Secretary of State said Sinn Fein were not offering any movement on decommissioning. HMG had gone a long way to meet their concerns on policing, but they had simply increased their demands. We did not underestimate the magnitude of the step Sinn Fein were being asked to take, but they had baulked and were holding up progress for all of the other parties. We therefore looked favourably on the SDLP's proposal, but only on condition that such talks would be time limited. We hoped it would be possible for the two Governments to reach agreement and initiate such a process early in the following week. It would be a genuine effort to put pressure on all of the parties to deliver.

6. Brian Cowen said the Irish were disappointed that the two Governments' efforts to reach a big deal had failed. We needed now to create a basis for maintaining the devolved institutions. Any attempt to isolate the policing issue and pressure the SDLP into coming on board would not work politically. As the SDLP had proposed, we needed to deal with the four outstanding issues – decommissioning, normalisation, policing and the stability of the institutions.

7. Brian Cowen said that any viable deal would have to cover a number of issues – including:

- Ensuring that the SDLP did not become hostage to past RUC abuses. Delivering on SDLP demands on inquiries would therefore be very important.
- The SDLP would need assurances about David Trimble's position on the NSMC and also about the future stability of the devolved institutions.
- We would need to examine whether we could achieve IRA re-engagement with de Chastelain as the basis for the UUP lifting their sanction on Sinn Fein Ministers attending the NSMC. We would also need some measure of normalisation as a means of achieving IRA re-engagement.
- If we wanted the SDLP to come on board on policing, we would need to give them compliance on their outstanding concerns on policing issues and on inquiries. We would also need to provide assurances about independent appointments to the Policing Board.
- If the SDLP came on board, we would need to ensure that the UUP did not claim it as a victory for them. This would be tantamount to the SDLP committing "political suicide".
- Sinn Fein would need to be got into a "wait and see" position on policing. This might be achieved by promising a review after the General Election. We might also be able to use a review to get Sinn Fein onto the Policing Board in due course.
- On this basis, David Trimble would achieve IRA re-engagement with de Chastelain and the prospect of the SDLP coming on board on policing.

8. Brian Cowen said this was probably the best deal we could get in current circumstances. He had also heard the suggestion that the devolved institutions could be suspended while we conducted a review of the GFA. He claimed that the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach had agreed that there would be no question of suspending the institutions without the agreement of both Governments. We should not even consider suspension at this stage. We needed to focus on finding a way forward.

9. In response, the Secretary of State made the following points:-

- The UUP did not regard the SDLP coming on board on policing as a significant prize. They were also worried that the SDLP might boast about the concessions they had achieved on policing issues, which would have a negative impact on the UUP grassroots. As a result, this did not constitute a significant lever to get the UUP to move on the NSMC or the stability of the institutions.
- On inquiries, David Trimble had made clear that he wanted to see inquiries initiated into a number of issues including the murders of Superintendents Breen and Buchanan and Ambassador Ewart-Biggs. Brian Cowen commented that the Irish would have “no problem” with this.
- It was not our intention to use any roundtable talks to isolate the SDLP or Sinn Fein. The process would be a genuine attempt to deal with all of the outstanding issues.
- IRA re-engagement with de Chastelain would not be enough for David Trimble. He was demanding a clear timescale for actual decommissioning. HMG believed that re-engagement would be a worthwhile goal, but we would only be prepared to pay a proportionate price for it. Otherwise we would be accused of paying again for something which had already been promised.

- HMG supported the SDLP's proposal on its merits. There was much to be said for bringing all the parties together and forcing them to address the outstanding issues. The process would create a new dynamic and allow pressure to be applied to all of the parties.

8. Brian Cowen said that if David Trimble was wedded to a timescale for actual decommissioning, he would inevitably seek an exit strategy from the political institutions. If that happened, there would be no prospect of a compromise from the SDLP or Sinn Fein. It would be a "crazy scenario" to tell Seamus Mallon that SDLP participation on the Policing Board meant nothing to the UUP. This would mean that, if the UUP did not get progress on decommissioning, they would collapse the institutions. The two Governments needed both sides to fight to maintain the institutions.

9. Brian Cowen said the Irish would take stock after their meetings later in the day with Sinn Fein, the SDLP and the UUP. They would listen to the SDLP and assess their proposal. He would come back to the Secretary of State about whether they were prepared to proceed with roundtable talks. He reiterated that the two Governments would face fundamental difficulties if we could not get the UUP to maintain the political institutions. The Secretary of State said he did not disagree. He saw three potential outcomes to the proposed roundtable talks: there might be agreement on the big deal – however, this was unlikely; agreement on a mini deal – involving, at minimum, movement on policing by the SDLP, no toughening of the UUP's position, IRA re-engagement with de Chastelain and a proportionate response on normalisation by HMG; and thirdly, no deal – in which case we would need to aim for a soft landing for the process, which would probably involve a review of the GFA. Brian Cowen did not demur. He reiterated that the Irish side would consider the SDLP's proposal and come back to us.

10. Brian Cowen also took the opportunity to raise a number of other issues:

- i. On loyalist pipe bomb attacks, he acknowledged that there had been progress in Larne. But we still needed to ensure that fuller information was provided by the police to those who were the subject of threats.

Moreover, we needed to provide practical support to help families to remain in their homes. The SPED Scheme provided assistance for victims to move home. We should also provide help for them to stay in their homes. We should consider providing a grant to allow homeowners to take practical steps to protect their homes. We needed a well resourced, speedy and flexible scheme which would provide help. This would send out a positive political message to the nationalist community. In response, the Secretary of State acknowledged that there had been a huge increase in effort by the RUC which was now paying dividends. It was no part of our policy to encourage people to move out of their homes. The Secretary of State said he had sought advice on a scheme to provide practical support to those under threat or those who had been victimised. He was not sure how much difference a small scale scheme would make in terms of providing protection. However, he accepted that there was a political dimension to the issue. He had therefore asked for further advice on a scheme which could be made available and which would be affordable. Brian Cowen said he appreciated the effort which the Secretary of State was making.

- ii. Brian Cowen said the Irish attached considerable importance to close consultation on the implementation of the Criminal Justice Review – and especially on the detail of the legislation. The Irish did not want to face the same problems that had arisen over Patten. There were great expectations about the Criminal Justice Review in the nationalist community. He hoped that close co-ordination and liaison on the preparation and drafting of the legislation would help to resolve difficulties before they became political issues and ended up in win/loss arguments and entrenched positions. He emphasised that the proposed Judicial Appointments Commission, independent Public Prosecution Service and Northern Ireland-based Attorney General were all issues of great importance which the Irish Government wanted to see taken forward in line with the recommendations in the Review. The Secretary of State said he could not share our instructions to Counsel

on the draft legislation, but would fully consult the Irish on the draft Bill prior to publication. His instinct was to keep as close to the report of the Criminal Justice Review as possible. He believed this was the strongest ground from which we could defend our approach.

- iii. Brian Cowen raised the issue of patrolling by the Parachute Regiment in Co Fermanagh in almost apologetic terms. Their aggressive approach was causing problems and he had received representations from Tommy Gallagher. There was a need for greater sensitivity. He asked HMG to come back to him on the issue in due course.

12. The Secretary of State said he hoped the Irish understood our need to move forward with the police recruitment campaign. We could not risk undermining the operational effectiveness of the police. We hoped the Irish would be understanding in public. We wanted nationalists to join the new police service and had been encouraged by the helpful Irish response to date. Finally, it was clear that the next NSMC was not going to happen and we should find a way of postponing it.

Signed

P G PRIESTLY

PS/Secretary of State

☎ (B) 28110

(L) 6462

cc: PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - O
PS/Mr Ingram (B&L) - O
PS/Mr Howarth (B&L) - O
Mr Watkins - O
Mr Alston - O
Mr Fittall - O
Mr Kelly - O
Mr Leach - O
Mr Maccabe - O
Ms Bharucha - O
Mr Waterworth - O
Sir Ivor Roberts, HMA Dublin - O
Mr Powell, No.10 - E



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

11 Millbank, London, SW1P 4PN

Tel 020 7210 6469

Fax 020 7210 6479

email: william.fittall@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk

Top - JPo (by fax)

cc JS (enc)

AJ

CS

Jonathan Powell
 10 Downing Street
 LONDON
 SW1A 2AA

22 February 2001

NORTHERN IRELAND: GENERAL AND DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS

I took a phone call from Ken Maginnis this afternoon asking where we had got to on the possibility of combining the District Council elections with the General Election assuming one were called this spring. He stressed that it was crucial for the survival pro-Agreement unionism.

I said that his leader had already registered the thought with the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State. As a result of that we had done an assessment of what would be required and what the risks were. But the change would require legislation and, given its sensitivity, was very much for the Prime Minister's judgement. I said that we had been half expecting his leader to raise the issue again with the Prime Minister yesterday. Maginnis, who was in robust good spirits, said that he was just off to Dublin with David Trimble and would rebuke him suitably.

Maginnis also asked me whether combining the elections would be possible if the General Election were held in April rather than May. I said that there was not an insuperable technical obstacle. But there had to be time to get the necessary legislation through Parliament. And bringing the District Council elections forward by several weeks from 16 May would be far more contentious with the Northern Ireland parties than changing from one May date to another.

Maginnis' parting shot was to ask me to pass this on to the Prime Minister's office and to "see that he gets his finger out!"

WILLIAM FITTALL
 Associate Political Director

cc PS/Secretary of State (L&B)
 Mr Pilling (L&B)
 Mr Jeffrey
 Miss Bharucha

02072703426
CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

P1053

FROM: P G Priestly
TO: Mr Jeffrey
DATE: 22 February 2001

File

- PS/SOS (B&L)
- PS/Mr Ingram (B&L)
- PS/Mr Howarth (B&L)
- PS/Mr Pilling (B&L)
- Mr Watkins
- Mr Alston
- Mr Fittall
- Mr Kelly
- Mr Maccabe
- Ms Bharucha
- Mr Waterworth
- Sir Ivor Roberts, HMA
- Mr Powell, No 10

sent by fax to Ottawa 22/2

PRIME MINSITER'S MEETING WITH DAVID TRIMBLE, 21 FEBRUARY

Summary

- Trimble probes for details of what has been offered to Sinn Féin and the SDLP. Emphasises that he needs to see the fine details of any deal.
- SDLP need to be put under pressure on policing. Giving them concessions will cause problems for the UUP.
- HMG needs to do more to help the UUP if there is no movement on decommissioning.
- Trimble agrees to meet the Taoiseach and make his position clear.

Detail

1. The Prime Minister met with David Trimble on 21 February to discuss the current situation in Northern Ireland. David Trimble was accompanied by David Lavery and David Campbell. The Secretary of State, Jonathan Powell, Bill Jeffrey and I were also present.
2. The Prime Minister explained the current position in the political negotiations. Sinn Féin had baulked. We did not know whether this was their final position. We were therefore trying to ensure that the SDLP moved forward on policing. David Trimble said he needed to know more about what HMG was offering to the SDLP on policing. Movement on inquiries would create problems for the UUP. Similarly, a review of policing using Tom Constantine was a bad idea. He understood that the SDLP had been given assurances on appointments to the Policing Board. The Prime Minister and the Secretary of State refuted this. David Trimble said it was important for the UUP that the Chairmanship of the Policing Board went to a Protestant – since the Police Ombudsman

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

02072703426
CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

and the Oversight Commissioner posts had gone to Catholics, as had the Chairmanship of the Parades Commission.

3. The Secretary of State said the SDLP's position was that they could not join the Policing Board without Sinn Féin also coming on board. They were also concerned that the UUP would collapse the political institutions, which would inevitably cause the collapse of the Policing Board.

4. The Prime Minister said he had discussed the situation with the Taoiseach, who had agreed that Sinn Féin should not be given an effective veto over progress. Moreover, the Taoiseach had said he was content with the position we had now reached on policing issues and would support the SDLP if they came on board. The Prime Minister said his assessment was that we had a better chance of getting Sinn Féin to come on board if the SDLP were to come on board first. This would enable us to apply pressure to Sinn Féin to move. They would not do so if they were confident of having the nationalist consensus behind their position.

5. David Trimble said that he had heard from media sources that middle ranking PIRA members wanted Sinn Féin to face the elections with the political institutions having collapsed. The Prime Minister said this made it all the more important to persuade Sinn Féin that they would pay a price by being isolated on the policing issue. If the SDLP came on board with support from the Irish, Sinn Féin would be left in a difficult position. His judgement was that Sinn Féin would be more forthcoming in these circumstances. David Trimble countered that the SDLP joining the Policing Board would be a mixed blessing if they trumpeted the concessions they had received for doing so. SDLP participation on the Policing Board was not seen as a significant prize by the UUP. His supporters would be more concerned about poor police morale and the loss of senior officers through the severance arrangements. The big prize was decommissioning. The Prime Minister reiterated that it was in the UUP's interest for the SDLP to join the Board. David Trimble agreed and said we needed to apply pressure to the SDLP, not give them more concessions. An approach which was "all carrot and no stick" simply created difficulties for him.

6. Changing tack, David Trimble said that if HMG was pressing forward with the implementation of Patten ("butchering of the RUC") in circumstances where there was no progress on decommissioning, the UUP would need counter balancing measures to support its position. HMG also needed to ensure that the efficiency and effectiveness of the police service was maintained and that "proper" appointments were made to the Policing Board. On symbolic issues, the process of "hollowing out" the Britishness of Northern Ireland must stop.

7. The Prime Minister said David Trimble should arrange to see the Taoiseach and have a frank discussion with him. David Trimble said he was about to have a row with the Taoiseach about the NSMC. He was also fed up with Seamus Mallon blocking measures and creating obstacles within the devolved administration. When the UUP had agreed to support the GFA they had made the fundamental assumption that any devolved administration would be based on a partnership between the UUP and the SDLP. But, in practice, the SDLP had moved closer to Sinn Féin than the UUP. Seamus Mallon tended to regard every issue as a contest with the UUP. His whole approach was a type of guerilla warfare with the UUP. It was now obvious to the media and the public that his

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

02072703426
CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

relationship with Seamus Mallon was poor. To add to the difficulties, the SDLP had no decent party organisation. Sinn Féin were much more effective at grass roots level and were exploiting weaknesses in the electoral system. There was now a huge problem of electoral fraud. He had been complaining about this for years and had been promised legislation but HMG had not delivered on the commitment. There had been much talking about the problem, but little action. Part of the problem was that the NIO did not want to upset Sinn Féin. The Prime Minister asked whether legislation could be pushed through before the General Election. You said this was unlikely to be possible, but a number of administrative steps could be taken to tighten electoral procedures.

8. The Prime Minister said he was confident the Taoiseach would agree to a concerted approach to moving things forward, which would isolate Sinn Féin. But the UUP needed to avoid taking any steps which might give the moral high ground to Sinn Féin. We also needed to give the SDLP reassurance that if they joined the Policing Board they would be supported by the Catholic Church and the Irish Government, and would not run the risk of the political institutions being collapsed. David Trimble said he needed to see details of the concessions which had been offered to the SDLP. The Prime Minister assured him that he would be taken through these issues before any agreement was reached. He was content for the Secretary of State to take the UUP through the detail of the policing issues which had been agreed with the SDLP. David Trimble said the Chief Constable also needed to take Ken Maginnis through these issues. He alleged that the Police Federation had claimed that as part of any deal all police officers would have to take the new oath. The Prime Minister and the Secretary of State refuted this.

9. David Trimble then rehearsed a number of issues of concern to the UUP. He said that if HMG conceded any inquiries to the SDLP, the UUP would want to see inquiries into a number of issues about which they had concerns. He wanted to see more being done to keep Sinn Féin under pressure. We also needed to take action against the Republican dissidents. The UUP were also concerned about the continuing threat from the Provisionals, whom he understood were continuing to maintain their capability. The Drumcree issue also needed to be resolved. Brian Currin was "useless" and had "alienated all concerned" on the Orange side. He had been promised by the Parades Commission that certain (unspecified) steps would be taken, but the Commission had not delivered. The Prime Minister asked the Secretary of State for a note on Drumcree (advice please: **Mr Watkins**).

10. Drawing the meeting to a close, the Prime Minister asked David Trimble to arrange to meet the Taoiseach in order to set out his position. He needed to make clear that it was not justifiable for Sinn Féin and the SDLP to be given a veto over progress. Moreover, he should make clear that he would consider it a breach of faith if the Irish Government were not prepared to take concerted action to achieve progress.

P G Priestly

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL



DCO
Top: COS
FAYED
cc: FA/RS
FA/GAPS
AC/Press

PRIME MINISTER'S
CORRESPONDENCE SECTION
RECEIVED
23 FEB 2001

GERRY ADAMS MP
SINN FÉIN
PRESIDENT

February 21st

Mr. Tony Blair MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London

Anna
Can you file
a draft of
for MoD with lunch

JL 26/2

A Chara

Tomy

There is increasing evidence of criticism and cynicism of the Saville Inquiry by relatives of those killed by the British Army on Bloody Sunday in January 1972.

This was articulated by spokesperson for the families at the Bloody Sunday commemorations which I attended in Derry last month.

As you may recall I raised some of the points with you during a recent meeting. Since then I requested a brief which I have summarised below.

I believe it explains the reasons why and justifies the growing concern at the way in which the Saville Inquiry is being subverted by those within the British military and political establishment who appear intent on preventing the Inquiry from getting to the whole truth.

This is being achieved in a number of ways.

Considerable questions are being asked regarding the extent and importance of the material which the British MoD has not provided to the Inquiry, the explanations which are being offered as to why this material was not retained at the time, and has subsequently been destroyed or cannot be traced.

Relatives, and lawyers acting for them, do not accept this given that contemporaneous material that is of benefit to the soldiers' case has become available.

54 23/2/01

The main outstanding military material concerns army photographs and the identity of the photographers, the contemporaneous film footage from army helicopter, destruction of the rifles fired, relevant contemporary documents such as the armoury register, and internal reports.

The taking of photographs and the assignment of photographers was an important part of the operational orders on Bloody Sunday. Yet despite their importance to the British Army in the presentation of their case at the Widgery Tribunal, and their consequent historical importance, almost none of the vast number of photographs have been made available.

Colonel Overbury, who was a member of the Army Legal Services and who prepared for the Widgery Tribunal, has confirmed that military photographs were taken on the day from ground level and he believes also from the air. He confirms also that further photographs were taken later to prepare a plan of the soldiers' shots. He states that all photographs were provided to Widgery tribunal staff, and is of the view that the number would be around 1000 photographs. The explanation which continues to be provided by the British MoD for their non-disclosure is similar to that offered regarding other material, i.e. that in 1972 the British MoD did not have a centralised catalogue or archive system, and therefore if the material is still in existence it is very difficult to trace where it is now or alternatively it was destroyed.

The position regarding photographs and film appears even worse than military documents as the British MoD state (extraordinarily) that photographs and film were not accorded the same significance as official documents.

There was a team from British MoD headquarters in the north of Ireland, responsible for taking heli-tele film, and whose task was to provide maximum photographic coverage of the march and associated incidents. The lawyers believe the film should last several hours. The information they have is that the original film was taken to London for security processing, where 2 copies were printed, one of which was required urgently by the British MoD at the start of February 1972.

The Widgery Tribunal had possession of a film, although it is not thought that this was the original. The Lawyers acting for the families do not know whether the Widgery Tribunal received either a full copy or the very short (just over 3 minutes) and edited version that we now have. What is clear to the lawyers is that whatever was provided to the Widgery Tribunal, by May 1972 the original was being stored in the Home Office in London, and a copy was held in 'Headquarters NI'.

The lawyers do not know the total numbers of copies made. Yet the British MOD states they have no further film to the very short one that they have received. No statement is yet available from the person who took the film.

29 rifles were identified as belonging to the Parachute Regiment at the Widgery Tribunal as being responsible for all shootings, all of which were accounted for by 29th September 1999. There is an ongoing British MoD police investigation into the disposal of all rifles, namely those that have been sold and those which have been destroyed.

The families concern centres around those rifles that have been destroyed or otherwise disposed of after this Inquiry was announced, and after the MoD had provided an assurance that everything of relevance had been provided to this Inquiry. Only 3 out of these rifles remain. The explanation provided regarding those destroyed after this inquiry began, is that the British MOD had not been provided with the full serial numbers which would have highlighted those rifles as Bloody Sunday rifles.

The lawyers acting for the families have also sought relevant documentary material. Much attention was paid to documents for the relevant forensic evidence concerning the rifles, their examination and testing, armoury registers to ascertain which rifles were assigned to whom, ammunition registers to detail how much was in possession of whom. The lawyers also sought intelligence reports, signal instructions, training documents, standing orders records, disciplinary procedures, etc and none of this has been made available. The same explanations offered in relation to photographs and film has been given for this.

Finally, all Government bodies are subject to the document management procedures and rules. The Public Records Office gives guidance on this obviously as material, which is to be preserved, will eventually be deposited with them. As a result all information and material must go through processes of review to determine whether they are preserved as material of public importance or destroyed.

The lawyers believe that most of the material they seek would have been considered of such importance as to be preserved, in view of the fact that the Widgery Tribunal was the first occasion in which the British Army's actions were being examined by a public inquiry under the 1921 Act. If the material was destroyed, there must be a motive or reason for this and in those circumstances; those persons who gave authorisation for destruction must provide an explanation.

At a minimum, the families require evidence that the material has in fact been destroyed, i.e. the destruction records etc, and these still have not been provided.

Moreover the lawyers and relatives do not accept that all the material they seek has been destroyed.

For example, regarding photographs, when it suited the British MOD to help obtain screening, contemporaneous photographs have come to light for soldiers 042, and H, with no explanation of how these came to light.

Also regarding documents, when the families sought source documents relating to intelligence reports, they were told they would not be preserved, yet when the British government wanted to produce evidence of alleged IRA activity, they were able to produce source documents, statements by the parties involved and a tape recording purporting to be an actual debriefing of an informer.

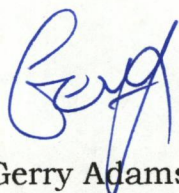
Clearly, there are those within the British system who are intent on frustrating the truth about Bloody Sunday.

This is unacceptable.

I am therefore asking you to use your authority to ensure that these obstacles to the truth are removed and that the British MoD and other relevant British agencies co-operate fully with the Saville Inquiry and with the lawyers acting for the relatives.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Is mise le meas

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gerry Adams', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gerry Adams MP



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

26 February 2001

Dear Sarah

BLOODY SUNDAY INQUIRY

I enclose a letter from Gerry Adams to the Prime Minister about the Saville Inquiry. I would be grateful for a draft reply by 2 March. If for any reason it is impossible to meet this deadline please could you let me know?

I am copying this to Julian Miller (MOD).

Yours ever

Anna Wechsberg

ANNA WECHSBERG

Sarah Todd
NIO

Top: COS

cc SA/PS
FA/APS
AC/PS

NEWS
SECTION
RECEIVED
23 FEB 2001

GERRY ADAMS MP
SINN FÉIN
PRESIDENT

February 21st

Mr. Tony Blair MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London

A Chara *Tony*

There is increasing evidence of criticism and cynicism of the Saville Inquiry by relatives of those killed by the British Army on Bloody Sunday in January 1972.

This was articulated by spokesperson for the families at the Bloody Sunday commemorations which I attended in Derry last month.

As you may recall I raised some of the points with you during a recent meeting. Since then I requested a brief which I have summarised below.

I believe it explains the reasons why and justifies the growing concern at the way in which the Saville Inquiry is being subverted by those within the British military and political establishment who appear intent on preventing the Inquiry from getting to the whole truth.

This is being achieved in a number of ways.

Considerable questions are being asked regarding the extent and importance of the material which the British MoD has not provided to the Inquiry, the explanations which are being offered as to why this material was not retained at the time, and has subsequently been destroyed or cannot be traced.

Relatives, and lawyers acting for them, do not accept this given that contemporaneous material that is of benefit to the soldiers' case has become available.

as niala

The main outstanding military material concerns army photographs and the identity of the photographers, the contemporaneous film footage from army helicopter, destruction of the rifles fired, relevant contemporary documents such as the armoury register, and internal reports.

The taking of photographs and the assignment of photographers was an important part of the operational orders on Bloody Sunday. Yet despite their importance to the British Army in the presentation of their case at the Widgery Tribunal, and their consequent historical importance, almost none of the vast number of photographs have been made available.

Colonel Overbury, who was a member of the Army Legal Services and who prepared for the Widgery Tribunal, has confirmed that military photographs were taken on the day from ground level and he believes also from the air. He confirms also that further photographs were taken later to prepare a plan of the soldiers' shots. He states that all photographs were provided to Widgery tribunal staff, and is of the view that the number would be around 1000 photographs. The explanation which continues to be provided by the British MoD for their non-disclosure is similar to that offered regarding other material, i.e. that in 1972 the British MoD did not have a centralised catalogue or archive system, and therefore if the material is still in existence it is very difficult to trace where it is now or alternatively it was destroyed.

The position regarding photographs and film appears even worse than military documents as the British MoD state (extraordinarily) that photographs and film were not accorded the same significance as official documents.

There was a team from British MoD headquarters in the north of Ireland, responsible for taking heli-tele film, and whose task was to provide maximum photographic coverage of the march and associated incidents. The lawyers believe the film should last several hours. The information they have is that the original film was taken to London for security processing, where 2 copies were printed, one of which was required urgently by the British MoD at the start of February 1972.

The Widgery Tribunal had possession of a film, although it is not thought that this was the original. The Lawyers acting for the families do not know whether the Widgery Tribunal received either a full copy or the very short (just over 3 minutes) and edited version that we now have. What is clear to the lawyers is that whatever was provided to the Widgery Tribunal, by May 1972 the original was being stored in the Home Office in London, and a copy was held in 'Headquarters NI'.

The lawyers do not know the total numbers of copies made. Yet the British MOD states they have no further film to the very short one that they have received. No statement is yet available from the person who took the film.

29 rifles were identified as belonging to the Parachute Regiment at the Widgery Tribunal as being responsible for all shootings, all of which were accounted for by 29th September 1999. There is an ongoing British MoD police investigation into the disposal of all rifles, namely those that have been sold and those which have been destroyed.

The families concern centres around those rifles that have been destroyed or otherwise disposed of after this Inquiry was announced, and after the MoD had provided an assurance that everything of relevance had been provided to this Inquiry. Only 3 out of these rifles remain. The explanation provided regarding those destroyed after this inquiry began, is that the British MOD had not been provided with the full serial numbers which would have highlighted those rifles as Bloody Sunday rifles.

The lawyers acting for the families have also sought relevant documentary material. Much attention was paid to documents for the relevant forensic evidence concerning the rifles, their examination and testing, armoury registers to ascertain which rifles were assigned to whom, ammunition registers to detail how much was in possession of whom. The lawyers also sought intelligence reports, signal instructions, training documents, standing orders records, disciplinary procedures, etc and none of this has been made available. The same explanations offered in relation to photographs and film has been given for this.

Finally, all Government bodies are subject to the document management procedures and rules. The Public Records Office gives guidance on this obviously as material, which is to be preserved, will eventually be deposited with them. As a result all information and material must go through processes of review to determine whether they are preserved as material of public importance or destroyed.

The lawyers believe that most of the material they seek would have been considered of such importance as to be preserved, in view of the fact that the Widgery Tribunal was the first occasion in which the British Army's actions were being examined by a public inquiry under the 1921 Act. If the material was destroyed, there must be a motive or reason for this and in those circumstances; those persons who gave authorisation for destruction must provide an explanation.

At a minimum, the families require evidence that the material has in fact been destroyed, i.e. the destruction records etc, and these still have not been provided.

Moreover the lawyers and relatives do not accept that all the material they seek has been destroyed.

For example, regarding photographs, when it suited the British MOD to help obtain screening, contemporaneous photographs have come to light for soldiers 042, and H, with no explanation of how these came to light.

Also regarding documents, when the families sought source documents relating to intelligence reports, they were told they would not be preserved, yet when the British government wanted to produce evidence of alleged IRA activity, they were able to produce source documents, statements by the parties involved and a tape recording purporting to be an actual debriefing of an informer.

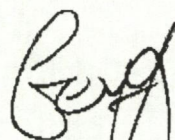
Clearly, there are those within the British system who are intent on frustrating the truth about Bloody Sunday.

This is unacceptable.

I am therefore asking you to use your authority to ensure that these obstacles to the truth are removed and that the British MoD and other relevant British agencies co-operate fully with the Saville Inquiry and with the lawyers acting for the relatives.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Is mise le meas



Gerry Adams MP

BILLY ARMSTRONG MLA
ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY
ASSEMBLY MEMBER for MID-ULSTER



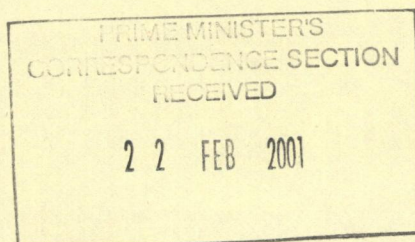
**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

Room 378
Parliament Buildings
Belfast BT4 3XX
Tel :028 90 5 20305
Fax:028 90 5 20302

PM/NIO/MT
CC NIE
CS
JP

Wednesday, February 21, 2001

Rt.Hon. Tony Blair MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW12 2AA



Dear Tony,

I write to you because of my concerns of the way we in the Ulster Unionist Party have been lead Westminster and other concerned parties.

We have supported you and have tried to make the Belfast Agreement work and we have agreed to ideas and suggestions of yours and your advisers.

I believe as a lot of my fellow assembly members do, we have went to far, we are selling ourselves out to a republicans agenda, and our creditably as leaders of the Unionist people has gone.

The way things have been shaping in the past three years might be good in the eyes of the world, and is sure bringing us closer to an united Ireland where we as Unionist don't want to be!

The SF/IRA, Gerry and Martin has really given nothing, they have achieved all their prisoners out of jail, the whole structure of security in our province has changed to suit them, I could go on and on.

What are you trying to do to David Trimble and the Unionist Party?

Do you believe Sinn Fein deserve to be in Government when they have not decommissioned their weapons and bomb making material?

Would you not think Nationals and Republicans parties should be more tolerant to the culture of Unionists? We all have to live together?

Would you not say that security can't be relaxed until the threat of terrorists is totally demised

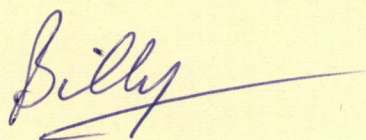
David Trimble can't come back after speaking to you saying that we have to take another chance, because SF/IRA won't move unless we do this, that, or the other.

MID-ULSTER ULSTER UNIONIST CONSTITUENCY OFFICE
PROSPECT HOUSE, COAGH ROAD, STEWARTSTOWN, DUNGANNON, CO.TYRONE. BT71 5JH.
TEL: 028 87 738641, FAX: 028 87 738844, MOBILE: 07801 738641

WEB SITE: <http://www.billyarmstrong.co.uk> E-MAIL: m1a@billyarmstrong.co.uk

I hope you will reply yourself, and consider my fears, so that we both can keep face, and work towards stable government in these islands of ours without the threat of terrorist.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Billy" with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Billy Armstrong

02072703426

RESTRICTED

P 1 of 2

FROM: John Rankin
HME Dublin

TO: HMA

DATE: 21 February 2001

Cc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B)
PS/Mr Ingram
PS/Mr Howarth
PS/PUS
Mr Jeffrey
Mr Maccabe
Mr Fittall
Mr Watkins
Mr Kelly
Ms Bharucha
Mr Waterworth
Mr Brett
Mr Sawers, No10

wd
21/2

← JPO
MT OIR
AC

TAOISEACH'S COMMENTS ON PEACE PROCESS

1. At your dinner for the Secretary of State on 20 February, Martin Mansergh and other senior Irish officials laid considerable stress on the Taoiseach's comments on Northern Ireland earlier in the day at Dáil questions, saying these had been "highly significant". Ashley Ray has already reported the gist of what Ahern said, but we now have the full transcript. The significant points in Ahern's remarks seem to be the following:

- "We have not crossed every 't' and dotted every 'i', but there has been more than 90% progress.
- "In the end the Parties, collectively, but especially individually, have to decide what is satisfactory. The Governments are working together and bilaterally with them to get everyone across the line in this phase. This has to be done in the next week or so".
- "I accept that I have a role, as do the churches and others, in trying to persuade the Parties if there is a deal which, although not perfect, can enable progress. We ourselves have not come to a conclusion yet but will decide soon".
- "...the matter cannot drift on endlessly. People somewhere will have to make a call soon".

RESTRICTED

02072703426

RESTRICTED

- [In response to a question from Austin Currie (who is very close to the SDLP) on policing and possible legislation] **Ahern** "My view is that an understanding can be reached on these issues. Ultimately they will require legislation, but they do not need legislation now. **Currie** Ultimately? **Ahern** Yes **Currie** Not within the next week or too? **Ahern** No. An understanding can be reached now that would allow movement to take place. Ultimately, legislation will be required. **Currie** Is that the answer to Sinn Féin? Could the Taoiseach say "yes" rather than nod? **Ahern** Yes.

COMMENT

2. As ever, the precise intended import of the Taoiseach's remarks is open to some interpretation. But the line from Irish officials was that Ahern's remarks should be seen as helpful from a UK perspective.
3. Presumably the message was intended to be that it was time for PIRA ("People somewhere") to come on board. The comment that legislation on policing was not required immediately was also presumably intended to be helpful. But it is clear from discussions over the past couple of days that Ahern's further remark that legislation on policing would ultimately be required may not be viewed so positively by the SDLP (to say nothing of Trimble's position).

John Rankin

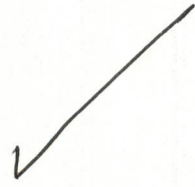
RESTRICTED



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
11 Millbank, London, SW1P 4PN
Tel 020 7210 6469 Fax 020 7210 6479
email: william.fittall@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk

Jonathan Powell
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AA

TS
MT or
AC
BWP



21 February 2001

Dear Mr. Powell

NORTHERN IRELAND: PM'S MEETINGS THIS MORNING

In case you have not spotted the transcripts, yesterday's public comments about the launch of police recruitment make for interesting reading. Trimble said: "There is no doubt about the need." Perhaps more interestingly Mallon, while noting that the new Policing Board was not in place and that things had to be taken a step at a time, said that: **"I wish well anybody who chooses to respond to that advert."**

By contrast Gerry Adams said: "At this point its recruitment to the RUC, and **no democrat, never mind a republican or nationalist, would advise anyone to join the RUC.**" On the contrary Sinn Féin will be advising people not to join or support this recruitment drive to what is an old force."

W.F. **WILLIAM FITTALL**
Associate Political Director

cc PS/Secretary of State (L&B)
PS/Mr Pilling (L&B)
Mr Jeffrey
Mr Watkins

CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister

✓
 CCJPS
 JS
 MTP/IC
 AC

OVERNIGHT THOUGHTS FROM DUBLIN

1. My best guess is that

the SDLP'S line when you see them this morning will be:

- to complain that we have been readier to make concessions on policing to Sinn Féin in private than to the SDLP in Parliament;
- to say that they can't safely sign up for the Policing Board until other outstanding matters have been sorted out - they will look fools if they nominate and within weeks the collapse of the institutions invalidates their nominations;
- to propose discussions involving the parties collectively to chart a way through.

2. The last point reflects discussion in Dublin last night. Irish officials are wary, because they know Sinn Féin won't like it, and still hold out some hope that a big deal can be done. They have encouraged Mallon to talk to you about it, but not to emerge from the meetings - as he was planning to do - with a public call for round table discussions.

3. As it happens, Trimble's position may be not dissimilar

- he too will complain about how extended we have got with Sinn Féin, and how this plays publicly.
- he has been toying publicly with the idea of a review, without making it clear whether he expects the institutions to collapse or continue while the review takes place.
- he probably doesn't know himself, and would certainly need to hang tough on North/South.

4. My advice would be, for the moment, to be non-committal both on the idea of a review and on Mallon's call (if he makes it) for collective discussions. but to work to the following plan:

- aim to bring the present round of discussions to a head soon after your return, and in effect present Sinn Féin with an ultimatum - you and Bertie could do this in a day's discussions at Hillsborough;
- in these discussions, put the question on policing, but also explore to the limit the possibility of parking policing if it is just too difficult for the SDLP and Sinn Féin to move on it before the Election, and instead doing a limited deal on weapons/military installations/OTRs. (It is lack of progress on weapons that is hurting Trimble most);
- if that fails, set up, with Bertie, a review to straddle the Election period, to be launched by a round table discussion involving all the parties.

John Reid

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM: William Fittall
Associate Political Director(L)
20 February 2001

Jonathan Powell

PM'S MEETINGS WITH TRIMBLE AND HUME/MALLON

Before leaving for Dublin the Secretary of State suggested that the PM might like a single page of bull points for each of tomorrow morning's meetings to supplement the minute which he sent earlier this afternoon. These are attached.

(Signed)

William Fittall
11 Millbank ☎ 6469 (Castle Buildings ☎ Ext.22885)

JB
e: JS
AC
Sup.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Bull points to use with David Trimble

- Adams and McGuinness told me last Thursday that they couldn't do the **big deal** now. Serious disappointment to the Irish and us after all the effort Bertie and I have put in. The gap is said to be on policing but this may be a pretext for their difficulties on decommissioning.
- Didn't want the news to break while you were away. And in any event there are advantages in avoiding a sudden sense of crisis. **Talks continue**. But realistic assessment now is that chance of big breakthrough over next few weeks is slim.
- Sinn Fein **may** come back and offer **limited deal** – perhaps reengagement with de Chastelain without assurances on timescales thereafter. Provided the price to us is low would this buy you a few weeks breathing space, or be more trouble than it's worth?
- Still trying to get SDLP to **nominate to Policing Board**. Hard sell, given the politics. Not confident of success. If we pull it off how much will it help you? John's made it clear to them that the recruitment advertising is going ahead anyway this week.
- How do we keep institutions going over the coming weeks? What is your thinking on the nature and timing of a **review** to tide us over? Will this be enough for your party colleagues?
- Will the Irish agree not to provoke a crisis by insisting on a **North/South Council on 2 March**? Worth you talking to Bertie.
- [Trimble likely to raise **synchronisation of elections** (see John Reid minute of 13 February). PM might without commitment probe how much this matters to Trimble both in substance and for party management.]

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Bull points for Hume/Mallon meeting

- John's told me about his long meeting with you on Monday evening. We're all fed up with the way Sinn Fein have behaved. There were the markings of a deal which would have enabled all nationalists to claim victory. The question now is **where do we go from here?**
- Tough call for you but **real opportunity to give a lead** and show you've got your own agenda, independent from Sinn Fein's. And it would put pressure on them. Do you think Dublin and Catholic Church will be prepared to back you?
- Don't believe Trimble wants to collapse the institutions. But even if we do get back to suspension we'll still need a Policing Board with nationalist politicians on it. **If you come on the Board now we're absolutely committed to keeping you on.**
- Prepared to help on any outstanding **implementation plan** points but gap now pretty small. Please don't demand the impossible on **inquiries**. What you asked John for on Monday goes far beyond Patten. We've not given Sinn Fein anything beyond Patten.
- If you're clear you can't join the Board till after the election tell us and we'll have to plan accordingly. **Recruitment campaign** this week has to go ahead anyway. And we need to decide what to do about the **Police Authority**.
- I accept that we've not always got the balance right between **collective and bilateral** negotiations. But really don't think we'd have made faster progress on decommissioning and policing if we'd got everyone into the room together.

CONFIDENTIAL



SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

JB
W. JS
MT 01/1
AC.

Prime Minister

NORTHERN IRELAND: THE NEXT FEW DAYS

Summary

Predictable line from Adams. No sign of movement or fishing for a mini deal. SDLP very bitter and negative. All but rule out joining Policing Board in present situation though imply they might reconsider if we give unequivocal commitments to public inquiries, with international judge, in Finucane, Nelson and Hamill cases. Trimble now under increasing pressure to get tough. Our priorities for the rest of this week should be to keep up the pressure on the SDLP and to win the PR battle here and in Dublin over the launch of the police recruitment campaign, which Sinn Fein will strongly criticise. We also need urgently to prepare the ground for the two issues likely to dominate next week: the run up to the North South Ministerial Council plenary on Friday 2 March, which Trimble will come under increasing pressure to boycott; and our need to decide whether to invite the Police Authority to remain in existence beyond 31 March or announce the creation of a new interim Commission.

What happened yesterday

Adams got wind of my wish to see Mallon and demanded a meeting, largely for public consumption. His line remains that Sinn Fein would in principle like to join the Policing Board but cannot do so until we reduce the wide gap that remains. He

CONFIDENTIAL & PERSONAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL & PERSONAL~~SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

wants to bring McGuinness to see me for a further talk over the weekend and agreed with me that we needed to find a way of preventing the process from falling apart over the next few weeks. There was no talk of a possible mini deal.

2. I took Adams - and subsequently the SDLP - through the reasons why we had to launch the police recruitment campaign this week. The SDLP appeared to understand but would not be drawn on what line they would take publicly. Adams said that Sinn Fein would be sharply critical. I shall need to use my media opportunities in Dublin on Thursday and perhaps seek such opportunities in Northern Ireland on Friday to get our story across vigorously. I also threw in the necessity of me addressing the Police Authority issue.

3. The SDLP were full of reproaches. They were sore about Peter and the handling of the Police Act. They were particularly sore that you had ruled out fresh legislation for them at Hillsborough a month ago and now conceded it to Sinn Fein "because they have guns". They didn't see how they could put three Assembly members on the Board when they would be in a total minority. I pointed out that I could redress this with the balance of the appointed members of the Police Board. However, they also agreed that they would be isolated because, in the absence of a deal on weapons, Trimble would probably collapse the Assembly and Executive within weeks.

4. They agreed to meet me again in a couple of days time but made it clear that the only possible basis for movement would be if we had "closed" negotiating with Sinn Fein and also conceded unequivocal commitments to public inquiries for Finucane, Hamill and Nelson. I interpret this as a spoiling tactic.

~~CONFIDENTIAL & PERSONAL~~



SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

5. I have not seen Trimble, but our lower level contacts with UUP people and his own letter to you yesterday suggest the screw is tightening. He may want to get through the Election by maintaining his tough stance on North/South and through a formal review of some kind. But in the absence of movement there must be a real risk that the "anti" people in his party will seize the opportunity to get UUP Ministers out of the Executive without attacking Trimble personally. His period of maximum vulnerability is the next few weeks. As things stand, he will have no choice but to boycott the North/South meeting on 2 March, thus ratcheting things up.

Our objectives now

6. In my view, our short-term objectives should be:

- ◆ **To keep working on the SDLP.** They are probably not going to sign up for the Policing Board before the Election. They may be being restrained by Irish officials behind the scenes and are certainly not being put under much pressure. But you should use our meeting with Hume and Mallon tomorrow to appeal to them, and give them a sense of the political downside of being so obviously in hock to Sinn Féin. Any Police Board could be balanced by appointments. I attach a note on the detailed outstanding SDLP points on policing/inquiries in case the discussion goes in that direction. If the SDLP did nominate to the Police Board, it would add to the pressure on Sinn Fein to do likewise.





SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

- ◆ **To keep our minds open to a deal with Sinn Féin, including one short of our ideal requirements, but without putting anything new on the table and, within this, with only a proportionate response to whatever they offer.** There is some intelligence to suggest Sinn Féin interest in a small deal, in which the IRA would enter discussions with de Chastelain without any guarantees about where they would lead or on what timescale, and we would do some of what we have been offering. In my view we should be willing to entertain this, but not go looking for it or consider paying much of a price for it. The fact is that Sinn Féin probably need minimal IRA re-engagement before the Election for their own protection. It would be a bit of a poisoned chalice for Trimble, because he would be expected to back off on North/South in return for something which might have made a difference a couple of months ago but will now be dismissed by unionists as just another ploy.

- ◆ **To re-engage Trimble in a tactical discussion of how to hold things together over the Election period.** It is his own fault for being out of the country, but he clearly feels neglected, and has a point when he says that we have spent weeks wooing Sinn Féin and the SDLP. When you see him tomorrow, you could ask him, in particular, whether a small deal would be a help or a hindrance; how he sees a review working; and whether he thinks that a well-timed review would enable him to get through the Election with the institutions intact. You could also encourage him to work on the Taoiseach himself (and perhaps Mallon) if he agrees with us that Irish Government/SDLP/Catholic Church support on policing would at least improve the atmosphere.

CONFIDENTIAL & PERSONAL





SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

- ◆ **To launch the police recruitment campaign on Friday and handle the media in such a way as to pre-empt and rebut Sinn Féin claims that we, rather than they, have scuppered the chances of a deal by moving ahead on recruitment.**

- ◆ **To prepare the ground for interim arrangements for police accountability after 31 March, assuming neither the SDLP nor Sinn Féin sign up.** I incline towards interim Commissioners, as an evidently temporary measure until the Policing Board can be established, rather than keeping the existing Police Authority on indefinitely, but am still working on the details.

- ◆ **To work up the review option, which would benefit from being played in relatively early, if it too is not to be discounted.**

JOHN REID
20 FEBRUARY 2001

CONFIDENTIAL

Annex

SDLP - POSSIBLE POINTS FOR PM MEETING

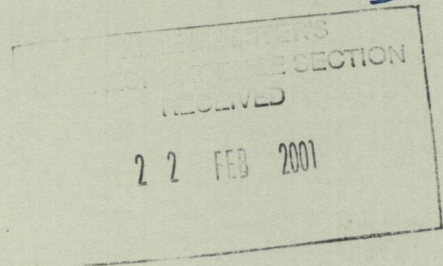
1. Need for collective management of peace process.	Agree, and accept that we haven't always got this right (eg Hillsborough May 2000). But collective process needs underpinning with bilaterals.
2. Have HMG finished negotiating with Sinn Fein?	We've made it clear we've already gone beneath our bottom line on policing. Nothing more to offer. Until we have full implementation of GFA, however - including on weapons - we cannot stop talking to anyone.
3. Will HMG commit unequivocally to Finucane/Hamill/Nelson inquiries?	No, because it's simply impossible to know what will come out anyway as a result of the continuing, independent investigations. And retrospective inquiries would be contrary to what Patten recommended - the touchstone for our negotiations with Sinn Fein as well as the SDLP. We have already said that we recognise our 'responsibility to take such further steps as may ... be required to meet continuing public concern' once the investigations are over.
4. Will HMG firm up words in implementation plan on Gough, full time reserve etc?	John Reid happy to look further at any detailed points if it would really make the difference , but the gaps now are about fine tuning of timings.
5. How can 3 SDLP nominees avoid being swamped on Board of 19?	John Reid has said that we'd be prepared to invite further applications for independent membership of the Board and to balance up the unionist dominance of the political nominees.

CONFIDENTIAL

6. What about a review of the Act and a commitment to legislate?	Happy to give a commitment to a review after 12 months and a willingness to legislate [but, in the absence of a big deal, not a commitment to details of new legislation.]
7. What's the point of putting Assembly members on the Board when the Assembly's about to be suspended anyway?	Don't accept that's inevitable. If it did collapse John Reid would have to appoint a replacement Board and would obviously want to have members acceptable to the SDLP, provided they had already committed themselves to the new service. He has power to reappoint the suspended Assembly members to the Board.



SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND



Prime Minister

NORTHERN IRELAND: THE NEXT FEW DAYS

Summary

Predictable line from Adams. No sign of movement or fishing for a mini deal. SDLP very bitter and negative. All but rule out joining Policing Board in present situation though imply they might reconsider if we give unequivocal commitments to public inquiries, with international judge, in Finucane, Nelson and Hamill cases. Trimble now under increasing pressure to get tough. Our priorities for the rest of this week should be to keep up the pressure on the SDLP and to win the PR battle here and in Dublin over the launch of the police recruitment campaign, which Sinn Fein will strongly criticise. We also need urgently to prepare the ground for the two issues likely to dominate next week: the run up to the North South Ministerial Council plenary on Friday 2 March, which Trimble will come under increasing pressure to boycott; and our need to decide whether to invite the Police Authority to remain in existence beyond 31 March or announce the creation of a new interim Commission.

What happened yesterday

Adams got wind of my wish to see Mallon and demanded a meeting, largely for public consumption. His line remains that Sinn Fein would in principle like to join the Policing Board but cannot do so until we reduce the wide gap that remains. He



SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

wants to bring McGuinness to see me for a further talk over the weekend and agreed with me that we needed to find a way of preventing the process from falling apart over the next few weeks. There was no talk of a possible mini deal.

2. I took Adams - and subsequently the SDLP - through the reasons why we had to launch the police recruitment campaign this week. The SDLP appeared to understand but would not be drawn on what line they would take publicly. Adams said that Sinn Fein would be sharply critical. I shall need to use my media opportunities in Dublin on Thursday and perhaps seek such opportunities in Northern Ireland on Friday to get our story across vigorously. I also threw in the necessity of me addressing the Police Authority issue.

3. The SDLP were full of reproaches. They were sore about Peter and the handling of the Police Act. They were particularly sore that you had ruled out fresh legislation for them at Hillsborough a month ago and now conceded it to Sinn Fein "because they have guns". They didn't see how they could put three Assembly members on the Board when they would be in a total minority. I pointed out that I could redress this with the balance of the appointed members of the Police Board. However, they also agreed that they would be isolated because, in the absence of a deal on weapons, Trimble would probably collapse the Assembly and Executive within weeks.

4. They agreed to meet me again in a couple of days time but made it clear that the only possible basis for movement would be if we had "closed" negotiating with Sinn Fein and also conceded unequivocal commitments to public inquiries for Finucane, Hamill and Nelson. I interpret this as a spoiling tactic.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

5. I have not seen Trimble, but our lower level contacts with UUP people and his own letter to you yesterday suggest the screw is tightening. He may want to get through the Election by maintaining his tough stance on North/South and through a formal review of some kind. But in the absence of movement there must be a real risk that the "anti" people in his party will seize the opportunity to get UUP Ministers out of the Executive without attacking Trimble personally. His period of maximum vulnerability is the next few weeks. As things stand, he will have no choice but to boycott the North/South meeting on 2 March, thus ratcheting things up.

Our objectives now

6. In my view, our short-term objectives should be:

- ◆ **To keep working on the SDLP.** They are probably not going to sign up for the Policing Board before the Election. They may be being restrained by Irish officials behind the scenes and are certainly not being put under much pressure. But you should use our meeting with Hume and Mallon tomorrow to appeal to them, and give them a sense of the political downside of being so obviously in hock to Sinn Féin. Any Police Board could be balanced by appointments. I attach a note on the detailed outstanding SDLP points on policing/inquiries in case the discussion goes in that direction. If the SDLP did nominate to the Police Board, it would add to the pressure on Sinn Fein to do likewise.



SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

- ◆ **To keep our minds open to a deal with Sinn Féin, including one short of our ideal requirements, but without putting anything new on the table and, within this, with only a proportionate response to whatever they offer.** There is some intelligence to suggest Sinn Féin interest in a small deal, in which the IRA would enter discussions with de Chastelain without any guarantees about where they would lead or on what timescale, and we would do some of what we have been offering. In my view we should be willing to entertain this, but not go looking for it or consider paying much of a price for it. The fact is that Sinn Féin probably need minimal IRA re-engagement before the Election for their own protection. It would be a bit of a poisoned chalice for Trimble, because he would be expected to back off on North/South in return for something which might have made a difference a couple of months ago but will now be dismissed by unionists as just another ploy.

- ◆ **To re-engage Trimble in a tactical discussion of how to hold things together over the Election period.** It is his own fault for being out of the country, but he clearly feels neglected, and has a point when he says that we have spent weeks wooing Sinn Féin and the SDLP. When you see him tomorrow, you could ask him, in particular, whether a small deal would be a help or a hindrance; how he sees a review working; and whether he thinks that a well-timed review would enable him to get through the Election with the institutions intact. You could also encourage him to work on the Taoiseach himself (and perhaps Mallon) if he agrees with us that Irish Government/SDLP/Catholic Church support on policing would at least improve the atmosphere.



SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

- ◆ **To launch the police recruitment campaign on Friday and handle the media in such a way as to pre-empt and rebut Sinn Féin claims that we, rather than they, have scuppered the chances of a deal by moving ahead on recruitment.**

- ◆ **To prepare the ground for interim arrangements for police accountability after 31 March, assuming neither the SDLP nor Sinn Féin sign up.** I incline towards interim Commissioners, as an evidently temporary measure until the Policing Board can be established, rather than keeping the existing Police Authority on indefinitely, but am still working on the details.

- ◆ **To work up the review option, which would benefit from being played in relatively early, if it too is not to be discounted.**

JOHN REID
20 FEBRUARY 2001

SDLP – POSSIBLE POINTS FOR PM MEETING

<p>1. Need for collective management of peace process.</p>	<p>Agree, and accept that we haven't always got this right (eg Hillsborough May 2000). But collective process needs underpinning with bilaterals.</p>
<p>2. Have HMG finished negotiating with Sinn Fein?</p>	<p>We've made it clear we've already gone beneath our bottom line on policing. Nothing more to offer. Until we have full implementation of GFA, however - including on weapons - we cannot stop talking to anyone.</p>
<p>3. Will HMG commit unequivocally to Finucane/Hamill/Nelson inquiries?</p>	<p>No, because it's simply impossible to know what will come out anyway as a result of the continuing, independent investigations. And retrospective inquiries would be contrary to what Patten recommended – the touchstone for our negotiations with Sinn Fein as well as the SDLP. We have already said that we recognise our 'responsibility to take such further steps as may ... be required to meet continuing public concern' once the investigations are over.</p>
<p>4. Will HMG firm up words in implementation plan on Gough, full time reserve etc?</p>	<p>John Reid happy to look further at any detailed points if it would really make the difference, but the gaps now are about fine tuning of timings.</p>
<p>5. How can 3 SDLP nominees avoid being swamped on Board of 19?</p>	<p>John Reid has said that we'd be prepared to invite further applications for independent membership of the Board and to balance up the unionist dominance of the political nominees.</p>

CONFIDENTIAL

<p>6. What about a review of the Act and a commitment to legislate?</p>	<p>Happy to give a commitment to a review after 12 months and a willingness to legislate [but, in the absence of a big deal, not a commitment to details of new legislation.]</p>
<p>7. What's the point of putting Assembly members on the Board when the Assembly's about to be suspended anyway?</p>	<p>Don't accept that's inevitable. If it did collapse John Reid would have to appoint a replacement Board and would obviously want to have members acceptable to the SDLP, provided they had already committed themselves to the new service. He has power to reappoint the suspended Assembly members to the Board.</p>

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM: BILL JEFFREY
Political Director
20 February 2001
BJ/MR/712(L)

~~JB~~
~~JS~~
MT
AC

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE(L&B)

cc PS/Mr Ingram(L&B)
PS/Mr Howarth(L&B)
Mr Pilling
Mr Watkins
Mr Fittall
Mr Kelly
Mr Maccabe
Mr Masefield
→ Mr Powell No.10-FAX
Sir Ivor Roberts HMA(D)

CONVERSATION WITH DÁITHI O'CEALLAIGH

I had a conversation with Daíthi O'Ceallaigh this morning which illustrated the hopelessness of the position into which the Irish Government have got themselves on policing and the SDLP.

2. O'Ceallaigh said that he had met the SDLP twice yesterday, before and after the Secretary of State's meeting with them at Parliament Buildings. They had been "very depressed", particularly Mallon, and annoyed that we and the Irish had been willing to concede so much to Sinn Féin. O'Ceallaigh's "solid impression" was that they could not do policing without Sinn Féin. This was more to do with anxieties about policing than about the politics of the situation. Sean Farren had made the point that, if Sinn Féin were opposed to recruitment, then in very many places the effort to recruit nationalists would fail. O'Ceallaigh thought it significant that someone as reasonable as Farren was saying this.

3. I asked rather pointedly whether, in discussions such as the ones he had had yesterday, the Irish Government were telling the SDLP they thought they should sign up and would be ready to line up with them publicly if they did. O'Ceallaigh, sounding rather uncomfortable, said that they were not specifically saying that they should sign up, but that they would certainly like them to. The fact was that they clearly believed that they could not do it. I said that I had hoped, following the Prime

CONFIDENTIAL

Minister's conversations with the Taoiseach, that Irish officials would be willing to put more pressure on the SDLP. O'Ceallaigh changed the subject.

4. O'Ceallaigh asked me how we now saw Trimble's position. I said that it seemed to me pretty bleak. There was a strong risk that during the next week or so his opponents would try to get the withdrawal of UUP Ministers from the Executive before the Election. It was hard to tell whether they would succeed, but at the very least Trimble was likely to feel he had no option but to increase the pressure on North/South. Part of the problem was that – for the best of motives – although he had been shown no papers, Trimble had been told about the outcomes we were trying to secure in negotiations with Sinn Féin. His expectations had been raised, and anything less would now be easily discounted. In an effort to do the big deal, we had also given Mallon some grounds for complaint, which he was now exploiting to the full. O'Ceallaigh said that he could not disagree on either count.

[Signed]

BILL JEFFREY
11 Millbank ☎ 6447

- 2 -
CONFIDENTIAL

not a Matrix

CONFIDENTIAL - PERSONAL

SUBJECT
MASTER



Rie
c AC

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff

20 February 2001

Dear Paul,

**PRIME MINISTER'S PHONE CONVERSATION WITH THE
TAOISEACH**

The Prime Minister rang the Taoiseach this afternoon.

The Prime Minister said he was seeing Trimble tomorrow before leaving for the US. He was very worried that Trimble would tell him that he was going to withdraw from the Executive. If that happened the Executive would go down; and he couldn't see how we would put the pieces back together again after that. We urgently needed to go forward somehow. But Seamus Mallon had told John Reid last night that the SDLP would not move on policing without Sinn Fein; and Sinn Fein were showing no sign of shifting their position.

The Prime Minister said we had to break through this. He understood that the SDLP would not want to go out on a limb on policing. But if everyone else – the Irish Government, the Church, the GAA – were to support them, and if Sinn Fein agreed not to attack them, he thought the SDLP should be able to move. Indeed it made no sense for the SDLP themselves to allow Sinn Fein an effective veto over any decision by them on policing.

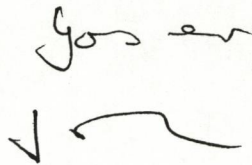
The Taoiseach said he had met the SDLP last weekend, and was about to see them again. He would explore the scope for getting them to move. There had been some supportive articles in the Northern Ireland press, which should have helped.

The Prime Minister said that if the SDLP were prepared to move now, we had a better chance of getting Sinn Fein on board afterwards. That was the pattern in agreeing the Good Friday Agreement. But the SDLP would need the Taoiseach's support. The Taoiseach said both he and Brian Cowen were satisfied

CONFIDENTIAL - PERSONAL

that they could support the current policing proposals. He agreed that the immediate focus should be on getting the SDLP to move. The Prime Minister said that it might be possible to move on to a mini-deal with Sinn Fein whereby they re-engaged with de Chastelain in return for David Trimble dropping his sanctions on North/South bodies.

The Prime Minister said we would let the Taoiseach have a readout from tomorrow's meeting with Trimble. He stressed again the urgency of the situation as he saw it. He and the Taoiseach agreed they should speak again after the US trip.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Powell', with a checkmark below it.

JONATHAN POWELL

Paul Priestly
NIO

Top - JPo
✓ CCSS

From: PS/Secretary of State
19 February 2001

✓
to see.
B.C. is now by recall
J

cc: See Copy Distribution List

Mr Fittall - O

DISCUSSION WITH BRIAN COWEN, 19 FEBRUARY

The Secretary of State had a telephone conversation with Brian Cowen earlier this afternoon about the current political situation in Northern Ireland.

2. The Secretary of State explained that he had arranged to meet Seamus Mallon and a delegation from the SDLP later this evening. Since arranging this meeting, Sinn Fein had also asked for a meeting. He intended to go through the SDLP's difficulties on policing with Seamus Mallon to see whether the party was prepared to come on board. The SDLP's demand for inquiries into Finucane, Hamill and Nelson was the main remaining difficulty - but we hoped it would be possible to find a way through this issue. If the SDLP were not prepared to come on board, then we would take the opportunity to explain why we needed to proceed with 50/50 recruitment and the disbandment of PANI. For police operational reasons we could no longer delay the recruitment campaign.

3. Brian Cowen expressed disappointment about the attitude of Adams and McGuinness. They had given a less than satisfactory response to the package worked out by the two Governments. The Irish had taken a hard line with Sinn Fein and insisted that they should reconsider their position. They had left Adams to sweat over the weekend. They would continue to argue that real progress was available if Sinn Fein were prepared to sign up for the deal.

4. Brian Cowen agreed that we should test whether the SDLP were prepared to come on board and keep the show on the road. If they were not prepared to do so, the two Governments would have to aim for a soft landing.



5. The Secretary of State said HMG had gone beyond its bottom line in the negotiations. A number of elements in the proposed deal would involve considerable pain – in particular, OTRs was a 'nightmare scenario'. We had therefore shown considerable flexibility. Brian Cowen said the Irish Government accepted this. The Secretary of State questioned whether Sinn Fein had decided to wait until after the General Election before considering any movement. This would risk a further loss of unionist support for the GFA and could encourage loyalist gunmen. Republicans might feel forced to retaliate for any loyalist attacks and we would be into a downward spiral. Brian Cowen agreed that this would be a high-risk strategy on Sinn Fein's part.

6. The Secretary of State said he would try to ascertain from Sinn Fein whether any deal was possible and, if so, what type of deal. They were likely to ask for the earth in return for mere re-engagement with de Chastelain. We would also need to explain to both Sinn Fein and the SDLP that – irrespective of whether we were able to achieve a wider political deal – we needed to proceed on policing issues.

7. Brian Cowen said we needed to avoid another round of interminable discussions with Sinn Fein. Our message should be that 'decision time has arrived'. Sinn Fein needed to understand that they were unlikely to find a similarly benign set of political circumstances for reaching a deal. He hoped that Adams and McGuinness would start to see that they needed to move. He reiterated that Sinn Fein should not be encouraged to believe that they could re-open negotiations. If Sinn Fein were unable to do the deal, the two Governments would need to manage the situation and bring the process to a soft landing.

8. The Secretary of State said he would explore the possibility of meeting Brian Cowen in Dublin on Thursday morning.

Paul Priestly

P G PRIESTLY

PS/Secretary of State

☎ (B) 28110

(L) 6462

JL
cc: JS
MP



CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

✓
Prime Minister

NORTHERN IRELAND: NEXT STEPS

SUMMARY

I would go for a push on policing on Tuesday on two conditions: (1) provided we have the Taoiseach on side, and (2) provided we don't build up expectations so much that failure to make progress on decommissioning crashes the whole process. Our first task is to get policing on a sensible footing, including launching the recruitment campaign. We can then turn our attention to helping Trimble, either by persuading Sinn Féin to change their minds on weapons, or by giving him enough cover – perhaps through a formal review – to keep him in the Executive over the Election period.

Where we are now

Sinn Féin's rejection of the deal yesterday could be both tactical and substantive. My own sense is that it is not purely tactical, and that Adams and McGuinness have hit some kind of barrier internally. As you said to the Taoiseach yesterday, it is quite possible that decommissioning – even disguised in the concreting of dumps – is beyond them, and that they have been using policing as an excuse and have been surprised at how far we've been willing to go.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL



CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

Our short-term objectives

2. In my view, our objectives (in descending order of preference) now should be:

2.1 Ideally, to change Sinn Féin's mind, but without running after them to offer more, which would be a mistake. We should try to put pressure on Sinn Féin, of the kind that stands the best chance of getting them to shift their position. This does not mean excoriating them in public, but it does mean exposing them to the consequences of their intransigence, and getting across publicly the extent to which we have already moved in their direction.

2.2 If that proves impossible, to salvage what we can on policing by persuading the SDLP to sign up for the Policing Board. The chances of getting the SDLP on board for policing depend almost entirely on the attitude of the Irish. I would be surprised if Bertie has not already been talked out of his willingness last night to consider splitting the SDLP from Sinn Féin, or if Seamus Mallon was willing to jump without Sinn Féin. But with Irish support, I agree that it would be worth your coming to Northern Ireland, with Bertie, on Tuesday. It would be important not to raise expectations, particularly on decommissioning. Trimble would almost certainly feel bound to react to a public crash against the buffers on decommissioning.

I will get you a separate note on what could be offered to persuade the SDLP to join the Policing Board. I don't think you should go as far as you did with Sinn Féin. Some of their points – allowing ex-terrorists on DPPs, the Belfast sub groups, OTRs – are of little interest to the SDLP, and would just infuriate



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL



CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

everyone else. You might not even offer a formal review of the legislation. It will be more important to show some movement on inquiries, and I will reflect on that over the weekend.

2.3 If that fails, to advance police reform as rapidly as we can without a new-style Policing Board, and in particular to launch the necessary recruitment campaign. If we can't get the SDLP to join the Policing Board, we will have no option but to go ahead with the policing reforms, but without the Patten structures of accountability. We would either keep the existing Police Authority on until either or both of the nationalist parties were willing to nominate, or appoint interim Commissioners who might be viewed by nationalists with less suspicion than the existing authority. I am looking urgently at the options.

Whatever happens, we should not hold up the launch of recruitment advertising at the end of next week. I attach a note explaining why we can't delay recruitment any longer. Ultimately it comes down to manpower. If we don't move now, we would lose a couple of months over the holiday period, and by early next year police strength would have fallen below the minimum envisaged by Patten, and well below what Ronnie Flanagan regards as necessary. That would not be an acceptable outcome. Our first responsibility is to provide an effective police force. Ronnie has spoken out publicly this week, and if we deferred again his position would become impossible. The Irish will not like the idea of our expecting potential nationalist recruits to apply before the badge and the flag have been settled, but they are not at the moment in a strong position to complain.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL



CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

2.4 Whatever the short term outcome, to keep the decommissioning issue in play, and if possible keep the Executive in being until after the Election.

A soft landing on weapons and the institutions will be even more difficult to achieve, if Sinn Féin stand firm. You were right to warn Bertie that Trimble will now be under pressure to pull things down. But it is just possible that he could successfully resist such pressure. Such is the negativism of Northern Ireland politics, that he is, for the moment, reasonably comfortable in his position of defiance, preventing the North/South institutions from working properly and being seen to stand up to Sinn Féin. It was clear when I briefed him on the emerging deal last week that he did not regard it as unmitigated good news, and was concerned that there was too much in it for Sinn Féin, too early, and against too uncertain a pay-off. A weak deal in which we were perceived to have given away too much but Trimble was still expected to lift his North/South sanction would be worse for Trimble than no deal at all.

My conclusion is that, if Sinn Féin won't budge on weapons, we should try to play the issue long, rather than bringing it to a head. But we should bear in mind that as his March AGM approaches, Trimble is likely at the very least to intensify the North/South sanction, which could provoke a reaction on the other side.

19
JOHN REID
February 2001



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

POLICE RECRUITMENT – WHY THE HURRY?

1. Proceeding with police recruitment in the absence of a deal will be controversial. This note explains why it is, nevertheless, so important.

What Patten said

2. In September 1999 the Patten report noted that there were 8,500 regulars and 2,900 in the full time reserve, making a total of 11,400 full time officers (plus 1,300 in the part time reserve). His recommendation was that the full time strength of **11,400** should be reduced over three years to **7,116**, after which it would build up again slightly to a stable level of 7,500 “provided the peace process does not collapse and the security situation does not deteriorate significantly from the situation pertaining at present”. Patten envisaged that the full time reserve would be “phased out over three years, after a reasonable notice period, as officers’ contracts expired”. His calculations assume, therefore, that by the end of year 3 the only reserve officers would be part timers.

3. Patten’s proposal was for the part time strength of 1,300 to be increased to “up to 2,500 officers”. With Catholics constituting only 5% of the PTR (as opposed to 7% of the FTR and 8% of the Regulars) Patten recommended that the new PTR officers should be recruited from Catholic/nationalist areas. Patten goes on to say that “if these new reservists were recruited within, say, four years, this would mean that regular and part time Catholic police officers combined would be over 22%, nearly treble the present percentage, and the figure after 10 years would be 40%”. Catholic recruitment to the PTR is central to the overall figures for Catholic police officers: Patten’s projection was that the number of regular Catholic officers would be just under 17% after four years and 29% after 10 years.

4. Between the publication of Patten and now, the number of full time officers has declined by nearly 600 to 8,353 regulars and 2,540 FTRs. A further 500 regulars are leaving under the severance scheme by the end of March. Then, in the following 12 months there are expected to be a further 700 or so departures under phase 2 of the severance scheme. Even assuming natural wastage (medical retirements etc) of only around 100 regulars, what this means is that, **without further recruits, the number of regulars would go below the lowest figure set by Patten (7,116), in the first quarter of 2002. The police estimate is that what they actually require is 8,179 regulars in the current**

Security situation (plus 2,154 FTR). This is why the Chief Constable is so anxious: (a) not to box himself in prematurely on the phasing out of the full time reserve and (b) to avoid further slippage in recruitment, since officers who join in September will not be out on the streets until February/March 2002.

5. Delaying recruitment would also trigger a greater requirement for Army support and a delay to the start of the run-down of the FTR. Both would be nationalist unfriendly.

The critical path

6. Granted the general analysis, what is the specific penalty from a short delay in the recruitment campaign? The police and Deloitte & Touche, the independent recruitment agency, assert that losing even one more week now (the advertising has already been delayed by one week) would lose two months down the track. Why? The key considerations are:

- officers cannot be selected and brought in in batches because of the "merit pool" arrangement which is needed to regulate the 50/50 recruitment process, the whole process has to be completed before any of the 240 or so successful candidates are accepted;
- the assessment centre process needs to be pretty well completed by the end of June to avoid disruption (both for interviewers and candidates) over both the holiday and the peak of the marching season;
- there are seven stages to the recruitment process which, for equality proofing reasons, has to be highly structured and formalised. There is no scope for short cuts;
- the police themselves and an outside consortium led by Deloitte & Touche are managing the recruitment process on the basis recommended by Patten, not the NIO and are not susceptible to Ministerial instructions to concertina any of the stages (even if equality proofing did not preclude this anyway);

- this is already a risky and complex and ambitious process. It used to take the RUC 12 months to recruit an officer from scratch. In line with Patten, the contract stipulates 6 months.

Conclusion

7. At the end of the day there is no scientific means of demonstrating that there is an absolutely irreducible minimum below which police manpower numbers must not fall at any point. But the Chief Constable – who has demonstrated a remarkable flexibility on many other points - has now, publicly, given his professional judgement that he can wait no longer. **The high level of sectarian attacks, the continued RIRA campaign and the shadow of Drumcree vividly illustrate the pressures he faces.** The present timetable is already extremely tight and, even now, the 240 recruits due to arrive in September will not have completed their training before February/March 2002. Slippage now would mean that they would not start operational duty before May 2002. Even assuming no increase in present threat levels, to wait longer would be unacceptably risky.

THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND
DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

David Trimble First Minister

*Parliament Buildings,
Stormont, Belfast BT4 3XX*

The Rt Hon Tony Blair MP
Prime Minister
No 10 Downing Street
LONDON

Faxed
19 February 2001

Dear Prime Minister,

I thought I should write to you today following my return from Washington. I am doing so in order to let you know that I am becoming increasingly concerned as to the manner in which the negotiations with Sinn Fein and the SDLP have been carried out over the past number of weeks.

The current round of meetings, which effectively began with President Clinton's visit to Northern Ireland on 13 December, have largely been conducted through intensive bilateral contacts with Sinn Fein and the SDLP. Although you have met me on a number of occasions to discuss progress, and Jonathan Powell has been in regular contact with my officials, the degree of substantive and detailed contact with me has in reality been extremely limited.

This contrasts strongly with the frequency and intensity of the discussions which have taken place between the Governments and both Sinn Fein and the SDLP. The public impression this has created is unhelpful. It has been reinforced by recent press reports of clandestine meetings between your Chief of Staff and representatives of SF/IRA, and also by the public comments of the RUC Chief Constable and the Irish Government giving the impression that they have been engaging in detailed negotiations with the SDLP on the future shape of policing in Northern Ireland. I cannot emphasise to you too strongly the damaging impression these reports create.

While I have at all times been mindful of the personal efforts you have made to try to find a way through our current difficulties, I believe we are now coming to the point where we may be forced to conclude that it may not be possible to make progress at this time. In this context, I am mindful of the remark you made when I met you some weeks ago when you indicated your determination that Sinn Fein/IRA would pay a 'heavy price' if they were not prepared to honour their commitments under the Agreement. I would find it helpful to know whether it remains your determination that the refusal of Sinn Fein/IRA to honour the Agreement will not be without cost.

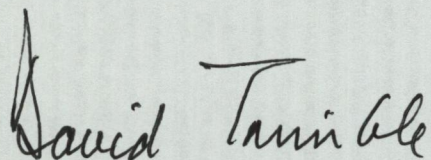
As you will know, I wrote to Seamus Mallon last week outlining my concerns for the Agreement. I reminded him of the division of opinion within the majority community regarding the Agreement, and of our expectation that his public commitment to make a stand against any Party which dishonoured the Agreement was something upon which we could depend - and not just so much rhetoric. I have yet to receive a reply to my letter.

I believe that it is becoming increasingly obvious to everyone in Northern Ireland that Sinn Fein/IRA are indeed behaving exactly as the Deputy First Minister sought to assure us they would not. Rather than honour the commitments they made under the Agreement, and the public assurances of good faith they have offered subsequently, Sinn Fein/IRA have concentrated on pocketing for themselves the maximum sectoral advantage available to them under the new political dispensation. At the same time, they have shamelessly and immorally disregarded the burden of expectation placed upon them to demonstrate their putative transition from violence to democracy. The effect of this, taken together with the SDLP's brazen attempt to push the policing reforms far beyond what Parliament sanctioned, has had a most harmful effect upon the confidence of the pro-Agreement Unionist community. My community sees in all of this a calculated effort to hollow out from the Agreement all remaining manifestations of Britishness and a flagrant disregard for Northern Ireland's place within the United Kingdom. The result is a leaching of support from the Agreement on an almost daily basis.

I hope you will accept that I have at all times endeavoured to honour the Agreement notwithstanding the reservations I had regarding aspects of it. My colleagues and I have applied ourselves to operating the institutions of the Agreement to the point where the Irish Government publicly commended us for the co-operative spirit with which we have operated the North-South dimension in particular.

My purpose in writing to you at this time is to suggest that we should now pause and take stock. I believe it would be better to do this now rather than to embark upon some further hasty initiative. The danger is that any further efforts to secure SDLP or Sinn Fein movement could only be achieved at a price which would not be in the public interest and which would be entirely unacceptable to my Party.

I would find it helpful if we could meet soon to discuss my concerns.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Trimble". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

RT HON DAVID TRIMBLE MP MLA

01232521118

**THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND
DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER**

David Trimble First Minister
Parliament Buildings,
Stormont, Belfast BT4 3XX

WFO
cc: JS
PRESS

FAXED
cc Bill [unclear], [unclear]
FAXED

The Rt Hon Tony Blair MP
Prime Minister
No 10 Downing Street
LONDON

FAXED
for to [unclear] [unclear]
you should see Dr
or [unclear]. I
slow call [unclear]
to [unclear].

19 February 2001

Dear Prime Minister

I thought I should write to you today following my return from Washington. I am doing so in order to let you know that I am becoming increasingly concerned as to the manner in which the negotiations with Sinn Fein and the SDLP have been carried out over the past number of weeks.

The current round of meetings, which effectively began with President Clinton's visit to Northern Ireland on 13 December, have largely been conducted through intensive bilateral contacts with Sinn Fein and the SDLP. Although you have met me on a number of occasions to discuss progress, and Jonathan Powell has been in regular contact with my officials, the degree of substantive and detailed contact with me has in reality been extremely limited.

Put in
Dr's
vol'

This contrasts strongly with the frequency and intensity of the discussions which have taken place between the Governments and both Sinn Fein and the SDLP. The public impression this has created is unhelpful. It has been reinforced by recent press reports of clandestine meetings between your Chief of Staff and representatives of SF/IRA, and also by the public comments of the RUC Chief Constable and the Irish Government giving the impression that they have been engaging in detailed negotiations with the SDLP on the future shape of policing in Northern Ireland. I cannot emphasise to you too strongly the damaging impression these reports create.

While I have at all times been mindful of the personal efforts you have made to try to find a way through our current difficulties, I believe we are now coming to the point where we may be forced to conclude that it may not be possible to make progress at this time. In this context, I am mindful of the remark you made when I met you some weeks ago when you indicated your determination that Sinn Fein/IRA would pay a 'heavy price' if they were not prepared to honour their commitments under the Agreement. I would find it helpful to know whether it remains your determination that the refusal of Sinn Fein/IRA to honour the Agreement will not be without cost.

01232521118

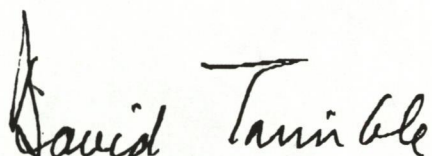
As you will know, I wrote to Seamus Mallon last week outlining my concerns for the Agreement. I reminded him of the division of opinion within the majority community regarding the Agreement, and of our expectation that his public commitment to make a stand against any Party which dishonoured the Agreement was something upon which we could depend - and not just so much rhetoric. I have yet to receive a reply to my letter.

I believe that it is becoming increasingly obvious to everyone in Northern Ireland that Sinn Fein/IRA are indeed behaving exactly as the Deputy First Minister sought to assure us they would not. Rather than honour the commitments they made under the Agreement, and the public assurances of good faith they have offered subsequently, Sinn Fein/IRA have concentrated on pocketing for themselves the maximum sectoral advantage available to them under the new political dispensation. At the same time, they have shamelessly and immorally disregarded the burden of expectation placed upon them to demonstrate their putative transition from violence to democracy. The effect of this, taken together with the SDLP's brazen attempt to push the policing reforms far beyond what Parliament sanctioned, has had a most harmful effect upon the confidence of the pro-Agreement Unionist community. My community sees in all of this a calculated effort to hollow out from the Agreement all remaining manifestations of Britishness and a flagrant disregard for Northern Ireland's place within the United Kingdom. The result is a leaching of support from the Agreement on an almost daily basis.

I hope you will accept that I have at all times endeavoured to honour the Agreement notwithstanding the reservations I had regarding aspects of it. My colleagues and I have applied ourselves to operating the institutions of the Agreement to the point where the Irish Government publicly commended us for the co-operative spirit with which we have operated the North-South dimension in particular.

My purpose in writing to you at this time is to suggest that we should now pause and take stock. I believe it would be better to do this now rather than to embark upon some further hasty initiative. The danger is that any further efforts to secure SDLP or Sinn Fein movement could only be achieved at a price which would not be in the public interest and which would be entirely unacceptable to my Party.

I would find it helpful if we could meet soon to discuss my concerns.



RT HON DAVID TRIMBLE MP MLA

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM: William Fittall
Associate Political Director(L)
19 February 2001

cc PS/Mr Ingram (B&L)
Mr Pilling
Mr Jeffrey
Mr Watkins
Mr Alston
Ms O'Mara
Mr Lindsay
Mr Masefield
Mr Powell, No 10

JB
✓ CEJS
MT
AC

PS/Secretary of State (B&L)

TODAY'S 6.00PM MEETING WITH SDLP

You already have a copy of the more forward text on **Inquiries**, which your office sent, with No 10's agreement, to Mallon's office at lunchtime. Robin Masefield has also sent you separately extracts of the revised draft **implementation plan** which could be handed to the SDLP team.

2. I have set out below a possible line to take with Mallon. There are two significant points which I should flag up – on **inviting further applications to the Policing Board** and a **possible review of the legislation**. We indicated to Sinn Fein that we were prepared to invite further applications for independent membership of the Board if Sinn Fein and the SDLP signed up. There is an even stronger case for doing this if the SDLP are prepared to go it alone. So I assume the Secretary of State would be prepared to concede the point as part of a deal. This does, however, create a potential timing problem in that if an election were called for 3 May we could not be confident of completing the process and announcing appointments before the pre-election purda came into operation.
3. Similarly I have assumed that the Secretary of State would concede a 12 month review of the legislation to Seamus Mallon if he wanted one (though without commitment as to outcome). It seems better to give Mallon the credit for a review,

CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL

which would also provide a way out for Sinn Fein in due course, than having it extracted from us as a concession at some later date. Trimble is also relaxed about a review so long as the terms of reference are not prejudicial.

4. If the Secretary of State agrees, the approach to Mallon might be as follows:

Thanks for seeing me at short notice. When we had our series of discussions a couple of weeks back I thought that we would have brought matters to a head by now. Our aim all along has been to try and secure a breakthrough on all the big political issues, including policing and decommissioning, in order to rebuild confidence and stability in the political institutions. Those efforts continue, but the prospects for a quick and comprehensive breakthrough have receded over the past few days. Very frustrating for us and for the Irish Government who have worked so hard on this.

Meanwhile time marches on. The Chief Constable is in desperate need of additional policing manpower. No recruitment campaign since 1998. Numbers set to tumble fast over the next 12 months. Can't delay any further. Unless the campaign starts this Friday we shall lose a minimum of a couple of months if not more. That means instead of getting recruits in in September they would not start training before November and would not be available for operational duty until April or May next year. That's too slow for the operational needs in the real world. And it's too slow for securing the change in the composition of the police force to which we are all committed.

The ideal solution would be to launch the recruitment campaign on the back of a decision by your party and Sinn Fein to join the Policing Board. They have now said that they can't sign up now despite our willingness to go a long way towards addressing the concerns they have raised. I realise that creates a very difficult situation for you. But in our earlier discussions we went a long way to close the gaps on the detailed implementation and timing issues. I am prepared to see whether there is

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

more we can do on your other points of concern. And the Prime Minister would be willing to come over here at short notice tomorrow if there is a chance that you can sign up. If you cannot see a way of coming on the Policing Board this side of a general election then we need to find a way of keeping all the issues in play until then. In the meantime the recruitment campaign will have to proceed. By far the better course would be to proceed with SDLP support. What are the obstacles? Historic opportunity etc....

[Seek initial reaction. Subject to that hand round revised implementation plan extract] Are there any points here which require further discussion? With the Chief Constable we have stretched as far as we can on the Gough holding centre and special branch. Recognise there are one or two other areas (full-time reserve, symbolic issues) where you would prefer absolute certainty now but I genuinely cannot go any further, nor will I be able to in a few weeks time. We have met the substance of your concerns. [Invite discussion].

That leaves three other important areas. One concerns appointment of independent members to the Policing Board. The selection process with independent members was all but completed before Christmas but has been on ice since then. There is an argument that some suitable nationalists may have been deterred from applying by the reservations that your party and Sinn Fein had. So, if it would make a difference -- particularly in a situation where you but not Sinn Fein were on the board -- I would be willing to reopen the application process in order to give ourselves a wider choice. I would need a positive decision to nominate political members to the Board first;

Secondly, there is the question of reviewing the legislation. Trimble has said publicly that the operation of the legislation should be reviewed after a while. Sinn Fein have wanted something much more specific with commitments over what the legislation would include. I can't write a

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

blank cheque, but if it helped you, I would be prepared to give a commitment to a review of the legislation after 12 months;

Thirdly on **inquiries** sorry if there was a mix up over who was going to produce another form of words. You now have a new version (cleared by No 10). The key new words are that when the investigations "**and any subsequent proceedings are concluded, the Government recognises its responsibility to take such further steps as may then be required to meet continuing public concern**". That goes further than mere willingness to consider.

I have thought hard about whether we could go even further than that and give a conditional promise of an inquiry, say in the Hamill case. The problem is simply, as I explained before, that none of us can know what will come out of the ongoing investigations. Nuala O'Loan's involvement in the Hamill case has undoubtedly shaken things up. It's still entirely possible that prosecutions and or disciplinary proceedings will result. Even if a commitment to an inquiry now was not prejudicial to any such proceedings, it is hard to see that it would really make sense. It's just too soon to know whether an inquiry is needed and if so what sort of inquiry. The key thing that we are prepared to give now, for the first time, is an explicit recognition of our responsibility to take such further steps as may be required to meet continuing public concern once proceedings or the prospect of proceedings are over.

[If asked about Police Authority: If cannot get the Policing Board up and running by 1 April, as now looks likely, I shall need to consider whether to invite PANI to remain in place for a while longer or whether to make some other short term interim arrangement.]

(Signed)

William Fittall
11 Millbank ☎ 6469 (Castle Buildings ☎ Ext.22885)

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Top
FAIPS
2
COS
FAI/WARS
AC/Press



QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

The Rt Hon Dr John Reid MP
Northern Ireland Office
11 Millbank
London SW1

19 FEB 2001

Dear John,

"ON THE RUNS" : PRE-CONVICTION PARDONS

I was grateful for sight of the correspondence that has arisen from a suggestion by the Irish Attorney General that the Royal Prerogative of Mercy could be used to grant pardons in the outstanding "On the Runs" cases.

Whilst it is the case that the Crown does have the right to pardon before conviction, this practice has fallen into disuse - I understand that the last time that the Royal Prerogative was used in this way was in 1891. I share the belief of Gareth Williams and Peter Mandelson that to revive this practice for "On the Runs" would be highly contentious and would run the risk of challenge in the courts with the added potential issue of courts requiring the disclosure of related Government papers.

As you will be aware from our recent correspondence about the issue of whether to drop extradition proceedings in these cases, I am inclined to the view that these cases should be dealt with by means of either a legislative amnesty or alternatively by an administrative scheme.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and to Gareth Williams.

Yours ever,
Jack

JACK STRAW

CONFIDENTIAL

SKP 21/2/01

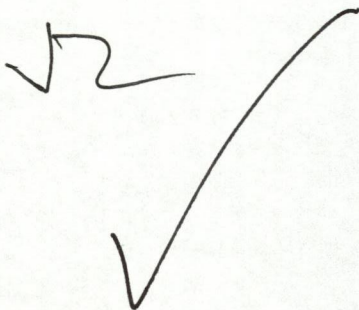


10 DOWNING STREET

Par

NI

—
The latest tests for gun
marks found.



PRIVATE TEXT

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

Sections 24 and 27

Long-term policing objectives and codes of practice

Amend to bring out that in each case the Secretary of State is to consult the Board and others with a view to reaching agreement.

Section 25(2)

Board's medium-term objectives

Board to "take account of" long-term objectives in drawing up policing objectives

Section 59(3)(d)

Delete

Section 60(3)(d)

Delete

Schedule 3 paragraph 8(2)

Independent membership of DPPs

Disqualification to be removed

Sections 20 to 23

Public meetings of Board and DPPs

Government publicly committed to Patten approach.
Recommendation on DPP public meetings will be covered in Board code of practice. Public meetings of Board already covered in Schedule 1

Section 21(2)

Belfast DPP sub-groups

Expand functions, for example to include the function set out in Section 16(1)(c).

Section 1

Name

Clarification of the name if required.

fa-eaps\legislative

fa-eaps\legislative

The position on the specific points which Sinn Fein have raised is as follows:

New Oath

The Act sets out the need for all serving and new police officers to carry out their duties in accordance with the terms of the new Oath thus putting all officers on the same footing. It is the intention that a record will be made in each case confirming that the new oath has been drawn to the officer's attention and that he/she understands the need to act in accordance with it. The oath is declaratory: sanctions apply to non-observance of the code of ethics. The code will be binding on all officers and will be reflected in regulations relating to conduct and discipline. In preparing the new code the Chief Constable and Board are required to have regard to the terms of the new Oath.

Badges, Flags and Emblems

On badges and flags, the Secretary of State will consult the Board and others, as required in the legislation, before reaching a decision. The aim is to secure consensus in the Board. If this is not achieved the Government will not propose a solution which would deter recruits or be objectionable to a substantial part of the community: the Government's bottom line will be the same as Patten's.

Oversight Commissioner

The Oversight Commissioner will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of changes in policing arrangements and structures recommended in the Patten Report. The Oversight Commissioner has already circulated a full report setting out the methodology by which he and his team will carry out their task. The Government has accepted the report. The Oversight Commissioner will monitor progress with implementation; will report at least three times a year, and will be able to draw attention to shortcomings in implementation and make recommendations. This could include recommendations for changes in the legislation if the Commissioner concluded that aspects of the Act were inhibiting the new beginning to policing as envisaged in the Good Friday Agreement.

Time-Limit for Complaints and References to Ombudsman

Under the Police Act 2000 the powers of the Ombudsman have been extended and the Government is ensuring that the office will be adequately staffed and resourced. The Ombudsman has unprecedented powers which will enable her to

initiate investigations into individual complaints, and arising from them, draw attention to police practices and policies which raise difficulties. She may carry out research for this purpose. She will also have powers of retrospection. The Government will make regulations under the Police Act extending the circumstances under which the Ombudsman may deal with complaints dating back more than two years, to cover cases which she considers grave or exceptional and which involve new evidence. In a case which has already been the subject of a complaint, the Ombudsman will be able to consider whether evidence about the adequacy of any earlier investigation constitutes new evidence.

In this context, the Ombudsman will be supplied by the Chief Constable and the Policing Board with such information and documents as she may require.

We referred previously to the substance of the draft Police Complaints Regulations, to be made under the 1998 Act as amended. Copies of the Regulations were made available during the passage of legislation. The regulations have yet to be finalised and are subject to further consideration with interested parties. A copy of the latest draft has already been provided.

Demilitarisation of buildings, vehicles etc

Patten made a series of recommendations on normalisation. These include making the appearance of police stations and of police vehicles less forbidding, a reduced role for the Army, closure of interrogation centres, the creation of a routinely unarmed police service, and the early phasing out of reliance on emergency legislation. Implementation of these recommendations has begun and will be advanced as quickly as conditions allow. We confirm that implementation of these recommendations will be subject to the scrutiny of the Oversight Commissioner.

Police Reserve

The Government is fully committed to phasing out the **Full Time Reserve**, as recommended by Patten, as soon as possible, taking account of the overall manpower situation in the light of the security situation. The process has, in effect, begun and numbers are decreasing. The strength of the Full Time Reserve has been reduced by over 600 and there has been no recruitment for three years. It is projected to fall by a further 700 over the next two years, producing an overall reduction of over 40 per cent. This takes no account of the

non-renewal of contracts, which will be a further step. We want this process to start, if possible, once the first new recruits start operational service in early 2002. The timescale is inevitably bound up with some difficult contractual issues which require further discussion with the Police Federation. We also aim to initiate the recruitment of an enlarged **Part Time Reserve** this year. The aim would be to bring the service up to 2,500 within three years of start up.

Special Branch and its support units

The Government and the Chief Constable have accepted all of the Patten recommendations in relation to Special Branch. The Chief Constable has announced his intention to bring Special Branch and the Crime Department under a single Assistant Chief Constable from 1 April. The Patten Report identifies 850 officers being attached to Special Branch. By March 2001 the Chief Constable expects to reduce this figure to around 765, a reduction of some ten per cent. The Chief Constable then aims, by September 2001, to amalgamate into the wider police service those units commonly referred to as support units (Patten recommendation 101). These units include support teams, including training, technical and air support units. This would by that stage have reduced Special Branch by over 40 per cent.

It is intended that the new tenure policy for the service will be finalised by September 2001. This would include an objective of five to seven years, with a maximum continuous period of the order of seven years for officers deployed in Special Branch.

Public order equipment

The Government has accepted and is implementing all the Patten recommendations in relation to Plastic Baton Rounds. The terms of reference of a research programme have been published. The conclusions of the first phase of the programme will also be published in the new few weeks. The next phase will involve preparation of research proposals. The Government will urgently advance the research programme recommended by Patten to find an acceptable alternative to plastic baton rounds. In the meantime, the use of plastic baton rounds will be avoided to the maximum extent. This area will be subject to scrutiny by the Oversight Commissioner.

Human rights offenders within the RUC

The Government agrees with the Patten Report (paragraph 5.19) that "bad apples" need to be dealt with. The Ombudsman has unprecedentedly wide powers to investigate complaints and individual cases and to provide an appropriate remedy. She has powers to initiate an investigation even if no specific complaint has been received, but where she believes that a criminal or disciplinary offence may have been committed under section 55 of the Police Act 1998. The regulations will provide for her to investigate cases arising before her office was established. There are just on 100 staff in her office. As already noted, the Government is committed to ensuring that her office is adequately resourced.

DRAFT

**BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S STATEMENT ON POLICING
ACCOMPANYING PUBLICATION OF UPDATED IMPLEMENTATION
PLAN**

[This text reflects Sinn Fein and SDLP concerns. As the Prime Minister has made clear, the final version will need to reflect concerns of other parties once they have been brought into discussions.]

It is over two and a half years since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement and some 15 months since the publication of the report by the Independent Commission on Policing (the Patten Report) which had its origins in that Agreement.

The Government fully accepts, as described in the Good Friday Agreement, that it is

Essential that policing structures and arrangements are such that the police service is professional, effective and efficient, fair and impartial, free from partisan political control: accountable, both under the law for its actions and to the community it serves; representative of the society it polices, and operates within a coherent and co-operative criminal justice system, which conforms with human rights norms.

That remains the Government's steadfast goal.

The Government is fully committed to the vision of the new beginning in policing. It wishes to see a police service that is supported by both traditions, is effective and enjoys the confidence of all sections of the community in Northern Ireland.

The Police Act 2000 and an updated Implementation Plan, that is being published today, lay the ground work and establish a road map for the implementation of the Patten recommendations. In its consultation with those directly involved in implementation and others, the Government acknowledges that concerns have been raised. The point has been made by many that in an unprecedentedly large programme of this magnitude, greater certainty was required.

The Plan covers all 175 of the Patten Report recommendations. Significant progress has already been made in many areas. For example, the Ombudsman's Office is now fully operational (and she will shortly be given further powers).

DRAFT

Two of the holding centres have been closed. An external agency has been appointed to conduct recruitment to the police and the process for appointments to the Policing Board has begun.

The Plan has been updated to take account of points raised by the parties and of the substantial work which the Chief Constable and his colleagues have done to prepare for the new service, against a tight timetable and in the face of continuing policing pressures. Further steps will take place shortly. By April the recruitment campaign will be launched to attract new regular trainees on a 50-50 basis. They will begin training in September. District Policing Partnerships will be set up by the end of 2001. They (and their sub-groups in Belfast) will interface with the Police District Commands which will be established in April. The objective is to bring about effective community policing and the DPPs will play a crucial role in achieving this.

The Implementation Plan will provide clearer timetables for increasing the Part-time Reserve and phasing out the Full-Time Reserve. Gough holding centre will close in the next few months, once alternative accommodation is available. The Special Branch and CID will be brought together under the management of one Assistant Chief Constable in April. The aim is for the redeployment of support units to take place this year and for a new tenure policy to be operational by September. The Plan makes plain the commitment to establish a human rights-based approach to policing, accountable against defined standards. The Plan also sets out the Government's position in relation to the important symbolic issues.

Underpinning the Plan is the Government's determination to maintain law and order through the development of a police service and which gains strength from more widespread community support.

The Government is now taking steps to set up a Policing Board which will be representative of the community in Northern Ireland. The Policing Board will, alongside the Ombudsman, have powers that are without precedent in the United Kingdom, in the Republic of Ireland, in Europe or America. It will determine objectives for the policing of Northern Ireland and it will issue the policing plan. It will be empowered to call for reports from the Chief Constable on matters connected with policing, including performance against the policing plan, and to initiate inquiries.

On the basis set out in this document and the implementation plan, the Government welcomes the commitment given by the parties represented in the Executive to nominate members to the Policing Board.

All these steps are the start of a process of change. The Government will want to keep the effectiveness of the new arrangements under close and constant review. The Oversight Commissioner will monitor progress on implementation and will report at least three times a year.

In addition, after the first twelve months of operation, the Government will ask the Oversight Commissioner to carry out a comprehensive review of implementation thus far, in the course of which he will be able to identify any shortcomings in the Police Act 2000 in bringing about the new beginning in policing and in providing an effective Police Service, able to do its job, and acceptable to all parts of the community. In conducting this review, the Oversight Commissioner will consult closely with the Policing Board, the Chief Constable, DPPS, political parties and other organisations in Northern Ireland. The Policing Board will also be invited to express views direct to the Government on the legislation after twelve months of operation. The British Government is aware of the concerns that have been expressed that the Government's legislation does not fully implement the letter and spirit of the Patten report and deliver the new police service we all want. These concerns include, in particular, the tripartite arrangements for accountability and the powers of the Policing Board, disqualification from independent membership of DPPs, extension of the functions of the Belfast DPP subgroups and clarification of the name if required. We make it clear that the Government will amend legislation to remedy each of these and other concerns in keeping with Patten as rapidly as possible after the conclusion of the review in [June 2002].

Now is the time for the whole community to demonstrate commitment to the new beginning to policing. That calls for unequivocal support for and co-operation with the new police service, and the encouragement of young people to join the police. By participating in this way, the whole community can together help to shape the future. For it is only through cross-community support, at local, district and national level, that the vision can and will be delivered.

DRAFT

STATEMENT BY THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

The Chief Constable today announced that he had conducted an assessment of the overall security threat and had concluded, in consultation with the GOC, that, notwithstanding a significant ongoing threat by the dissidents, today's events represent a real lowering of the overall threat. This, he said, assuming that all the commitments given today are honoured, makes appropriate the following steps which would be taken as soon as logistically possible:

- demolition of the supersangar at Newtonhamilton Police Station adjacent to the helicopter landing site;
- demolition of Magherafelt army base;
- demolition of the observation tower on Sturgan Mountain and one of the observation towers on Camlough Mountain.

Language from Chequers,

19 Jan.

IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

Creation of an informal Implementation Group; to comprise senior officials from Irish Government and British Government.

Remit:

To meet privately to liaise and exchange information on an ongoing basis, and monitor the implementation of commitments made, including on policing, security normalisation, OTRs and the issue of arms.

To report progress and identify outstanding commitments.

To agree, where possible, actions and remedies to meet outstanding commitments and report differences to Ministers.

To meet fortnightly and more regularly as required.

To report to the British Prime Minister and An Taoiseach, not later than 72 hours after each meeting.

Representatives of Sinn Fein to be involved in meetings.

A dedicated representative from the two Governments and Sinn Fein to liaise and exchange information on an ongoing basis, between meetings.

*Language from
Chequer, 19 Jan*

STEPS TO PUTTING WEAPONS BEYOND USE

- Statement by IRA announcing re-engagement with IICD for the purpose of agreeing how weapons will be put completely and verifiably beyond use. IICD report that re-engagement has taken place and that these discussions are under way.

- IICD announces that agreement reached on how weapons to be put beyond use.

- IICD report that weapons put beyond use in the manner agreed with the IICD.

- Private undertaking to the Prime Minister on the timetable on which all three steps will take place, with the first putting of weapons beyond use by Easter.

Language from
Chequers, 19 Jan

Policing

- Sinn Fein and SDLP to nominate political members to the Policing Board by end January for the purpose of making preparations for the assumption of its powers by the Policing Board, including advising the Secretary of State on the new service's badge and flag-flying policy.

cos\policing

CONFIDENTIAL - PERSONAL



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

File
sent faxed to Dublin
NIO for urgent and
transmission to PSI
65
S. SS

From the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff

16 February 2001

Dear Paul,

URGENT
MASTER

**NORTHERN IRELAND: CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRIME
MINISTER AND THE TAOISEACH**

The Prime Minister spoke to Bertie Ahern on the telephone this evening. The Taoiseach said he was fed up with Sinn Fein. We had wasted five weeks. He believed that we could do no more and had instructed his people to take the weekend off. He understood that the Sinn Fein high command were meeting all day today. He had also heard that Sinn Fein had warned Seamus Mallon's assistant that they should not do a deal on policing unless they wanted to set the peace process back 50 years. He was prepared to try to get the SDLP, the GAA and the Catholic Church to move on policing. He would speak to Mallon over the weekend.

The Prime Minister asked what the Taoiseach thought had happened. The Taoiseach said he thought the IRA had simply said no to putting weapons beyond use before Easter. As far as he was concerned we could not move on that. He thought we should let Sinn Fein sweat it out over the weekend. The Irish would not be speaking to them. He had said today in Donegal that we could not wait around for ever for people to clarify their position. He was not certain that the SDLP would be brave enough to move but we should try.

The Prime Minister said that if Sinn Fein thought that the SDLP were about to move that might concentrate their minds. The Taoiseach said that we might hear back from Sinn Fein next week. They would not like being isolated. The Prime Minister said he would ask John Reid to speak to Seamus Mallon over the weekend as well. If we made no progress David Trimble would be a 'goner' at the elections.

The Prime Minister said one possibility would be a mini deal whereby the IRA re-engaged with de Chastelain, the SDLP signed up to the Policing Board and Sinn Fein remained neutral on policing. The Prime Minister thought it might

CONFIDENTIAL - PERSONAL

CONFIDENTIAL - PERSONAL

- 2 -

be possible for Trimble to get through the election on that basis. The Taoiseach agreed. It was quite possible that Sinn Fein would come back to us next week to ask for a mini deal. It might therefore be possible to get the SDLP to move on policing. The Prime Minister said we ought to keep open the possibility of himself and the Taoiseach going to Belfast on Tuesday to see if they could make progress with the SDLP. The Taoiseach agreed and suggested they should speak again on Monday.

I am copying this letter to Bill Jeffrey (Northern Ireland Office).

Yours ever,

S Macleod

PP JONATHAN POWELL

Paul Priestly
NIO

CONFIDENTIAL - PERSONAL



CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

Top-JP

cc JS

Ru

✓ This is a good note.

Prime Minister

NORTHERN IRELAND: NEXT STEPS

SUMMARY

I would go for a push on policing on Tuesday on two conditions: (1) provided we have the Taoiseach on side, and (2) provided we don't build up expectations so much that failure to make progress on decommissioning crashes the whole process. Our first task is to get policing on a sensible footing, including launching the recruitment campaign. We can then turn our attention to helping Trimble, either by persuading Sinn Féin to change their minds on weapons, or by giving him enough cover - perhaps through a formal review - to keep him in the Executive over the Election period.

Where we are now

Sinn Féin's rejection of the deal yesterday could be both tactical and substantive. My own sense is that it is not purely tactical, and that Adams and McGuinness have hit some kind of barrier internally. As you said to the Taoiseach yesterday, it is quite possible that decommissioning - even disguised in the concreting of dumps - is beyond them, and that they have been using policing as an excuse and have been surprised at how far we've been willing to go.



SECRET

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

**CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL**Our short-term objectives

2. In my view, our objectives (in descending order of preference) now, should be:

2.1 Ideally, to change Sinn Féin's mind, but without running after them to offer more, which would be a mistake. We should try to put pressure on Sinn Féin, of the kind that stands the best chance of getting them to shift their position. This does not mean excoriating them in public but it does mean exposing them to the consequences of their intransigence, and getting across publicly the extent to which we have already moved in their direction.

2.2 If that proves impossible, to salvage what we can on policing by persuading the SDLP to sign up for the Policing Board. The chances of getting the SDLP on board for policing depend almost entirely on the attitude of the Irish. I would be surprised if Bertie has not already been talked out of his willingness last night to consider splitting the SDLP from Sinn Féin, or if Seamus Mallon was willing to jump without Sinn Féin. But with Irish support, I agree that it would be worth your coming to Northern Ireland, with Bertie, on Tuesday. It would be important not to raise expectations, particularly on decommissioning. Trimble would almost certainly feel bound to react to a public crash against the buffers on decommissioning.

I will get you a separate note on what could be offered to persuade the SDLP to join the Policing Board. I don't think you should go as far as you did with Sinn Féin. Some of their points - allowing ex-terrorists on DPPs, the Belfast sub groups, OTRs - are of little interest to the SDLP, and would just infuriate



INV-SOS-01/0001

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL



CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

everyone else. You might not even offer a formal review of the legislation. It will be more important to show some movement on inquiries, and I will reflect on that over the weekend.

2.3 If that fails, to advance police reform as rapidly as we can without a new-style Policing Board, and in particular to launch the necessary recruitment campaign. If we can't get the SDLP to join the Policing Board, we will have no option but to go ahead with the policing reforms, but without the Patten structures of accountability. We would either keep the existing Police Authority on until either or both of the nationalist parties were willing to nominate, or appoint interim Commissioners who might be viewed by nationalists with less suspicion than the existing authority. I am looking urgently at the options.

Whatever happens, we should not hold up the launch of recruitment advertising at the end of next week. I attach a note explaining why we can't delay recruitment any longer. Ultimately it comes down to manpower. If we don't move now, we would lose a couple of months over the holiday period, and by early next year police strength would have fallen below the minimum envisaged by Patten, and well below what Ronnie Flanagan regards as necessary. That would not be an acceptable outcome. Our first responsibility is to provide an effective police force. Ronnie has spoken out publicly this week, and if we deferred again his position would become impossible. The Irish will not like the idea of our expecting potential nationalist recruits to apply before the badge and the flag have been settled, but they are not at the moment in a strong position to complain.



0015 OF 004911

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

**CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL****2.4 Whatever the short term outcome, to keep the decommissioning issue in play, and if possible keep the Executive in being until after the Election.**

A soft landing on weapons and the institutions will be even more difficult to achieve, if Sinn Féin stand firm. You were right to warn Bertie that Trimble will now be under pressure to pull things down. But it is just possible that he could successfully resist such pressure. Such is the negativism of Northern Ireland politics, that he is, for the moment, reasonably comfortable in his position of defiance, preventing the North/South institutions from working properly and being seen to stand up to Sinn Féin. It was clear when I briefed him on the emerging deal last week that he did not regard it as unmitigated good news, and was concerned that there was too much in it for Sinn Féin, too early, and against too uncertain a pay-off. A weak deal in which we were perceived to have given away too much but Trimble was still expected to lift his North/South sanction would be worse for Trimble than no deal at all.

My conclusion is that, if Sinn Féin won't budge on weapons, we should try to play the issue long, rather than bringing it to a head. But we should bear in mind that as his March AGM approaches, Trimble is likely at the very least to intensify the North/South sanction, which could provoke a reaction on the other side.

JOHN REID
February 2001



S/SECRETARY OF STATE

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

CONFIDENTIAL**POLICE RECRUITMENT - WHY THE HURRY?**

1. Proceeding with police recruitment in the absence of a deal will be controversial. This note explains why it is, nevertheless, so important.

What Patten said

2. In September 1999 the Patten report noted that there were 8,500 regulars and 2,900 in the full time reserve, making a total of 11,400 full time officers (plus 1,300 in the part time reserve). His recommendation was that the full time strength of **11,400** should be reduced over three years to **7,116**, after which it would build up again slightly to a stable level of 7,500 "provided the peace process does not collapse and the security situation does not deteriorate significantly from the situation pertaining at present". Patten envisaged that the full time reserve would be "phased out over three years, after a reasonable notice period, as officers' contracts expired". His calculations assume, therefore, that by the end of year 3 the only reserve officers would be part timers.

3. Patten's proposal was for the part time strength of 1,300 to be increased to "up to 2,500 officers". With Catholics constituting only 5% of the PTR (as opposed to 7% of the FTR and 8% of the Regulars) Patten recommended that the new PTR officers should be recruited from Catholic/nationalist areas. Patten goes on to say that "if these new reservists were recruited within, say, four years, this would mean that regular and part time Catholic police officers combined would be over 22%, nearly treble the present percentage, and the figure after 10 years would be 40%". Catholic recruitment to the PTR is central to the overall figures for Catholic police officers: Patten's projection was that the number of regular Catholic officers would be just under 17% after four years and 29% after 10 years.

4. Between the publication of Patten and now, the number of full time officers has declined by nearly 600 to 8,353 regulars and 2,540 FTRs. A further 500 regulars are leaving under the severance scheme by the end of March. Then, in the following 12 months there are expected to be a further 700 or so departures under phase 2 of the severance scheme. Even assuming natural wastage (medical retirements etc) of only around 100 regulars, what this means is that, **without further recruits, the number of regulars would go below the lowest figure set by Patten (7,116), in the first quarter of 2002. The police estimate is that what they actually require is 8,179 regulars in the current**

CONFIDENTIAL

security situation (plus 2,154 FTR). This is why the Chief Constable is so anxious (a) not to box himself in prematurely on the phasing out of the full time reserve and (b) to avoid further slippage in recruitment, since officers who join in September will not be out on the streets until February/March 2002.

5. Delaying recruitment would also trigger a greater requirement for Army support and a delay to the start of the run-down of the FTR. Both would be nationalist unfriendly.

The critical path

6. Granted the general analysis, what is the specific penalty from a short delay in the recruitment campaign? The police and Deloitte & Touche, the independent recruitment agency, assert that losing even one more week now (the advertising has already been delayed by one week) would lose two months down the track. Why? The key considerations are:

- officers cannot be selected and brought in in batches because of the "general pool" arrangement which is needed to regulate the 50/50 recruitment process, the whole process has to be completed before any of the 240 or so successful candidates are accepted;
- the assessment centre process needs to be pretty well completed by the end of June to avoid disruption (both for interviewers and candidates) over both the holiday and the peak of the marching season;
- there are seven stages to the recruitment process which, for equality proofing reasons, has to be highly structured and formalised. There is no scope for short cuts;
- the police themselves and an outside consortium led by Deloitte & Touche are managing the recruitment process on the basis recommended by Patten, not the NIO and are not susceptible to Ministerial instructions to concertina any of the stages (even if equality proofing did not preclude this anyway);

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- this is already a risky and complex and ambitious process. It used to take the RUC 12 months to recruit an officer from scratch. In line with Patten, the contract stipulates 3 months.

Conclusion

7. At the end of the day there is no scientific means of demonstrating that there is an absolutely irreducible minimum below which police manpower numbers must not fall at any point. But the Chief Constable - who has demonstrated a remarkable flexibility on many other points - has now, publicly given his professional judgement that he can wait no longer. **The high level of sectarian attacks, the continued RIRA campaign and the shadow of Drumcree vividly illustrate the pressures he faces.** The present timetable is already extremely tight and, even now, the 240 recruits due to arrive in September will not have completed their training before February/March 2002. Slippage now would mean that they would not start operational duty before May 2002. Even assuming no increase in present threat levels, to wait longer would be unacceptably risky.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

CS
e: JB
JS

NORTHERN IRELAND DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS

I have seen John Reid's letters to you concerning the date of the District Council Elections in Northern Ireland. If you wish to have the option of changing the date, there are two options for legislation. Either a short bill now followed by regulations later, or a longer bill rushed through should you decide to call a General Election. The business management case is finely balanced, but I prefer the latter option. Full co-operation from the other parties would be essential for either.

As John's letter makes clear, there are two options for legislation should you want the option of changing the council election date. We could introduce a very short bill now, allowing general and council election polls to be combined, and then bring in regulations to change the date of the council poll if needed once you had announced a General Election date. Alternatively we could wait, and then rush through a bill making all the arrangements if you did decide to call a General Election for May.

Either option would need the complete support of the other parties – Denis is clear that without this neither Bill would have a chance of reaching the statute book. Experience on Patten and Disqualifications last year shows we cannot necessarily rely on the Tories living up to any promises. Also, either option would mean having to rush something (either major regulations or a full bill) through if you decide to call an early election. The Opposition would use this as a bargaining chip to win concessions on the rest of the programme. We cannot tell at this stage what those might be.

My preference would be for delaying any legislation. That way we would retain flexibility for as long as possible and avoid (unless absolutely necessary) committing Parliamentary time that we need to deliver on other priorities like the big crime and health bills. Of course the Opposition might extract a higher price for rushing through a whole bill rather than regulations, although if you had already called an election it would be hard for them to resist. And we could use the time saved by not doing a Bill earlier to get other legislation in a better state for fast passage at the end of the session if it were cut short.

I am copying this to John Reid, Jack Straw, the other Business Managers and Sir Richard Wilson.

Harman

MB

15/02/01

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL - PERSONAL



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff

15 February 2001

Dear Paul,

NORTHERN IRELAND: SINN FEIN

Dermot Gallagher called me last night. He told me the meeting in Dundalk had been very difficult. Sinn Fein had tabled the attached paper. They had simply restated all their original positions. The Irish had refused to be drawn into the discussion of the detail. They had simply gone round and round on the question of whether Sinn Fein could do the deal now.

He feared that Sinn Fein's intention was to play for time. They said that PIRA had lost their engineers and a section of good people in Derry and could not afford to lose more. It was just too hard a deal to sell. By the end of the meeting the Irish had been more encouraged, and Dermot called me again this morning to say that they thought the briefing of the Irish Times was significant in that it listed all the things we had already agreed to on policing as the demands Sinn Fein needed to be met before they could sign up.

The Prime Minister will see Adams this afternoon to see if he can force the issue with the aim of talks on Tuesday in Belfast. The Taoiseach apparently has to be in Rome on Wednesday morning for the swearing in of the new Irish Cardinal.

*Yours
✓*

JONATHAN POWELL

Paul Priestly
NIO

CONFIDENTIAL - PERSONAL

JPB
E.M.T.

Confidential & Immediate

For J. Powell from S. Pollock

1 of 2 pages

Forgot to mention that this
text given to us yesterday. Please
call home this morning (8330 771)
if you need to make contact.

Regards.

14/2/01
 Bellhouse i fax S. Féin

Disparate Issues for Resolution

All of the issues which follow are to be addressed by the 2 Governments in public statements. That is a joint statement by the 2 Governments and a British Government statement on policing.

Subject	Positions/Proposals
<p>Policing: A number of issues are involved beyond those addressed in the IG paper faxed to SF on Tues. 13/2/01. Sinn Féin has raised these issues with both Governments in both written form and verbally, for resolution by way of legislative amendment and/or other non-legislative means. The right hand column contains issues not addressed in the IG's 13/2/01 fax.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement needs to include agreed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water-tight guarantees And - Timeframes for implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representativeness: Quantify this in years 1, 2 and 3 and how it will be achieved including through IN/OUT of full time officers, Full Time Reserve, Part Time Reserve and lateral entry. And, in addition, the effect of the latter – lateral entry – on representativeness at senior levels and what other measures will be put in place to effect representativeness at this level. • Independent members of the policing board. • Recruiting materials to attract applications from republicans, nationalists and catholics. • Covert law enforcement. • Identification of Police Officers. • Special Branch and support units. • Recruitment Arrangements. • Registration of interests. • RUC – GC Foundation. • RUC memorials.

Subject	Positions/Proposals
OTRs	<p data-bbox="870 490 1312 599">S.F. position. The issue needs to be resolved in a definitive timeframe.</p> <p data-bbox="870 634 1424 1187">B.G. proposed: (19th Jan. 2001) The Government recognises the difficulty in respect of those people against whom there are outstanding prosecutions for offences committed before 10 April 1998. At present, they face the possibility of extradition or prosecution even though the offences if proven were committed before the key date for the early release scheme under the GFA. The Government is committed to dealing with this difficulty as soon as possible, so that those who, if they were convicted, would be eligible under the early release scheme, are no longer pursued.</p> <p data-bbox="870 1222 1401 1296">This proposal is deficient in respect of a defined timeframe.</p>

Subject	Positions/Proposals
Demilitarisation	<p>S.F. position: 14th Dec. 2000: A phased, timetabled programme of demilitarisation of society is required. Commencing with the substantive demilitarisation of South Armagh and the removal of the British Military installations on Divis Tower and Springfield Road, Girdwood in Belfast and at Fort George and Rosemount in Derry City. (Commitments given in May including Fort George in Derry have not been kept.) The programme should set out the timetabled steps which would see the programme completed by June 2001.</p> <p><u>Demilitarisation Measures in South Armagh</u> Phased implementation, commencing 1 Jan 2001 and to be completed by 30 June 2001, of the following, and in this order of prioritisation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Immediate closure of Crossmaglen base and the return of private property at Crossmaglen base to the owners.2. Removal of spy-posts at: Crievekieran, Drumuckaval, Glassdrummond, Clohogue and Faughil Mountain. <p>Followed by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Removal of spy posts at Camlough Mountain, Sturgan Mountain and Forkhill Mountain.2. Closure of Newtownhamilton and Forkhill Bases.3. Ending of foot-patrols and helicopter flights.

Subject	Positions/Proposals
Demilitarisation	<p>BG proposals 19 Jan 2001 and 26 Jan 2001:</p> <p>The essence of the very lengthy British Government commitment which follows is; The demolition of <u>Newtownhamilton sanger, Magherafelt Army Base, one of two observation towers on Camlough Mountain and the observation tower on Sturgan Mountain.</u></p> <p>The only timeframe given is <u>as soon as logistically possible.</u></p> <p>19/1/01: Further steps in normalisation will be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demolition of the supersanger at Newtownhamilton police station adjacent to helicopter landing site. - Demolition of tower on Strurgen Mountain. <p>The British Government repeats the assurance on normalisation given on 5 May. It is our intention to continue with this process until complete normalisation is restored in Northern Ireland. But it can only be on the basis of a continuing implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and the assessment of threat and danger to the community and people in Northern Ireland. Provided this threat is reduced, we will carry out a progressive rolling programme reducing levels of troops and installations in Northern Ireland. Ultimately, the "normal" state of Northern Ireland would mean the following:</p> <p>The following locations would have been vacated, returned or demolished:</p> <p>(a) <u>Army Bases</u>. The Army would move out of the following bases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bessbrook - Dungannon - Rathfriland - Clogher

- Clooney Base
- Ebrington Bks
- Magherafelt
- Grosvenor Bks
- Coleraine (Laurel Hill House)
- Girdwood Park
- Moscow Camp and Airport Jetty
- Military Hospital
- Malone Road
- Steeple Bks

The evacuation of some of these locations, such as Ebrington Barracks, for practical reasons, may take some time to complete.

(b) Surveillance Towers. All surveillance towers would be demolished and vacated.

(c) Joint Military/Police Locations. No further army presence in police stations.

All helicopter use would be for training.

There would be a number of overseas deployments and training opportunities, which would reduce the size of the garrison in situ at certain times.

Most training within Northern Ireland would be focused in Magilligan and Ballykinler Training Areas.

Draft Statement by the Chief Constable 26/1/01:

The Chief Constable today announced that he had conducted an assessment of the overall security threat and had concluded, in consultation with the GOC, that, notwithstanding a significant ongoing threat by the dissidents, today's events represent a real lowering of the overall threat. This, he said, assuming that all the commitments given today are honoured, makes appropriate the following steps which would be taken as soon as

logistically possible:

- Demolition of the supersanger at Newtownhamilton Police Station adjacent to the helicopter landing site;
- Demolition of Magherafelt army base;
- Demolition of the observation tower on Sturgan Mountain and one of the observation towers on Camlough Mountain.

Subject	Positions/Proposals
Putting Arms Beyond Use (PABU)	<p data-bbox="861 460 1424 641">(6 May 2000: The IRA's position is carried in a public statement of this date. This, as their part of a negotiated deal with the BG which the latter did not/has not delivered on.)</p> <p data-bbox="861 680 1374 827">SF's position is to explore a 'real world' position/agreement on the PABU issue. This of course is substantially and adversely affected by the above.</p> <p data-bbox="861 866 1396 1192">BG proposal: 19/1/01 Steps To Putting Weapons Beyond Use Statement by IRA announcing re-engagement with IICD for the purpose of agreeing how weapons will be put completely and verifiably beyond use. IICD report that re-engagement has taken place and that these discussion are under way.</p> <p data-bbox="861 1231 1407 1303">IICD announces that agreement reached on how weapons to be put beyond use.</p> <p data-bbox="861 1343 1416 1415">IICD report that weapons put beyond use in the manner agreed with the IICD.</p> <p data-bbox="861 1454 1391 1594">Private undertaking to the Prime Minister on the timetable on which all three steps will take place, with the first putting of weapons beyond use by Easter.</p>

Subject	Positions/Proposals
<p data-bbox="278 467 648 497">BG and Unionist Guarantees</p> <p data-bbox="278 536 813 641">Assurances/Guarantees from D. Trimble and BG about permanence of the political institutions.</p>	<ul data-bbox="866 467 1424 869" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="866 467 1424 536">• BG's suspension legislation is in breach of the GFA and International Treaty.<li data-bbox="866 576 1424 722">• The 'N.I. Act' should be amended to remove powers of veto afforded to the First and Deputy First Minister in respect of nominations to the NS/MC.<li data-bbox="866 762 1424 869">• David Trimble to publicly commit himself and the UUP to the permanence of the institutions.

Subject	Positions/Proposals
<p>Implementation of outstanding IG and BG commitments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation and democratic participation in the political life of the nation by Irish citizens living in the 6 counties. • Castlereagh Prisoners. • Passport Office Belfast. • Facilities at Westminster for SF MPs. • Flying of flags – the union flag – at government buildings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The basic inequality must be addressed. Unionists can go to Westminster. Nationalists should be enabled to go to the Dáil. • IG needs to make its position public now and timeframe implementation. • Measures should include voting rights in Presidential elections. • Release under the terms of the GFA. • Announce it and publicly timeframe. • BG committed to this but have not delivered. • This should be reversed.

Subject	Positions/Proposals
Implementation Group	<p data-bbox="863 460 1417 636">BG Proposal: 19/1/01: Implementation Group Creation of an informal Implementation Group; to comprise senior officials from Irish Government and British Government.</p> <p data-bbox="863 683 1417 938">Remit: To meet privately to liaise and exchange information on an ongoing basis, and monitor the implementation of commitments made, including on policing, security normalisation, OTRs and the issue of arms.</p> <p data-bbox="863 985 1417 1055">To report progress and identify outstanding commitments.</p> <p data-bbox="863 1101 1417 1194">To agree, where possible, actions and remedies to meet outstanding commitments and report differences to Ministers.</p> <p data-bbox="863 1241 1417 1310">To meet fortnightly and more regularly as required.</p> <p data-bbox="863 1357 1417 1450">To report to the British Prime Minister and An Taoiseach, not later than 72 hours after each meeting.</p> <p data-bbox="863 1496 1417 1566">Representatives of Sinn Féin to be involved in meetings.</p> <p data-bbox="863 1612 1417 1752">A dedicated representative from the two Governments and Sinn Féin to liaise and exchange information on an ongoing basis, between meetings.</p>

CONFIDENTIAL - PERSONAL



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

15 February 2001

Dear Paul

TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH TAOISEACH

The Prime Minister spoke by telephone to the Taoiseach this evening to debrief him on this afternoon's meeting with Adams and McGuinness.

The Prime Minister said he had had a frustrating and unproductive session. Adams and McGuinness were miles away from a reasonable position on policing. Some of their demands were ridiculous and went well beyond Patten. Their main argument – that they could not realistically present this as a satisfactory basis for Catholic recruitment – did not stand up. Adams and McGuinness had also said point blank that there was no way they could put weapons beyond use before Easter and anything they could do would be dependent on additional steps on demilitarisation.

The Prime Minister's impression was that Adams and McGuinness had been pulled back by people on their side. They were just not up for what was required of them. It may be that the IRA had said a definitive no to putting weapons beyond use within the required timescale and policing had been used as a breaking exercise.

The situation was now very dangerous. Trimble would be under huge pressure to bring things down. Even then, he would probably lose significant ground in the elections if there was no progress on decommissioning and policing. We could anyway not afford simply to park the policing issue. The police would be unable to function properly amidst so much uncertainty and with so many staff leaving. Things would move backwards.

The best approach was to try and move forward on policing with the SDLP on the basis of what was on the table. We appreciated it was not a happy situation for the nationalist community to be divided on policing. But it was time Sinn Fein felt some pressure. If Sinn Fein thought the SDLP might scoop up the

CONFIDENTIAL - PERSONAL

political credit for all the recent movement on policing, and that the Irish Government and Catholic Church would be supportive of the SDLP, they would be under real pressure to reengage (at least on the decommissioning/demilitarisation aspects). SDLP participation now might also ease the way for Sinn Fein engagement at a later date.

The Taoiseach echoed the Prime Minister's frustration. The British Government had moved "a hundred miles" on policing. He acknowledged that if Sinn Fein were not prepared to move we would need to try another tactic. We should assess the situation and consider how to take things forward with the SDLP. He had had a good meeting with the SDLP on Tuesday but still doubted they would be ready to move on policing without Sinn Fein. But they would be tempted by the prize of taking credit for all the movement on policing (some of which exceeded their own demands). The Taoiseach said he would take stock, think about how to approach the SDLP and then get back to us.

Comment

The Taoiseach was clearly pretty fed up with Sinn Fein and he acknowledged that we could not reasonably have moved any further. He did not dissent from the Prime Minister's strategy for putting pressure on Sinn Fein. We shall see if this toughness survives subsequent meetings with his officials.

Yours ever

Michael

MICHAEL TATHAM

Paul Priestly
NIO

cc Mr
JJ
FM
(202)364-5034
(fax)(202)364-1437
E-mail: MHCMcDowell@aol.com

✓
Wednesday, Feb. 14, '01

Dear Jonathan,

Sean O hUiginn/DFA have pulled off something of a coup in getting agreement now for Brian Cowen to meet Colin Powell and Condry Rice (see the attached *Irish Independent* story; it is correct; I have confirmed it) right after TB stays with George W.

It is important that DT see Powell or Rice or both or a drop-by Powell or some such combination this week (or before he leaves on Monday).

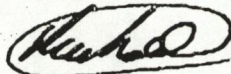
I am worried that the lobby (O'Dowd/Mackey et al) will use the current State Department offer of Asst. Sec. for Europe as a snub.

I have told David Campbell, and DT, separately, just a few minutes ago, NOT to turn down their current meeting with the Asst. Sec. or be churlish with the Yanks, but to work instead on a higher-level encounter (preferably the one I am suggesting) using your good offices and Chris Meyer. DT will try and call you from the plane en route, he says.

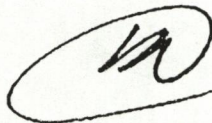
The trouble with the rank below Powell is that it hasn't been officially filled yet, nor Under Sec confirmed, as far as I know.

Anyway, we don't want the lobby here crowing about any kind of "snub." I am concerned too that the Irish and the lobby will use the inclusion of Rice as an indication that NI is still a high priority at the new NSC, even if this Cowen-Powell-Rice meeting is also Security Council related, because of Ireland's membership.

Best regards,



P.S. I hope the alarming reports I am reading about fiddling with the police deal are wrong; the pressure should be, rightly, on SF to live up to their May and earlier obligations and robustly reengage with de Chastelain and start decomm.; DT's credibility with the party and also his electorate is stretched to breaking point





UNISON

You are here: Home > News > Irish Independent > National News

Issue Date : Wed

Irish Independent



WEATHER

For Dublin

Sunny
Hi 12°C Lo 6°C
[Unison Access](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Customer Support](#) | [Bookmark Unison](#)

Welcome To Unison

NEWS

National News
[Irish Independent](#)
 National News
 International News
 Business
 Analysis
 Sport
 Politics
 Features
 Education
 Columnists
 Property
 Letters
 Weather
 Classifieds
 Archives
 Regional News
 World News

SPORT

ENTERTAINMENT

CLASSIFIEDS

SERVICES

TRAVEL

SEARCH

AT web



PARTNER

Newspapers >>

FAST

Cowen in surprise meeting with US officials

FOREIGN Minister Brian Cowen is to meet with US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, and other members of the Bush administration in a surprise visit to Washington.

Mr Cowen will meet the high-ranking US officials just one day after British Prime Minister Tony Blair finishes his Washington visit at the end of this month, it was learned last night.

In the build-up to St Patrick's Day, President Bush's team will have its initial exposure to the Northern peace process's competing factions.

Mr Blair arrives in Washington for an overnight visit with President Bush at the presidential retreat Camp David on February 23.

Mr Cowen will arrive for meetings with Colin Powell and National Security Council advisor, Dr Condoleeza Rice, starting on February 26. And as St Patrick's Day approaches, plans are still unconfirmed for the activities of the Irish delegation, which are expected to be much scaled-down compared to the days of the Clinton administration.

The traditional bowl of shamrock will be handed over by Taoiseach Bertie Ahern to President Bush on the Friday before March 17, but it is unlikely to be an all-day event at the White House.

Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams will attend the annual Speaker's Luncheon on March 15, along with the Taoiseach. A spokesman in the office of Speaker of the House, Dennis Haster, said there was no confirmation yet whether President Bush would attend. "We're hoping he comes," the spokesman said.

TOP STORIES

- ▶ [Fracas victim 'thought brother had been killed'](#)
- ▶ [Strikes pile pressure on fragile pay pact](#)
- ▶ [Liffey campus is pre-funded in new £8.5m deal](#)
- ▶ [Helicopter attack kills Arafat's bodyguard](#)
- ▶ [Clash of gladiators in election warm-up](#)
- ▶ [Bowler pounces for winner as Harte kick-starts Leeds revival](#)

BREAKING WORLD

- ▶ [Eight die in Israel after bus hit 12:27](#)
- ▶ [Estrada's bribery guilt could be proved 11:52](#)
- ▶ [Britain to ban cigarette advertising 10:03](#)
- ▶ [British man detained over Saudi bombings 09:16](#)
- ▶ [Email virus traced to Amsterdam 09:07](#)
- ▶ [more>>](#)

BREAKING NATIONAL

- ▶ [UDA living about pipe bomb involvement - Sinn Fein 15:12](#)
- ▶ [Max fine for littering to rise to £100,000 14:20](#)
- ▶ [Martin opposed to pub deregulation 14:10](#)
- ▶ [UDA denies pipe bomb attack link 14:03](#)
- ▶ [Wales unhappy with EC agriculture proposals 13:56](#)
- ▶ [more>>](#)

The first of the visits begins this week with the arrival of UUP leader and head of the Northern Ireland Assembly, David Trimble, in Washington to make his case for continued sanctions against Sinn Fein.

At a speech at the National Press Club and in meetings on Capitol Hill, Trimble will explain his decision to re-impose the ban on Sinn Fein ministers attending sessions of the ministerial council. Last Saturday Trimble was rewarded with the UUP executive's support despite a judge's decision the ban was illegal.

The UUP leader, who in years past regularly made a stop at the National Security Council's offices in the West Wing, will meet with State Department officials this time around.

The centerpiece of his visit will be his participation in the New Atlantic Alliance (a conservative Republican think-tank) panel discussion tomorrow.

With the Republicans in control of the presidency, the House and the Senate, those with conservative leanings, such as Mr Trimble, will be approached more warmly than during the Clinton era.

Susan Garraty in Washington

[Email This Story](#)

[About Unison](#) | [Corporate Services](#) | [Ad Specifications](#) | [Contact Unison](#)

© [Copyright Unison](#)

BREAKING SPORTS

- ▶ [Rugby : Buccaneers coach Rigney quits](#) 15:04
- ▶ [Soccer : Cunningham back in squad to face Denmark](#) 14:51
- ▶ [Soccer : Tugay in trouble after Old Firm Derby](#) 12:00
- ▶ [Soccer : Transfer agreement hangs in the balance](#) 11:33
- ▶ [Rugby : Hickie and O'Driscoll face hard work](#) says Galland 09:59
- ▶ [more>>](#)

THALES

Michael Tatham

URGENT - we spoke.

Communications House
P O Box 3621
Western Road
BRACKNELL RG12 1WJ
England
Tel: 01344 387000
Fax: 01344 387868
DDI: 01344 387809

J
142

14th February 2001

Mr Tom McKane
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London SW.

cf. JPo
{ JS

+ file.

Dear Tom

ANNOUNCEMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

I attach the final version of the statement, which we have now issued (at 1230).
Thales Air Systems resisted my plea to be more explicit about job numbers on the grounds that not all the jobs will be filled by local recruits.

Kind regards

John Howe

JH **JOHN HOWE**

VT1 manufacture awarded to Thales Air Defence

Thales Air Defence Limited (formerly Shorts Missile Systems Limited) today announced that it has won a multi-million pound contract for the production of the VT1 missile. VT1 is the high performance missile integrated into the Crotale Short Range Air Defence system manufactured by Thales – the new name for Thomson-CSF.

VT1 is one of the fastest missiles in its class with a speed in excess of mach 3.5 and a range of 11 kilometres, and is currently in service in several countries around the world (including France, and Finland). Originally designed and manufactured in the USA, this new contract will cover development and production of a new batch of missiles. Work for this contract will be carried out in Thales Air Defence facilities in both Belfast and South Down.

Speaking from the headquarters in Belfast, Terry Stone, Chief Executive Officer of Thales Air Defence Limited said, "I am pleased to announce this contract today. We have world class development and production capabilities here in Northern Ireland and I am delighted that this has been confirmed through the award of this contract by the Thales Group."

Thales Air Defence Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Thales, is the UK Prime Contractor for Very Short Range Air Defence systems and within the Thales group, is the centre of excellence for missile design, development and production. Operating from the headquarters in Belfast, with some 550 personnel, Thales Air Defence Limited activities are broad ranging and serve to meet the requirements of customers seeking Design, Manufacture, Assembly, test and support of complete products or components.

For further information contact:

Denise Clarke
Marketing and PR Manager
Thales Air Defence Limited

Tel: +44 (0) 28 9046 5548

Fax: +44 (0) 28 9046 5791



SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

07 fax

Prime Minister

TACTICS FOR TODAY

I have a feeling that how you react to whatever Gerry Adams comes back with later today will prove to be an important decision.

2. If Adams says that, subject to some minor points, he can run with the deal, the decision is straightforward. But he is more likely to say either that the gap is still too wide and it would be a mistake to come to Belfast; or that his personal judgement is that what we've offered isn't enough, but it's your call.

3. You will obviously want to take Bertie's mind, and the chances are that, if Adams is counselling against going to Belfast, Bertie will be reluctant to do so. But my own view is that there is something to be said for bringing things to a head now. Either Sinn Féin are in the market for a big deal or they aren't. If they aren't, they will be playing things long in the hope that Trimble will make the first move and they will have an excuse for doing nothing. Trimble has so far been restrained, but that can't last indefinitely. If they are up for a big deal, they will carry on haggling until they think they've reached our bottom line. You have said that you're already below your bottom line, but they won't believe that until we call a halt to the private discussions.

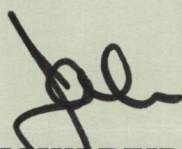
4. I also think that, if we don't call a halt to the private discussions, we will be implying that there is more to be had and will lose credibility. And if we don't bring Trimble into the picture soon, we run the risk of reaching an unbalanced deal which he can't live with.



SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND


5. It follows that:

- unless Bertie is unwilling, or Adams is so discouraging that he is in effect promising failure, my advice would be to travel to Belfast later today;
- if Adams is promising failure, you should turn the argument away from policing and back to weapons. Is he really saying that the IRA won't even re-engage with de Chastelain unless we meet every last demand on policing? That would be a hard position to defend publicly;
- I would resist sending Jonathan and Bill over for another round of private discussions.



JOHN REID

14 FEBRUARY 2001



Top: COS

FAJPS
FAEAPS
AK Press



SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

pu

over take, let
you slow see.
✓

Prime Minister

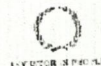
TACTICS FOR TODAY

I have a feeling that how you react to whatever Gerry Adams comes back with later today will prove to be an important decision.

2. If Adams says that, subject to some minor points, he can run with the deal, the decision is straightforward. But he is more likely to say either that the gap is still too wide and it would be a mistake to come to Belfast; or that his personal judgement is that what we've offered isn't enough, but it's your call.

3. You will obviously want to take Bertie's mind, and the chances are that, if Adams is counselling against going to Belfast, Bertie will be reluctant to do so. But my own view is that there is something to be said for bringing things to a head now. Either Sinn Féin are in the market for a big deal or they aren't. If they aren't, they will be playing things long in the hope that Trimble will make the first move and they will have an excuse for doing nothing. Trimble has so far been restrained, but that can't last indefinitely. If they are up for a big deal, they will carry on haggling until they think they've reached our bottom line. You have said that you're already below your bottom line, but they won't believe that until we call a halt to the private discussions.

4. I also think that, if we don't call a halt to the private discussions, we will be implying that there is more to be had and will lose credibility. And if we don't bring Trimble into the picture soon, we run the risk of reaching an unbalanced deal which he can't live with.






SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

5. It follows that:

- unless Bertie is unwilling, or Adams is so discouraging that he is in effect promising failure, my advice would be to travel to Belfast later today;
- if Adams is promising failure, you should turn the argument away from policing and back to weapons. Is he really saying that the IRA won't even re-engage with de Chastelain unless we meet every last demand on policing? That would be a hard position to defend publicly;
- I would resist sending Jonathan and Bill over for another round of private discussions. //✓✓✓


JOHN REID

14 FEBRUARY 2001

/