



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Note

This draft was prepared on 10.4.97 following notice of rumours that the IRA were to announce a

*ceasefire
of 1994
S.P. in that
a prepared unequivocal preparation. Another draft*

Statement by the Taoiseach, Mr John Bruton, T.D. on behalf of the Government

The Government note the statement by the IRA indicating an unequivocal restoration of the August, 1994 cessation of military operations. That ceasefire should never have been broken but the announcement of its restoration, if it proves to be genuine in the sense of being validated by events, is welcome to that extent.

[Any comment arising from the phrasing of the IRA statement.]

I indicated yesterday that the opportunity just about existed for Sinn Féin to participate in the multi-party talks when they resume on 3 June but that time was running out and that the necessary unequivocal ceasefire would need to come soon. If that has happened, it is welcome. But I also said that every time the IRA engaged in a further action, the more difficult they made it for others to believe that a ceasefire that might be called afterwards was truly unequivocal - because every act of violence created equivocation in terms of commitment to peace in any subsequent ceasefire. The shooting and serious wounding of [RUC Constable XX], which I utterly condemn, in Derry today is a further IRA action with these consequences.

Against the background of the last 14 months, the Government are treating today's announcement with caution. They will assess its significance, not just in terms of the words used [insert appropriate comment] but also by the deeds of the IRA or their absence. If, however, deeds are consistent with words and there is a total, genuine and unequivocal restoration of the ceasefire that is adhered to in the period to 3 June and if Sinn Féin establish a commitment to exclusively peaceful methods and have shown that they abide by the democratic process, it is the position of the Irish Government that they must be admitted to the multi-party talks on and from 3 June, on the same footing as and subject to the same ground rules and rules of procedure as all other participants.

If, however, deeds in the interval do not match words in terms of compliance with the position set out in the communiqué of 28 February, 1996 and in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the ground rules, then they cannot, and will not, be admitted to the talks.

The Government sincerely hope that the Republican Movement has, once and for all, decided to abandon violence and definitively to embrace exclusively

*contingency of a temporary suspension or cessation limited to the island of Ireland. In the event, there is no announcement. Instead RUC ceasefire was not possible. All in all was that part in the bar in Derry 30.4.97
L.V. 11.4.97*

Peaceful and democratic means. If this is demonstrated to be so, the Government will be prepared to engage and include Sinn Féin in democratic dialogue, in and at all appropriate fora and levels. But for this to happen, nothing less than a total, genuine and unequivocal ceasefire will suffice. The Government will be monitoring the situation very closely in the period immediately ahead.

believe that most people will see this for what it is - a cynical variant on the Armalite and Ballot Box strategy. Republicans are simply putting the Armalite aside temporarily, in order to assist the ballot box side of their operation. But the Armalite is still within reach and once the elections are over, the Armalite - and the Semtex - will be used again; and the shooting and bombing will resume. All that today's news tells us is two things. First, that Sinn Féin and the IRA are indeed inextricably linked. And second, that Sinn Féin has, unfortunately, not yet turned its back on the strategy of the Armalite and the Ballot Box. Sinn Féin will have to do better if they want to get into the talks - if they want to do real business with the rest of us on these islands. It is self-evident that a temporary suspension of violence does not show the commitment to non-violence and democracy that is required for entry to the multi-party talks.

Note

The above draft was prepared on 10.4.97, following stories from ~~the~~ media sources that the IRA were ~~were~~ to announce a ceasefire between 4 and 5 p.m. that day. This draft was prepared for the contingency of a temporary suspension, so acknowledged or stated, or a cessation limited to the island of Ireland. Another draft was prepared for the contingency of a hurried unequivocal restoration. In the event, there was no announcement of a ceasefire. Instead, RUC Reserve Constable Alice Collins was shot in the back in Derry about 4 p.m.!!

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11.4.97