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M: MRS D E McNALLY  
CPL DIVISION  
19 APRIL 1994

ASST SEC 20 APR 1994  
CENT SEC

cc: Mr Williams -B  
Mr Daniell -B  
Mr Maxwell -B

1. Miss Harrison (Signed GFH 20/4)
2. Mr Brooker (The point for Baroness Denton to emphasize, if the conversation moves on to political issues, is that there is a lot of good co-operation between the 2 Governments at present, as officials work to devise a shared understanding on the parameters of an acceptable outcome to the Talks process. Signed DB 20/4)
3. Ms P Blacker, DHSS -B (via Typing Pool, Dundonald House) -B

**PROPOSED VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND BY MR BRENDAN HOWLIN TD, MINISTER OF HEALTH, REPUBLIC OF IRELAND**

Your minute of 29 March 1994 requested briefing for the above meeting.

2. Given that the meeting will deal essentially with issues in the Health care field, I attach up to date bull points together with a background note on political development for Baroness Denton's use.

(Signed)

MRS D E McNALLY  
Constitutional and Political Division  
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*Mrs. Keenan*

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TICAL TALKS: BULL POINTS

19 April 1994

HMG remains firmly committed to seeking a widely acceptable political accommodation which would take account of all the relevant relationships: those within Northern Ireland, those within the island of Ireland and those between the British and Irish Governments.

- HMG has a rational hope that the Talks process will succeed. There is a unanimous acceptance that the status quo is not a viable option - everyone wants a settlement.
- Both British and Irish Governments are continuing intensive contacts and committed to search for comprehensive political settlement. As mandated by both Governments, further work is currently being undertaken intensively to develop a framework to carry the process forward.
- Private bilateral discussions have taken place since last Autumn with 3 of the 4 main constitutional parties to explore the basis upon which they might come together for further dialogue. (DUP have declined to participate). The aim is to establish areas of common agreement; explore areas of continued apprehension or the disagreement and to try and identify the degree of flexibility which may be needed on all sides to resolve them.
- Peace and Talks are not rivals - It is not a case of either or.
- Dr Paisley has an open invitation to take part in bilateral discussions. These objectives are complementary. But a lasting peace will take time, patience and commitment and will only be
- The three parties who have been engaged in bilateral discussions with the Government have been shown the document containing the Government's ideas for giving direction to the talks process, covering all the main relationships. Now being discussed in bilaterals, on the same basis as before.
- It remains our objective to return to multilateral talks involving the two Governments and the four main constitutional parties at the appropriate point.

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Do not say what will emerge from our exploratory discussions. No artificial time limits have been set and any further dialogue need not be in the same format as before. Talks are a means to an end and not an end in themselves.

- No question of imposing a solution; nothing will work without the support of those who will have to work any new arrangements, and the community at large.
- We do not have a "blueprint" for a settlement, but "notions" based on our assessment of the broad areas of agreement which have so far emerged from earlier discussions. As partners in the Talks process the Irish Government have also been given a copy of the document.
- HMG has no hidden agenda; we have ruled out no options or possibilities for a final outcome; there are two basic tests - are they workable and crucially can they attract widespread support throughout the Community.
- The present status of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom will not change without the consent of a majority of the people who live there.
- Peace and Talks are not rivals - it is not a case of either or. We seek both a permanent end to violence - and a political settlement. These objectives are complementary. But a lasting peace will take time, patience and commitment and will only be achieved through a political settlement which has broad consent among the people of Northern Ireland.
- Both Governments are fully committed to the Anglo-Irish Agreement, but would be prepared to consider a new and more broadly based agreement or structure if such an agreement can be arrived at through direct discussion and negotiation between all the parties concerned.

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Select Committee on Northern Ireland. The House voted in March to set up a Select Committee for Northern Ireland. The establishment of such a Committee has been consistently recommended, in principle, by the Procedure Committee since 1978.

- The Committee stands to benefit all the people of Northern Ireland. It is in the interests of both sides of the community that Northern Ireland affairs are open to scrutiny and full Parliamentary accountability.
- It does not pre-judge the outcome of the political Talks process. It is essentially a matter of how Westminster arranges its affairs for the better scrutiny of Government.

**Blueprint for Stability: UUP Paper**

- Government was given the document in January. Will consider paper, as we have ideas from other parties.
- In the case of Strand one, it is an interesting contribution to the discussion. But the Government remains committed to the view that the best way of addressing the political problems of Northern Ireland is through the process involving the two Governments, all the main constitutional parties and addressing all the relevant relationships.

**(UUP proposals for devolved assembly-defensive)**

- Government believes that there are inherent difficulties in addressing only one set of relationships on its own.
- The Government has noted that the document recognised that the relationship between the two Governments is a matter for them to address. We are working closely with the Irish Government on these issues.

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ay Independent opinion poll)

Government notes that a Sunday Independent opinion poll in February showed that a majority of people in both the Republic (80%) and Northern Ireland (68%) support constitutional talks.

**JOINT DECLARATION**

- IRA would like us to abandon our democratic principles. They would like us to amend or abandon the Joint Declaration. They would like us to ignore those in Ireland and the United Kingdom who have given overwhelming support to the two Governments.

- They will succeed in none of these things. They will not deflect us by an inch from the course we have chosen. We shall stand by the Joint declaration: it is a statement of principles which underpins the two Governments approach.

- They will only reinforce our determination to do what we know to be right: to pursue terrorists with all the means at our disposal within the law, and to seek an overall political settlement with all those committed to exclusively political methods.

- Disappointed that Sinn Fein still seem unable to commit themselves to democratic politics. Hope that they will do so at the earliest opportunity.

**IRA Ceasefire**

- IRA couldn't wait for their own ceasefire to end before they were making the preparations for the attacks they launched only minutes after midnight on Saturday morning. That shows just how cynical the ceasefire was.

- It was an opportunity for peace. It was a ploy. Peace requires a permanent end to violence, not a brief respite from killing.

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do not have to surrender - Sir Patrick Mayhew's speech in New  
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hat we require of all those who use or justify violence is that they bring it to a permanent end and commit themselves wholly to democracy.

[Surrender of Arms]

Naturally people should not hold illegal weapons and we shall continue to uphold the rule of law.

[Clarification: Sir Patrick Mayhew in US]

For all their noise about clarification Sinn Fein have not been able to specify what they want explained. HMG has been prepared all along to ensure that the Downing Street Declaration is fully understood (The Secretary of State has in newspaper articles and speeches). If there were genuine questions which we could answer, we would do so. But as HMG have made plain before, there could be no negotiation with Sinn Fein until the violence has been brought to a permanent end.

[Adams letter]

The Prime Minister's Private Secretary's reply spelt out the position plainly. Sinn Fein know that the violence must come to an end before they can expect to play a part in normal democratic politics. It is their continuing support for violence which excludes them.

[Taoiseach's weekend speech]

Mr Reynolds said he was speaking personally and speculatively. Important point is that Irish Government - like HMG - are perfectly clear that - as it says in the Downing Street Declaration - "it

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It would be wrong to attempt to impose a united Ireland in the absence of freely given consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland.

Irish Forum for Peace and Reconciliation]

In the Downing Street Declaration the Taoiseach indicated his intention to make arrangements within the Republic of Ireland "to enable democratic parties to consult together and share in the dialogue about the political future". He said that these could include the establishment of a Forum for Peace and Reconciliation. Mr Reynolds has made it clear that Sinn Fein will not be able to participate in the Forum until there has been a permanent cessation of violence.

[John Hume's article in Irish Times, 13 April]

The sincerity and consistency of the hon Gentleman's repudiation of all forms of violence are rightly admired in this House. The IRA should examine his arguments carefully and take the course he urges - a complete and permanent cessation of violence.

4. Both Governments have reaffirmed their joint commitment to the search for a comprehensive political settlement covering the main relationships building on the Joint Declaration and achieved through political dialogue on the basis of the 26 March 1991 statement. At the IGC on 10 March Ministers mandated further intensive work to provide a framework to carry the Talks process forward.

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GROUND NOTE

NORTHERN IRELAND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Joint Declaration issued on 15 December by the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach sets out a framework for peace, stability and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and provides a starting point for a peace process designed to culminate in a political settlement founded on consent and covering arrangements within Northern Ireland, within the island of Ireland and between the British and Irish Governments. It provides Sinn Fein with the opportunity to engage in dialogue once the IRA have declared a ceasefire and sufficiently demonstrated that it is permanent.

2. Though Sinn Fein have yet to respond positively, the Government's policy is to intensify the political talks process which has been complemented and underpinned by the Joint Declaration.

3. The Talks process which began in 1991, has been continuing since last Autumn, in the form of private bilateral discussions with three of the four main constitutional parties (Dr Paisley's DUP has declined to take part). The Prime Minister has met the leaders of the UUP and DUP, and Michael Ancram, the Minister for political development, is in the process of holding further meetings with the three parties to discuss the Government's ideas for giving direction to the Talks and covering all the relevant relationships. This is not a "blueprint" but "notions" based on our assessment of the broad areas of agreement which have so far emerged from earlier discussions. As partners in the Talks process the Irish Government have also been given a copy of the document.

4. Both Governments have reaffirmed their joint commitment to the search for a comprehensive political settlement covering the main relationships building on the Joint Declaration and achieved through political dialogue on the basis of the 26 March 1991 statement. At the IGC on 10 March Ministers mandated further intensive work to provide a framework to carry the Talks process forward.

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