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Oifig an Taoisigh  
Office of the Taoiseach

8 February, 1994.

The Rt. Hon. Mr. John Major, MP,  
Prime Minister.

*Mr. Wall*  
*Mr. Clarke*  
*B*

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter of 4 February. I would look forward to an informal chat between the two of us on 19 February, and the Tánaiste and Sir Patrick Mayhew perhaps. However, I feel there should be no suggestion of a formal summit meeting, and the number of officials should be kept to a minimum. Perhaps Rod Lyne would get in contact with my Private Secretary Colm Butler about the arrangements.

I remain cautiously optimistic that the Joint Declaration has set a process in train that will lead sooner rather than later to a complete cessation of violence. While I realise that lethal attacks are continuing on the security forces, it is a source of some limited encouragement that there have been no fatalities from Republican sources so far this year, and only one since the Declaration.

We should be wary of behaving, as if we were writing off the chances of a positive response. There is very strong pressure here for peace, which has been reflected in public submissions to Sinn Fein's consultative commission hearings. There is also great pressure, arising from the American visit, on Adams not to disappoint the hopes of the many responsible political and

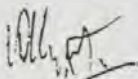
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business figures from the President down who associated themselves with the visit. I do not believe we have in any sense lost the initiative for peace.

I accept that preparations should be put in train for a resumption of the talks process next month, if there is no positive response by then. I and the Tánaiste have asked our officials to update a draft framework document held over from last autumn, to take account of the new basis presented by our Joint Declaration.

While Sir Patrick Mayhew's checklist of areas to be covered is a useful one, our view would be that the resumed talks should be based on a framework agreed between the two Governments, commensurate with the depth achieved in the Declaration. The Tánaiste will, I understand, be putting to Sir Patrick Mayhew our views on these matters in more detail.

Yours sincerely,



Taoiseach.

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

4 February 1994

*Dear Albert,*

I am glad that Patrick Mayhew and Dick Spring had the chance of a thorough discussion on 28 January. This was a good time to take stock.

As the days pass, it becomes harder to sustain optimism about the eventual response of the Provisionals and Sinn Fein to the Joint Declaration. We have both shown patience and restraint, and have kept the door open. To the extent that an internal debate may be continuing within Sinn Fein, this must be the right line. But Gerry Adams said nothing in the United States to encourage the thought that they will shortly give up violence. I see that you warned on 2 February that it was time we had a decision. I entirely agree.

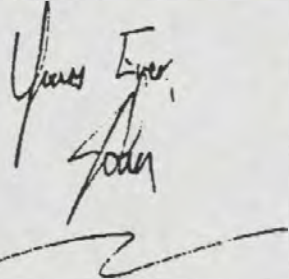
We should not be thought to be waiting on Sinn Fein, or holding up progress while they come to a decision. As I feared, the New York visit was a heaven-sent opportunity for Adams to try to undermine the Joint Declaration and to relieve the pressure on Sinn Fein to accept it. It has done a lot of damage, and the Administration must be regretting their decision to let him in. We now need to regain the initiative, and to demonstrate once again that our two Governments are working hand in glove to carry our initiative forward.

I therefore think it particularly important to give fresh impetus to the political dialogue involving the constitutional parties. I welcome your own call for an early resumption of the political Talks. We have always agreed that the Talks complement the Declaration. To make a reality of this, we should look for early progress across all three strands.

Patrick Mayhew and Dick Spring agreed on 28 January that there should now be intensive contacts between our officials. I hope you will agree that they should be asked rapidly to develop a framework to assist in the talks process. As Patrick Mayhew explained to Dick Spring, he intends to float privately some notions on where, in all three strands, the Talks so far have indicated a measure of agreement. This will be a basis for identifying the areas where more work is required.

I am sure that it would be useful for you and me to compare notes fairly soon, preferably in a way which would not attract too much attention. As luck would have it, the rugby international at Twickenham on 19 February looks like a good opportunity, and good timing. I gather that you are likely to come over for the game. The RFU have also invited me. I hope that we can find an hour or so before or after the game for a chat.

If you would like to do this, I shall ask Roderic Lyne to be in touch with your office to work out the most convenient arrangement.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'James Taylor', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Mr Albert Reynolds TD