

FROM: TONY BEETON  
TALKS PLANNING UNIT  
9 MAY 1994

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cc: PS/Sir John Wheeler (L&B) - B  
PS/Michael Ancram (L&B) - B  
PS/PUS(L&B) - B  
PS/Mr Fell - B  
Mr Legge - B  
Mr Thomas - B  
Mr Bell - B  
Mr Shannon - B  
Mr Steele - B  
Mr Watkins - B  
Mr Williams - B  
Mr Brooker - B  
Mrs Brown - B  
Mr Perry - B  
Mr Maccabe - B  
Mr White - B

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has been

1. Mr Daniell (Seen and approved)
2. PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - B

MINISTER'S CASE SSL/104/94: LETTER FROM CONGRESSMAN RICHARD E NEAL

Richard E Neal, Representative for the Second District in Massachusetts in the Congress met the Secretary of State in Washington on 14 April at the lunch with Speaker Foley and wrote on 20 April to follow up some of the issues discussed. Congressman Neal also met the PUS during Sir John Wheeler's visit earlier this year.

2. Congressman Neal writes that because of his deep interest in seeing 'issues of great importance to the people of Northern Ireland' dealt with as quickly and effectively as possible he wishes to call to the Secretary of State's attention some matters of the highest priority. These are, firstly the question of clarification. Congressman Neal writes, in an apparent attempt to be evenhanded, that Sinn Fein's request for clarification and the Government's 'refusal to enter discussions to provide such clarification' appear to be 'a stumbling block' in the way of 'a permanent ceasefire', and asks why the Government does not undertake 'appropriate discussions with Sinn Fein to remove this obstacle'.

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3. Secondly he asks the Secretary of State to elaborate on the comments he made in New York during his American visit about 'IRA surrender'. The Congressman wonders what steps the Government would take 'to assure that on-going prisoner review procedures will continue pending the implementation of a ceasefire and what new procedures you might consider to facilitate and accelerate those reviews should a ceasefire be implemented'.

4. Thirdly, he writes that he is concerned about two developments which he says could undermine progress in relations between the security forces and the nationalist community. These are what he describes as 'the apparently excessive buildup in border areas of British army defence and security facilities in response to isolated instances of violence', and the continued presence of security forces in areas where violence has decreased dramatically - for example, Londonderry - while the need for 'stronger measures' in some Loyalist areas appears to be ignored.

5. Congressman Neal is not beyond the pale, although his comments demonstrate clearly the continuing green-tinged blinkers which limit the vision of some Congressional opinion on Northern Ireland. The attached draft letter (to which SPOB1 have contributed) assumes that the Secretary of State will wish to reply in a reasonably friendly manner while correcting the misapprehensions in the Congressman's letter.

SIGNED

TONY BEETON  
Talks Planning Unit  
OAB 6564  
9 May 1994

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DRAFT LETTER

FILE NUMBER

ADDRESSEE'S REFERENCE

<p>TO:          Richard E Neal          House of Representatives          Washington DC 20515          USA</p>	<p>ENCLOSURES:</p>	<p>COPIES TO BE SENT TO</p>
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FOR SIGNATURE BY: SECRETARY OF STATE

Thank you for your letter of 20 April in which you took the opportunity to raise some matters relating to issues we discussed over lunch with Speaker Foley in Washington on 14 April.

May I first say that I did indeed find my visit to the United States useful and enjoyable. I felt the level of understanding and support for the Downing Street Declaration was extremely encouraging and the breadth of Congressional support for the efforts which the Government is making - in close partnership with the Irish Government - to secure progress towards a lasting settlement in Northern Ireland was reassuring too.

As to the specific points you raised. Firstly you suggest that both Sinn Fein's request for clarification and the Government's refusal to enter into discussions upon it are obstacles to a

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A 'permanent ceasefire and moving the peace talks ahead'. You wonder why we will not undertake what you call 'appropriate discussions' with Sinn Fein to remove the obstacle. The Government has made two things quite plain, and I am happy to underline them here.

First, we believe that the Downing Street Declaration is clear. Moreover both we and the Irish Government have made determined efforts to ensure that it is fully understood. The Taoiseach, Mr Spring, the Prime Minister and I have all made speeches and written articles dealing with many reasonable questions raised by people throughout our two countries. Furthermore, as I said during my time in the United States, if Sinn Fein - who for all their talk about clarification have not told us what it is they claim needs clarifying - have genuine questions let them be stated in public. We would look to see if they had already been dealt with, and then we would consider our course of action in the light of all the circumstances. But if Sinn Fein are unwilling or unable to say in public precisely what it is they claim needs clarifying, then, Dick Spring has said recently, that raises the inevitable suspicion that what they really want is to blur the vital distinction between politics and violence by drawing the Government into negotiations before IRA violence has been brought to a permanent end.

The second point is that we will not negotiate with Sinn Fein until they have ended their support for violence, and the IRA have

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brought their campaign to a permanent end. This is not a question of expediency, but it must be a fundamental principle in democracies such as ours that objectives cannot be furthered through the use of force. The Downing Street Declaration is unequivocal on this point. It says that 'the British and Irish Governments reiterate that the achievement of peace must involve a permanent end to the use of, or support for, paramilitary violence'. We have gone on to make clear what the consequences of an end to violence will mean. Sinn Fein simply have to acknowledge and accept the values of democracy which are at the core of the Downing Street Declaration for all obstacles to be removed. The choice is theirs.

You also asked if I would elaborate on my comments in New York about 'surrender' not being a necessary part of a permanent ending of violence. What I said was that the British Government was not going to surrender in the face of terrorism. I went on to explain that it is equally true that in order to give up violence and to enter the conference chamber nobody has to abandon or surrender any aspiration or political objective. I think, however, that you may be mistaken if you equate this with any willingness to come to some sort of an agreement with the IRA as a price for the ending of violence, involving, for example, the question of prisoner review procedures which you mention in your letter. There can be no question of any such arrangement. For so long as terrorist violence continues we shall use the full rigour of the law to bring the perpetrators of criminal offences to justice, and those convicted of offences by the courts must expect to serve their

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sentences. The arrangements for dealing with the release of sentenced prisoners are well understood and will continue.

Your letter goes on to make some points about the security forces in Northern Ireland. Whilst the deployment of police resources is an operational matter for the Chief Constable, I do not accept the implication that there is a particularly "pervasive presence" of security forces in Nationalist areas whilst "ignoring" Loyalist areas. The security forces work ceaselessly day and night to protect the community from terrorist attack and to bring all terrorists, no matter what their origin to justice. As the Chief Constable stressed in September of last year "Republican and Loyalist terrorists are the common enemy of the decent people of Northern Ireland". Naturally there is concern about attacks carried out and threats issued by Loyalist terrorists. Their activities are disgraceful and unacceptable and cannot be tolerated in a democratic society, any more than can those of the IRA.

I think that it is important to be clear about the nature of the terrorist threat at the border. Since the 1970s the IRA have ruthlessly and consistently tried to exploit the existence of the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic. The Government cannot view regular serious attacks on the security forces, many of which have caused death and injury and have disrupted and inconvenienced local communities, as isolated incidents. It has therefore sought to protect those in remote border areas who are

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vulnerable to attack by a combination of security measures, including permanent Patrol Bases. These installations have been strengthened in view of continuing cold blooded and cynical attacks at the border, which have clearly shown the terrorists' indifference to the suffering they cause.

You refer to a dramatic decrease in violence in the Derry area. However, a high level of threat remains both in the city and in the County of Londonderry. Unfortunately we need only to go back to 24 April when two men were shot dead while sitting in their car in the main street of a Co Londonderry town, or to 20 April, when a police constable was murdered, to be reminded of continuing terrorist activity in the area. Both attacks were claimed by the IRA.

The security forces will combat the continuing Loyalist and Republican terrorism with all the vigour and resources at their disposal. You will be interested to know that so far this year (28 April) 89 Loyalists have been charged with terrorist related offences, compared with 53 Republicans.

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