



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Mr. W. Kirwan

Uimhir.....

To: *Mr. W. Kirwan*
From: *B. McCarthy*

Secretary to the Government. Initially I considered whether in the context of the need for a fresh attempt to grapple with the overall problem and some evidence of internal debate in Provisional IRA and Sinn Fein, there would be any advantage in replying.

Re: Letter of 11 February, 1992 from

Mr. Gerry Adams

The points made by Mr. Adams convince me that there would not and that no reply or acknowledgement should issue

*Taoiseach,
To see please.
I certainly think that any question of a reply should not be considered until after your meeting with the British PM next week - and even then the inclination should be negative.*

1. The practice has been not to respond to letters of this nature from Mr. Adams. The most recent letter was on 19 August last when Mr. Adams wrote to the Taoiseach seeking a meeting with him to discuss the "search for peace". No response was issued to the letter which was also sent to the British Prime Minister and Church leaders. The only British response was a remark by Minister Needham that the letter was a publicity gimmick and that Adams should "call off his Rotweilers". The Church leaders did respond in November saying that since no credible proof had been given by Sinn Fein of its readiness to abjure all violence, they could not meet representatives of Sinn Fein. A statement was issued by Sinn Fein at the time the letter was written and much of its content is remarkably similar to the letter now sent to the Taoiseach.

2. In November, 1988, a letter was sent to the Taoiseach by the General Secretaries of Sinn Fein (Harley and O Raghallaigh) enclosing their proposals for an alternative to the Anglo-Irish Agreement. This letter was not replied to.

3. The only exception to the practice outlined above was in February, 1990 when Mr. Adams wrote to the Taoiseach about the controversy at that time relating to the return to Australia of aboriginal remains which were in the Royal College of Surgeons. The Taoiseach decided that a reply should be issued to Mr. Adams by his Private Secretary setting out the factual position i.e. the matter had been resolved and the remains were being returned to Australia.

19/2/92
agreed 19/2
SEEN BY
TAOISEACH

ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Misc.
P. 2.

Uimhir.....

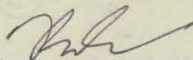
To:

- 2 -

From:

4. On 20 February, 1984, the Government agreed that members of the Government or Ministers of State should not meet deputations which included members of Provisional Sinn Fein unless they publicly disassociated themselves from the IRA campaign of violence. The decision was taken on foot of a memorandum from the Minister for Justice which drew attention to the practical difficulties of extending the decision to correspondence from Sinn Fein representatives addressed to Government Departments but this category of correspondence was distinguished from that addressed to Ministers or their private offices - the inference was that there should be no reply to the latter correspondence.

4. I see no reason to depart from our practice in relation to correspondence from this source. The Sinn Fein Ard Fheis is due to take place at the weekend and even an acknowledgement of the letter could well be used for purposes which would militate against the Government's interests. It could also complicate unnecessarily the Taoiseach's meeting with the British Prime Minister. The Sinn Fein letter does not renounce the IRA campaign or call for its cessation. Its statement that it does not advocate or endorse violence must be viewed in the context of Mr. Adams' prominent attendance at the funeral in Sligo recently of a Provisional IRA member who was shot dead by a part-time UDR member who had fired back when attacked by an IRA unit near Belleek.



18 February, 1992.

M. K. Kuper

W. H. C. Carthy
(As discussed)

Pl. discuss.

W. H.

14-2-92

22

1312



GERRY ADAMS MP
51/55 Bóthar na bhFáil
Béal Feirste BT12 4PD

11 February 1992

An tAoisreach
Mr Albert Reynolds TD
Leinster House
Dublin

A Chara

May I congratulate you on your election as leader of Fianna Fail. In your first press conference as leader of Fianna Fail you clearly signalled your intention to seek a resolution to the "cruelty and continuing conflict in the six counties". You also said that you looked forward to working with the British Prime Minister, John Major, and importantly stated "we must put no limits to what we would do".

I was, however, disappointed that you ruled out the involvement of Sinn Féin in political talks on the future of the north of Ireland. In the six counties, Sinn Féin represents the objectives, aspirations and interests of a large section of the nationalist community. The unionist administration at Stormont was, justifiably, criticised for disenfranchising nationalists. Surely such anti-democratic methods should be abandoned. Talks, if they are to be successful, must be as inclusive as possible.

Sinn Féin is not involved in violence and does not advocate or endorse violence. We understand why there is a conflict and why there is armed resistance by the IRA to British rule in our country. However, Sinn Féin wants to see a total demilitarisation of the situation and an end to armed conflict of all kinds in our country. This can only be achieved if the causes of political violence are tackled and a political solution worked out in which peace can be both achieved and sustained.

The central and most urgent issue facing us all is, therefore, how to create the conditions of justice, equality and democracy through which a real and lasting peace can be achieved. The only real and permanent answer to the issue of political violence in Ireland is to be found in the resolution of the injustices which create and sustain it.

People are looking to their political leaders to grasp the political nettle and make real efforts to accommodate the differing political positions which exist in order to secure peace.

Sinn Fein is convinced that partition and Britain's continued presence are the core issues creating conflict and division. They are the political barriers to peace and political progress. It is impossible to successfully tackle the question of relationships between the people of these islands without tackling these issues also. This requires dialogue. ✓

Sinn Fein is prepared to face up to that task and to discharge our responsibilities in a positive and honourable way. We believe that peace can be achieved. We are committed to establishing a peace process. ✓


Dialogue and a frank and full exchange of views is essential if there is to be any hope of constructive progress.

A real opportunity does exist to build a new future for the people of this island but it requires political courage, open mindedness and flexibility on all sides.

This is the challenge facing us all. For our part, Sinn Fein welcomes any genuine attempt to initiate a peace process. The causes of conflict must be tackled and resolved and an end brought to the terrible tragedy which we have all had to endure for too long.

You have a unique opportunity as incoming Taoiseach to start the process of resolving the conflict by persuading the British that the resolution to the conflict lies in the realisation of national self-determination for the Irish people. This is Fianna Fail party policy, it is also a constitutional imperative, but more importantly, it is the only real context for peace in this country.

Is mise



GERRY ADAMS MP