

C O N F I D E N T I A L

PAB/7686/DGMcN

FROM: D G McNEILL, PAB
DATE: 18 DECEMBER 1991

UNDER/ 599/12
SEC
19DEC1991
CENT SEC

9446
18 DEC 1991

DESK IMMEDIATE

- cc PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B
- PS/PUS (B&L) - B
- PS/Mr Fell - B
- Mr Ledlie - B
- Mr Thomas - B
- Mr Wilson - B
- Mr Bell - B
- Mr Alston - B
- Mr Deverell - B
- Mr Leach - B
- Mrs Collins - B
- Mr Rogers - B
- Mr F Woods, Info Service - B

19/12

a m [signature]

*Yes - he & I
talked about it
on the phone this
morning before he
put his note in
(2nd, in favour, also before
I saw the lead version).
Bell
18/12*

*I think you
would agree with
[signature]*

PS/Dr Mawhinney (B&L) - B

POSSIBLE PIRA CEASEFIRE

1. I have seen Mr Leach's suggested draft of a Government statement in the event of a PIRA pre stated Christmas ceasefire.
2. I fully recognise that the precise terms of any statement can only be finalised when, and if, we know of the terms etc of any ceasefire.
3. However I do think that we should be prepared to be less dismissive of any such declared ceasefire and I offer the following alternative draft for consideration, even if that can only be in outline form at this stage.
4. At this point I am not copying this to the RUC or HQNI.

(SIGNED)

D G McNEILL
Political Affairs Division
SH Ext 2238

C O N F I D E N T I A L

DRAFT 18/12/91

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO PIRA ANNOUNCEMENT OF CEASEFIRE

Christmas is a season of peace and goodwill so any announcement that killing and maiming is to stop, even if only for a few days, is welcome news. Of course this ceasefire will bring no comfort to families who are facing this Christmas without a loved one murdered for a cause which has no relevance in the Ireland or Europe of today. Equally it is of little comfort to those whose churches, homes and schools have been attacked by bombs and who are celebrating Christmas in the unseasonable surrounds of those wrecked churches and homes.

The people in Northern Ireland want peace. If the IRA is serious in sharing that wish, then let them prove it by continuing this ceasefire indefinitely; better still why don't they give up violence for good. That's what all of us want and that would truly set the stage for a happy New Year. If they cannot face that challenge the people, north and south, can only conclude that the IRA's real Christmas message came earlier this month in Craigavon.

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RG/12538