



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Government Statement

The Cabinet Sub-Committee on Northern Ireland has carried out a detailed review of all aspects of the current situation.

The Government note with profound regret the statement announcing the ending of the IRA's complete cessation of hostilities. They unreservedly condemn last night's bombing in London and express their deep sympathy, on behalf of the Irish people, to the victims of that act of violence and to their families.

On 1st November, 1982 the Taoiseach of that day said:

"It is not possible to adopt the pretence of being democratic, while simultaneously striking at the right to life and freedom which are the very basis of democracy".

Violence, and the threat of violence, have no place in democratic negotiation. Nothing can justify a resort to violence in an attempt to override the democratic political process.

The Government's search for an inclusive process of negotiation was based on a clear commitment by the IRA to a total cessation of violence. The fact that that commitment has now been revoked alters the situation fundamentally.

The Government believe that democratic negotiation is the only method by which the divisions in Northern Ireland can be healed and permanent peace restored. Only those who take no part in violence, in the threat of violence, or in the support of violence, can take part in democratic negotiation.

The great majority of the people of this island, the broad sweep of nationalist opinion in Northern Ireland, and Irish-America - all have invested in the peace that resulted from the IRA cessation of violence. The ending of that cessation shatters the hopes of all those who invested in peace and worked for democratic political progress.

The ceasefire of August 1994 was the key enabling event which permitted a whole range of top level political contacts and developments to take place.

The Government have noted Mr. Adams request for a meeting.

The Government want the IRA ceasefire to be restored immediately.

The basis for previous Government meetings with Sinn Féin was that a total cessation of IRA violence was already in place. That policy enjoyed support because it showed that violence was not an acceptable method of promoting a political programme. We are concerned to ensure that any meeting with Sinn Féin should be consistent with that long-standing policy.

The Government remain resolute in their determination to end terrorism from whatever source and have already commenced a full review of security towards that end. Close co-operation will be maintained with all relevant Governments.

10 February, 1996