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ON BEHALF OF

Department of the Taoiseach,
Dublin 2.
Tel. (01) 668 9333

THAR CEANN

Roinn an Taoisigh,
Baile Átha Cliath 2.
Tel. (01) 668 9333

Government Statement

The Government today reviewed the security situation generally following detailed security briefing provided to the Taoiseach yesterday evening by senior Garda and Defence Force personnel.

The Government noted the progress made in the investigation of the murder of Garda McCabe and of the serious injuries inflicted on Garda O'Sullivan in Adare, and expressed its appreciation for the very considerable support and co-operation which has been received from members of the general public.

The Government was briefed also on the Manchester bombing in which hundreds of people were injured and extensive property damage caused. The Garda Síochána remain in close contact with their opposite numbers in the U.K. and Northern Ireland on this and all similar acts of terror.

The Government reiterated its determination to face down the men of violence, to spare no effort in bringing those responsible to justice and to ensure that

neither they nor any of their associates will ever be allowed to damage the genuine efforts now underway by the representatives of the vast majority of the people on these islands to resolve the Northern Ireland question by exclusively peaceful and democratic means.

Following the breakdown of the IRA ceasefire and the Canary Wharf bombing on 9th February, the Government decided that it should terminate all Ministerial contact with Sinn Féin, but maintain limited official contact.

Official contact was maintained in the belief that it would be more likely to help restore the ceasefire than would a policy of total refusal of Government contact.

In the meantime, the Government did everything possible to facilitate Sinn Féin's entry into the negotiations launched on 10 June in its work on the preparations for those negotiations. Sinn Féin have been provided, through official contacts, with all the information they could possibly need, in this context. Everything has been done to make it possible for Sinn Féin to go to the IRA and seek from them a restoration of the complete cessation of violence.

The Government is seriously concerned that, despite this information and assistance, Sinn Féin has not yet got the IRA to restore the ceasefire. The murder of Garda McCabe in Adare, the serious injuries inflicted on Garda O'Sullivan, and the bombing outrage in Manchester in which hundreds of

people were injured, and Sinn Féin's reaction to these outrages, provide no grounds for confidence that Sinn Féin is capable of pursuing normal democratic politics based on exclusively peaceful methods.

The question of further meetings, if any, with Sinn Féin will be kept under review in light, *inter alia*, of the responses by Sinn Féin to the two simple questions that were put to them publicly last evening on behalf of the Government. A copy of last night's statement is appended.

These are simple questions, which any democratic political party should be able to answer.

They are questions which Sinn Féin must address in an honest way. Unless the party is able to answer these questions for its own members and for the public, it will continue to have difficulty pursuing a coherent peace strategy.

18th June, 1996.

Briefing Note

The Government's review of its relationship with Sinn Fein, which will begin tomorrow, will focus mainly on the question of whether Sinn Fein intends to continue to give political support to the armed struggle being waged by the IRA. In the past Mr. Gerry Adams accused the British Government of embracing the rhetoric of peace making but avoiding the real challenges. The real challenge now for Mr. Adams himself is to answer two simple questions:-

- (1) Has he yet gone to the IRA to ask for a ceasefire, and if not, why?

- (2) Does his party continue to support the "armed struggle" of the IRA?

These are simple political questions, and the Government will be looking at what Sinn Fein and the IRA do and say over the immediate future, to see if a clear answer is given to these questions. Democratic politicians in other jurisdictions will also be watching how Sinn Fein answers the questions.

The Government wants Sinn Fein to answer these questions for themselves. It wants an answer to these questions that is simple, genuine and convincing, not tactical or semantical.

Sinn Fein must avoid the temptation to blame others for the dilemma they find themselves in because of the contradiction between their own talk of peace, and the IRA action in Adare and Manchester. This political dilemma can only be resolved if Sinn Fein answers these simple questions about their party policy.

SMO. HAVO DEE