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Reference Code: 2021/96/22

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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

cc PST
PSS: Friday
A/S St. Uiginn
M. Mansergh
K. Murray
T. Dalton
Joint Secretary
Amst. on + Wash.
Counsellors AI

From the Private Secretary

7 April 1994

Dear Mr Adams,

The Prime Minister has asked me to reply to your letters of 30 March and 6 April.

You ask for direct dialogue in which there would be clarification and discussion on how to move matters forward. You also see this as a means of demonstrating recognition of Sinn Fein's position as a political party with a valid electoral mandate.

The issues which you raise were fully addressed in the Joint Declaration, which states clearly:

"... democratically mandated parties which establish a commitment to exclusively peaceful methods and which have shown that they abide by the democratic process, are free to participate fully in democratic politics and to join in dialogue in due course between the Governments and the political parties on the way ahead."

Many other passages in the Joint Declaration are also directly relevant to issues which you have raised. For example, paragraph 4 can leave the reader in no doubt over the Government's future intentions towards Northern Ireland.

You are wrong to say the Government have caused a stalemate. Any pause in the movement towards peace is because of the continuing violence, and Sinn Fein's failure unequivocally to renounce violence as a means of achieving political ends. It is Sinn Fein that excludes itself from playing a full part in the political process.

The Prime Minister, in addressing the House of Commons on 15 December, said that if there was a permanent end to violence, and if Sinn Fein committed itself to the democratic process, then the Government would be ready to enter into preliminary exploratory dialogue with it within three months.

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This dialogue would have the following purposes:

- (i) to explore the basis upon which Sinn Fein would come to be admitted to an inclusive political talks process to which the British Government is committed but without anticipating the negotiations within that process;
- (ii) to exchange views on how Sinn Fein would be able over a period to play the same part as the current constitutional parties in the public life of Northern Ireland;
- (iii) to examine the practical consequences of the ending of violence.

We await a positive response. The people of the island of Ireland, north and south, and from both traditions, want violence to stop now, not temporarily but for good. So do their governments.

The Joint Declaration offers the way forward. Sinn Fein can take it. Or reject it. But if violence continues, it will only be because Sinn Fein have spurned the opportunity to enter the democratic process.

In view of the importance of these issues to the people of these islands, the Prime Minister has decided to make this letter publicly available.

yours sincerely,

Roderic Lyne

RODERIC LYNE

Gerry Adams Esq