



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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**FOR: Anglo-Irish**  
**FOR: M. Brown/C. Goodman**

**FROM: Belfast**  
**FROM: C. O'Shea**

**Subj: Statement of 3 May by Dr. Mo Mowlan MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland**

Please circulate, as appropriate.



NORTHERN IRELAND  
Information Service

STATEMENT BY DR MO MOWLAM MP, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND Saturday 3 May 1997

Speaking on arrival in Belfast today, Dr Mowlam said:

"I am delighted by my appointment as Northern Ireland Secretary.

"It is a great honour and a great challenge.

"Over the past two and a half years, in my meetings and discussions with people throughout Northern Ireland, I have been impressed by the energy and determination you bring to the many difficult situations which you face.

"I will join with you in confronting the obstacles that remain to achieving a new settlement for Northern Ireland.

"Labour in Government will be no different from Labour in opposition. We took up principled and balanced positions then and we will carry them through in Government. We will be active in promoting the things we believe in, but we will listen to the views of the people of Northern Ireland and their political leaders and aim for more openness and accountability.

"We took the bipartisan approach in opposition because it was responsible and it was right, and we look forward to the same from the Conservative opposition. I wish Sir Patrick well, and I, like many people in Northern Ireland, would like to acknowledge the good work and commitment he put into the job.

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"The people of Northern Ireland have the right to decide their own future and there will be no change to Northern Ireland's status as a part of the United Kingdom without the clear and formal consent of a majority of the people who live here.

"Equally, we are determined that future arrangements for the government of Northern Ireland should attract the support of all parts of the community.

"The resumption of the multi-party talks at Castle Buildings on 3 June is highly significant. Expectations may be low, but it is only through political dialogue that we can reach a fair, long-term political accommodation to bring lasting political stability to Northern Ireland. Our goal is a political settlement which will have broad support on both sides of the community and the consent of the people as in the Downing Street Declaration. So I approach the negotiations determined that they should achieve their potential. Once the local government elections are out of the way, we will be looking to make early progress.

"We want Sinn Fein to join those negotiations: the talks are open to them. But if Sinn Fein want negotiations they know what must be done: if there is an unequivocal restoration of the IRA ceasefire, demonstrated in words and deeds, they could join the process. No one can combine terrorism and democracy. If the IRA campaign continues, we shall do all in our power to carry the talks forward, and achieve a settlement, without Sinn Fein.

"I will of course continue to work very closely with the Irish Government, both in discharging my responsibilities as Secretary of State and in the search for a lasting political accommodation which addresses all the relevant relationships and is capable of attracting the support of both Unionists and Nationalists.

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"I look forward to meeting the Chief Constable and the General Officer Commanding. The security forces will have my full support in their courageous work to uphold democracy and the rule of law. We will be working with them to maximise the support and confidence of the community as they carry out their task.

"We will be taking initiatives to expand and reinforce the protection of individual rights; to reform policing and to ensure equality in employment. We will be mounting a major review of training with a view to enhancing employment opportunities, especially for young people. We will be using these and other initiatives to build confidence throughout the community: they threaten no one's fundamental interests and reflect sound principles which should underpin any fair-minded society.

"I am determined to work with others to ease tensions arising from parades and marches, and to uphold the rule of law. We will implement the recommendations of the North Report with care and sensitivity. But as we approach the height of the marching season this year I appeal to everyone with any influence to use it to defuse sectarian tensions and attitudes and find ways of balancing the legitimate rights of marchers and local residents."

END