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DAIL ÉIREANN
BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH, 2.
(Dublin, 2).

1 April, 1994.

An Taoiseach,
Mr. Albert Reynolds, T.D.,
Government Buildings,
Merrion Street,
Dublin, 2.

Dear Taoiseach,

We are today issuing the enclosed joint statement. We are anxious to meet with yourself and the Tanaiste to discuss what practical steps we can collectively take to make political progress in regard to Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN BRUTON, T.D.,
Leader, Fine Gael

MARY HARNEY, T.D.,
Leader, Progressive Democrats

PROINSIAS DE ROSSA, T.D.,
Leader, Democratic Left

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DAIL ÉIREANN
BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH. 2.
(Dublin. 2).

JOINT STATEMENT BY JOHN BRUTON TD, LEADER OF FINE GAEL, MARY HARNEY TD, LEADER OF THE PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRATS AND PROINSIAS DE ROSSA TD, LEADER OF DEMOCRATIC LEFT

1st April 1994 4pm

We have come together this Easter, as leaders of the three Opposition Parties in Dail Eireann, to call on the IRA to permanently end its campaign of violence, once and for all. A three day suspension of its campaign is not an appropriate response to the overwhelming desire of Irish people for peace.

We are well aware that 78 years after the 1916 Rising, Easter is still a time of special significance for many in the republican movement. We believe, however, that the best commemoration of Easter 1916 that the IRA could observe is to heed the words of Padraig Pearse to his supporters when, to avoid inflicting further suffering on them, he said: "Lay down your arms lest you bring too much suffering on your own people".

Over 3,200 people have died in the current conflict in Northern Ireland. Over the last twenty five years Irish men, women and children have seen loved ones taken from them by those claiming to adhere to the doctrines of Padraig Pearse. We call on them now to emulate Pearse's most difficult political decision, to lay down their arms to spare their own people further grief and suffering.

As leaders of Parties which support the Downing Street Declaration we are deeply concerned that the momentum for peace has slowed significantly in recent weeks. We believe that a radical departure is now needed from parties on this side of the border to restore momentum to the process that the Declaration began and to bring constitutional parties to centre stage.

We are proposing to the Taoiseach and Tanaiste that they sit down with us, as Party Leaders with a commitment to peace, to hold discussions about what practical steps we can collectively take to make progress by constitutional action. This would help counter the growing pessimism about the present "peace process" and would demonstrate that constitutional politicians, not men of violence, set the agenda & of violence set the agenda.

We hope that discussions between party leaders, from both Government and opposition sides south of the border, will demonstrate in tangible form our own deep commitment to peace and will pave the way for the wider Forum for Peace and Reconciliation proposed by the Government involving constitutional parties on both sides of the border.

We have today written to the Taoiseach and Tanaiste conveying the proposal contained in this statement.

ENDS

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