



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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Policy on Meetings between Government Ministers
and Sinn Fein representatives

1. In February, 1984 the then Government agreed that Ministers 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.

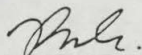
2. On the question of talks (i.e. political talks with Sinn Fein), the Taoiseach, in May, 1988 responding to a Parliamentary Question stated that the only circumstances in which talks with Sinn Fein could be contemplated by an Irish Government would be if they rejected violence and accepted that constitutional politics are the only legitimate way to achieve economic, social and political objectives.

3. Arising from the controversy surrounding the President's visit to West Belfast and her "meeting" with Gerry Adams (the President has stated that this was not a meeting in the normal sense of that term) together with subsequent comments by the Leader of Fine Gael it is likely that the question of Government policy in relation to meetings with Sinn Fein will arise in the Dáil and the media. It is suggested that the response to any such queries be on the following lines:-
 - (1) The policy of the Government in relation to meetings with Sinn Fein is well known.
 - (2) Successive Governments have taken the view that no useful purpose would be served by contact/dialogue with Sinn Fein as long as they condone the use of violence for political ends.

4. President's visit to West Belfast

It is important to emphasise that:-

- (a) The guest list for the function was drawn up by the organisers. The Government had no role in approving it.
- (b) The content of advice to the President on this or any other matter is confidential. This is a well established principle.



Brian McCarthy

22 June, 1993