



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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1. In notes
 2. in notes
 [I would like to have a meeting on the weekend]
 28/12/94

MESSAGE DATED 7 SEPTEMBER 1994 FROM THE PRIME MINISTER
TO THE TAOISEACH

Dear Albert

I am concerned at the gap which is developing between our positions, less than a week after the IRA's announcement. This risks making it much more difficult to consolidate peace in Northern Ireland.

We were caught by surprise by your meeting yesterday with Gerry Adams. Dick Spring did not mention it to Patrick Mayhew the previous evening: we first saw it on our television screens. I fear it will exacerbate the suspicions of the Unionists, when I am doing all I can to allay their fears about a secret deal.

It has been an extraordinary achievement to get this far. You have spared no effort in the peace process. But we are only six days into the cessation, and we have a very long way to go to finish the job. The next phase, which all being well will lead us to the exploratory talks and through them to the full negotiating process, is going to be very delicate to handle. I do not think it will succeed if our governments drift into different positions. Our unity has been probably the single most important factor up to now.

I know that you are anxious for me to determine that the cessation of violence is for good, and then move on from that. I do not differ greatly from your analysis. But the picture on the ground is mixed, and Sinn Fein's inhibitions in making it clear beyond doubt that there will be no return to violence have not helped at all. Our decision will be a critical point, and I have to make sure that we get it right. If the main body of unionists - I don't mean Paisley and Co: I gave them short shrift yesterday - came out against us, the process would not succeed.

I am sure that it would be helpful for us to go over all of this privately on the 'phone, as we have done so often, and to work our way back to a common position. I have to go to the Netherlands today and Berlin tomorrow; perhaps we could have a word on Friday or over the weekend.

If you have any further thoughts in the meantime, please let me know through David Blatherwick or any of the other usual channels.

Nothing could be more important than getting this right, and I am determined that we should succeed.

With best wishes,

John