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Reference Code: 2003/17/300

Title: Statements made by leaders of the IRA [Irish Republican Army]; William Whitelaw MP, British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland; and the Social Democratic and Labour Party [SDLP] regarding potential talks between the IRA and the British government.

Creation Date(s): 13 June, 1972-14 June, 1972

Level of description: Item

Extent and medium: 3 pages

Creator(s): Department of Foreign Affairs

Access Conditions: Open

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13th June 1972

Extract from statement issued by leaders of the
Provisional IRA inviting Mr. William Whitelaw M.P.
British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to
talks in Derry (as reported in the Irish Times
14th June 1972)

If this invitation is accepted by Mr. Whitelaw within a period of 48 hours the Irish Republican Army will suspend all offensive military operations for seven days, provided the British armed forces respond by: (a) ending arrests; (b) ending all raids and searches of homes; (c) ending harassment of the civilian population.

We guarantee a conduct of safe passage to Mr. Whitelaw during his visit to Free Derry. If Free Derry is not an acceptable venue, then the Republican leaders will meet Mr. Whitelaw at a place of his choosing provided a conduct of safe passage is publicly assured.

We believe that a stage has been reached where the major parties to the present conflict must engage in discussions designed to secure a lasting solution. Hence our invitation to Mr. Whitelaw. We expect a reply within 48 hours and trust it will be positive.

If the reply is negative, then the Irish Republican Army will have no option but to continue the campaign of resistance.

13th June 1972

Text of statement made by Mr. William Whitelaw M.P.
British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
rejecting the offer of talks made by leaders of the
Provisional IRA (as reported in the Irish Times
14th June 1972)

The Secretary of State cannot respond to ultimatums from terrorists who are causing suffering to innocent citizens in Northern Ireland and shooting British troops. They should listen to the people and cease the violence at once. Peace and normal life will then be restored to the long suffering people of Northern Ireland.

14th June 1972

Text of statement issued by the Social Democratic and Labour Party announcing their willingness to meet Mr. William Whitelaw MP Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (as reported in the Irish Times on 15th June 1972)

"We have noted all the events of the past 24 hours with interest and we welcome the further evidence of a great desire for peace on all sides. We accept the statement of the Provisional I.R.A. without commenting on its conditions as a sincere attempt to produce the atmosphere for a peaceful settlement to this community's problems and as evidence of their willingness to engage in peaceful political activity. We note the decision of the U.D.A. to suspend their activities as a contribution to the lessening of tension.

We as a party have sought consistently for the peaceful resolution of our problems and we believe that at this critical stage no opportunity should be lost. Accordingly, the parliamentary party of the S.D.L.P., without prejudice to its other commitments, has asked the two M.P.s whose constituents have suffered most, Mr. Devlin and Mr. Hume, to meet Mr. Whitelaw to discuss yesterday's statement by the Provisional I.R.A.

We make this offer in a spirit of genuine reconciliation for this community and as a test of the sincerity of both Mr. Whitelaw and the Provisional I.R.A. in their expressions of a desire for a peaceful settlement. We ask the Provisional I.R.A. to call a ceasefire for 48 hours. We ask Mr. Whitelaw to meet us to discuss the Provisional I.R.A. statement of 13th June. We hope for a positive response from both."