

FROM:

G HARRISON
CPL DIVISION
6 SEPTEMBER 1994



cc: PS/Michael Ancram (L&B)
PS/PUS (L&B)
PS/Mr Fell
Mr Thomas (o/r)
Mr Legge
Mr Bell
Mr Watkins
Mr Williams
Mr Steele
Mr Wood (L&B)
Mr Brooker (o/r)
Mr Maccabe
Mr Marsh
Mr Maxwell
Mr Canavan
Mrs Brown
Mr Ross
Mr T Smyth, A-I Sec
Mr Maye, SPOB1
Mr Beeton
Mr Caine

mrs King

PS/Secretary of State (L&B)

COMBER DISTRICT ORANGE LODGE - SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE:
WEDNESDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 1994

I attach a fully worked-up speech for this event based on the draft of 26 August which was submitted by Mr Brooker which has been considered by the Secretary of State.

2. The speech incorporates contributions from PAB (Introduction); a revised section on Security from SPOB1, which takes account of the ceasefire; a revised section on the Joint Declaration/Peace from SIL and a revised section on Economic and Social policy supplied by Central Secretariat.

3. The draft press release has been revised accordingly and is at Annex A.

CPL1/AJH/18890

4. Further changes may, of course be necessary, in the light of developments today.

Question and Answer Session

5. David McNarry, one of the organisers of the event has forwarded 8 questions to the Secretary of State which members of the Lodge wish to put to him during the question and answer session following the speech.

6. The questions and lines to take are attached at Annex B.

signed GFH

G HARRISON (MISS)
Constitutional and Political Division
OAB Ext 6483

CPL1/AJH/18890

SECRETARY OF STATE'S SPEECH TO COMBER DISTRICT ORANGE LODGE

WEDNESDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 1994

Introduction

1. Worshipful District Master, senior office bearers, gentlemen: glad to have received the invitation to speak to you tonight here in Comber. Appreciate the warm welcome. This is my first visit to an Orange Lodge, although like my Ministerial colleagues I have met with senior representatives of the Grand Lodge in Ireland from time to time to discuss matters of mutual interest. And of course the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge (Martin Smyth) and I are old Parliamentary colleagues.

2. I plan to take this opportunity to speak frankly to you about HMG's policies in NI. I hope to address some of your concerns in what I say. There will also be time for questions afterwards.

Constitutional Status

3. The firm bedrock of all the Government's policies is that NI is part of the UK. This is recognised in both national and international law. This will not change unless that is the democratically expressed wish of the majority of the people of NI. The Prime Minister has described this guarantee as "cast iron". He reaffirmed this guarantee in the Joint Declaration. For more than 21 years it has been declared in statute law.

4. After 25 years of violence by IRA, it is their achievement that this principle of consent is now also accepted by the Irish Government. The Taoiseach, in paragraph 5 of the Joint Declaration says:

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

And he goes on to say:

"... the democratic right of self-determination by the people of Ireland as a whole must be achieved and exercised with and subject to the agreement and consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland ...".

6. I cite these words not to suggest that the Irish Prime Minister/State has some jurisdiction over Northern Ireland, but to point out the Irish Government's own recognition of the principle of consent notwithstanding the territorial claim to Northern Ireland which their own constitution makes.

7. The future of NI is accordingly in the hands of the people of NI, and this Government is wholeheartedly committed to upholding the people in that status, with all the entitlements - and all the obligations - that entails.

8. In his Whitbread Brewery speech of 1990 Peter Brooke said that the Government has "no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland". This has from time to time been restated, and it has caused offence. But, as the Prime Minister made clear in his article in the Irish News on 25 February, it means that we have no selfish reason to wish to frustrate whatever the democratically expressed wishes of the people of Northern Ireland may in future prove to be. It doesn't mean we don't care about Northern Ireland, "nor that we don't share the interests of its people in a secure, prosperous and peaceful future". Nor does it mean that we have forgotten the undoubted strategic value of Northern Ireland in past conflicts (or the contribution of its people). It does mean that, committed as we are to upholding their wishes as to their constitutional future, we are not prepared for some selfish reason of our own to stymie them in the future, any more than we are here and now. As to which I shall have more to say later.

9. It is because we do care about the people of Northern Ireland that Northern Ireland is at the head of the Government's domestic priorities. You know how close a personal interest the Prime Minister is taking. I would suggest no PM in modern times has engaged himself so personally in the problems of the Province.

10. It is because the Government is determined to uphold the wishes of the people of Northern Ireland that we currently deploy [19,000] troops in support of the police and that the Treasury make a net subvention to the economy of more than £3billion. We will continue with each of these policies for as long as necessary.

11. But it is very apparent that the Government cares about all the people of NI. We have a responsibility to provide good government right across the community. In framing and carrying out our policies we must accept the reality of the situation in Northern Ireland - not what we would wish it to be but what it actually is.

12. As I have made clear, this means that we accept, and we gladly accept, that a majority of people in Northern Ireland support the Union with Great Britain and that is unlikely to change, if ever, for a long time. But we must also recognise that there is a sizeable minority that aspire to a united Ireland - the vast majority of these accepting the discipline of the constitutional and democratic process. The Government recognises the equal legitimacy of both aspirations. But it demands that the promotion of each shall be by peaceful, democratic means.

[Postpone? 13. The Government's policies are designed to address the needs of all the people of NI - from whatever part of the community they come. Both I and my colleagues endeavour to meet regularly with the people across the Province and to listen to their views. Both I, the Prime Minister and other Ministers in the NIO Team have meetings with members of the political parties. I have a programme of visits to District Councils which include meetings with Councillors, members of the local business community. I also meet Church leaders from the different denominations and people from various community groups. I am always happy to accept invitations to meet people and speak to them - such as tonight. I am always willing to listen to what people have to say.]

Government policies

13. The Government strives to achieve a co-ordinated approach to its policies. These have three main components: security, political development and economic and social.

Security

14. The Provisional IRA appear to have taken the opportunity to follow the democratic path which was the only realistic opportunity open to them. As the Prime Minister has said, this is a welcome development, if indeed it proves to be a full and permanent end to the violence which has divided this community for so long and blighted the lives of so many. Time will tell.

15. It is only a very short time since many of those who were involved in the self-styled "armed struggle" were responsible for acts of violence which have left a legacy of sorrow amongst the families of their victims, for whom the declaration of a terrorist ceasefire must have a particularly hollow ring.

16. We must also remember that this ceasefire has not signalled the end of terrorism. The reaction of those on the Loyalist side remains uncertain. Of one thing, however, we may be sure. The Government's absolute commitment to bringing terrorism, from whatever source, to an end remains undiminished. There has been no

diminution of the police and Army's determination relentlessly to pursue terrorists and all those involved in criminal activity, regardless of the community they claim to represent. They will continue to do so with the utmost professionalism, integrity and fairness. They do so with my full support.

17. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the magnificent courage and commitment of the security forces, proof of which has been their success in saving lives, recovering weapons and explosives and disrupting terrorist activity. Much has happened that we never hear of, and will never know about, but lives have been saved as a result.

18. A vital strand of security strategy has been, and continues to be the co-operation we receive from the Republic of Ireland. The importance of the Garda's contribution to the counter-terrorist effort cannot be overstated, with their many large-scale seizures of arms, ammunition, explosives and bomb-making equipment. I have no doubt that the efforts of the security forces north and south of the border have saved countless lives.

19. The continuing dedication of the police and Army in upholding the law and bringing those engaged in criminal activity to justice will be vital in ensuring the future peace and stability which the people of Northern Ireland deserve so much, and for which they have longed.

Joint Declaration/Peace

20. We all want peace in Northern Ireland. Not peace at any price. But peace through democratic means and agreement. Words and phrases such as "peace process" have no meaning unless they are accompanied by a commitment to exclusively democratic methods. Up to now Sinn Fein have talked peace to the accompaniment of callous IRA violence. We said peace meant that the terrorists should stop killing people.

21. The Joint Declaration made by the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach last year set out the principles both Governments believe can provide the basis for the real peace we want and for a political settlement.

22. First and foremost the Declaration emphasises the values of democracy and consent. Let me say it again tonight - the Government will uphold the democratic wish of a greater number of the people of Northern Ireland on the issue of whether they prefer to support the Union or a sovereign united Ireland.

23. The Declaration also says our primary interest in Northern Ireland is to see peace, stability and reconciliation established by agreement among all the people who inhabit the island.

24. Agreement is what we seek. But discussions on the political future can only be joined by democratically mandated parties which establish a commitment to exclusively peaceful methods and which

have shown that they abide by the democratic process. Moreover, both Governments say in the Declaration that the achievement of peace must involve a permanent end to the use of, or support for, paramilitary violence. The reason is plain. We cannot negotiate with people who say, "If I cannot persuade you to agree with me by means of discussion or negotiation, I reserve the right to resort to the bomb and the bullet to force you to accept my argument". We are all agreed that that is totally unacceptable.

25. The IRA statement last week was not entirely clear on this. Some saw it as an assurance that they had given up violence for good, but we - while hoping that it was indeed so - approached it with proper scepticism. It is not a question of whether they use this word or that but whether their intentions are plain. We have now had a week in which there has been no IRA violence. Sadly the so-called Loyalist paramilitaries have continued to bomb and murder, but it is fair to say that the IRA ceasefire has held and our soldiers and policemen have experienced a welcome change in the atmosphere in Republican areas. That much is welcome and every day it continues, brings us closer to concluding that it is meant to last. We shall watch what happens very carefully in the coming days and weeks, and pay close attention to what people say, so that we can make a proper, careful judgement on the right time to move forwards exploratory dialogue with Sinn Fein.

26. Of course, whether or not Sinn Fein and the IRA renounce their support for and the use of violence is a matter for them. Whatever they decide there is no question of letting them set an agenda.

Political Development

27. The Government's policy is to promote a comprehensive political settlement which would attract widespread support right across the community in NI.

28. It remains the Government's firm belief that any settlement likely to achieve such acceptance and support must be broad enough to encompass all three main sets of relationships: those within Northern Ireland; those within the island of Ireland; and those between the British and Irish Governments.

29. Some have claimed, and continue to claim, that seeking an overall settlement in this way is far too ambitious and that the process should move forward one step at a time.

30. But we have to work in the real world and work with what is possible. It is clear to us that because of the differing ideas and differing ultimate objectives of those who have participated in the talks, since they began in 1991, agreement on one set of relationships is only likely to be reached if the context for it is provided by agreement on the three sets of relationships as a whole. That is a political reality which cannot be wished away and one which all those involved in the process must recognise and work with.

31. Round table talks took place in 1991 and continued until November 1992. In the course of those Talks Mr Molyneaux courageously led his team to Dublin, and Irish Ministers joined the Talks in Belfast and in London. Since last September, my colleague Michael Ancram has been conducting bilateral discussions with 3 of the 4 main constitutional parties. We would like all 4 involved. Our purpose is to explore the basis upon which we might all come together for further multilateral dialogue. There have been discussions of the Government's ideas for giving direction and renewed impetus to the talks process.

32. On the basis of the 1992 talks and those that are going on now, there is a good deal of contingent agreement on the nature of new democratic institutions for NI - that is the first set of relationships (known as Strand I). But this is contingent on agreement on a satisfactory outcome to the process as a whole, including Strands 2 and 3.

33. To help progress we are currently working with the Irish Government on a framework document. The aim is to achieve a shared understanding of the elements of a political settlement which, in our view, is most likely to command widespread support across the community in NI. The purpose is to provide a basis for further multilateral talks.

34. I am aware that there are concerns and fears about what is being discussed. As I made clear in my article in the Sunday Life

on 26 June, there is no question of the two Governments imposing a solution on the people of Northern Ireland. Agreement and consent is the key.

35. Second, I know there are fears about what is spoken of as "joint authority". I think that means that the British and Irish Governments would jointly run the affairs of NI over the heads of people. There is no truth in that at all. To impose such a solution against the will of the people would be incompatible with the principle of consent. As far the Irish Government is concerned, Mr Spring said on 25 April, "Joint authority is not being considered". Neither Government is seeking Joint authority.

36. It is quite a different matter to examine, as we did during 1992 talks, ways in which, without impinging on sovereignty, some North-South body would enable common cause to be made in areas of common interest. To the general good of both parts of the island of Ireland. Mr Trimble was quoted in the press in July as saying, "If executive functions are confined to purely practical things which are genuinely beneficial to both sides, that's fine".

37. Acceptability remains the key test. I believe that such a body would be acceptable not only in NI but in the Republic as well, only if it operated in areas clearly delegated to it by the appropriate legislature in each jurisdiction. For the same reason it would have to be accountable to democratic institutions in Belfast and Dublin with decisions taken on the basis of agreement between the representatives of both parts of the island.

38. Provided, of course, that there is widespread agreement in Northern Ireland, there is no reason why a body constructed in that way should not assume a variety of functions, including executive functions. That does not confer joint authority on the Dublin Government over Northern Ireland, or anything like it, any more than Stormont conferred joint authority when, in 1952, it set up the Foyle Fisheries Commission to regulate the river that is bisected by the border. All that falls squarely within the ambit of Strand 2.

39. I know that there is a strong desire for the return of accountable democracy to NI. I have said on frequent occasions, far too much power is concentrated in myself and my Ministerial colleagues. We are daily taking decisions that ought to be the responsibility of local politicians elected by the people of NI and accountable to them.

40. But any new institutions in NI must not only be acceptable, but must command widespread support amongst both traditions in NI. There can be no return to a regime supported by only one side of the community and not identified with by the other. Such a regime would inevitably fail. Equally, it is unlikely that any devolved institutions will operate on conventional lines of simple majority rule. In our view, the reality is that such an outcome is unlikely to be widely acceptable.

41. From the discussions we have been having with the participants in the talks process I would expect any outcome to include the

following elements: a shared and mutually acceptable understanding of those important constitutional matters known to be in issue; the establishment of locally accountable democratic institutions in NI which provide an appropriate role for representatives from both main parts of the community; new arrangements for contact, co-operation and working together within the island of Ireland; and new arrangements between the two Governments.

42. Sometimes progress seems painfully slow - but much more has been achieved over the past 3 years than is sometimes realised. There are difficult issues to be resolved. Intensive work is continuing. We have set no artificial deadlines but our aim is to return to multilateral talks at the earliest practical moment.

43. To achieve an agreement, all involved will need to show courage and vision. This does not mean compromising on essential principles and no-one is being asked to give up their aspirations. But it does mean all of us need to be prepared to embrace new ideas, new institutional structures and imaginative approaches to constitutional and human rights issues.

Economic and Social Policy

44. As in all other policy areas, the Government seeks to be even-handed to both communities: We recognise that deprivation exists within both the Protestant and Catholic communities, and we will address that need wherever it arises. At the same time it has to be recognised that there are significant differences in the

experience of the Protestant and Catholic communities. For example, the level of male Catholic unemployment is proportionately over twice that of male Protestants. And in areas such as income, health, overcrowding, the Catholic community, generally speaking, does that bit worse.

45. We believe therefore that greater equality and equity can be achieved by improving the social and economic conditions of the most disadvantaged areas and people, whatever their community background. In 1991 we launched an initiative - we call it Targeting Social Need - which aims to focus our resources more precisely on those who suffer the highest levels of disadvantage and deprivation, and who need our support most.

46. All Northern Ireland expenditure programmes therefore have elements which address Targeting Social Need objectives, for example housing, education, health, industrial development, training. Progress in tackling disadvantage in both Protestant and Catholic communities can be seen in the work of initiatives such as rural development, provision of housing renovation grants, community infrastructure projects, ACE schemes, Laganside and Making Belfast Work.

47. The "Making Belfast Work" initiative, which, in fact, began in 1988 as a direct response on the part of the Government to the deep rooted deprivation in parts of Belfast on both sides of the community, has continued to provide many employment and training opportunities.

48. The Making Belfast Work programme addresses need wherever it exists. That means it covers both needy Protestant and Catholic communities. It is true that, of the present population of 160,000 covered by Making Belfast Work, around 55% is Catholic. That does not mean that the initiative is in any way biased against Protestants, or that disadvantage and deprivation are not recognised in Protestant areas. It is very simply - as I mentioned earlier - because there are significant differences in the experiences of Protestant and Catholic communities, with - still - a greater level of disadvantage experienced in Catholic areas. Protestant needs are recognised and met where they exist. For example, there are a number of key projects in the Shankill area, including the Family Resource Centre in the Shankill area, Fernhill, Argyle Business Centre, the advance factory at Ballygomartin. And more locally, Dundonald Flexible Open Learning Centre - a major initiative for the unemployed; Ballybeen Womens Centre; Ballyoran Community Economic Resource Centre which is run in partnership with the local Council; and work opportunities for the mentally handicapped are provided by Datalink, have all been supported under the programme.

49. Turning to more general matters I can report good news on the economic front. The economy has indeed come through the recession well and is performing strongly in the recovery. Manufacturing output grew by 3.6% in 1993, compared with 1.6% for the entire UK. The seasonally adjusted unemployment total in July of this year was 98,100 13.1% of workforce, a drop of about 6,000 on the total for the same period last year.

50. The Industrial Development Board had also one of its more successful years in 1993/94, promoting a record 2,309 inward investment jobs. Last year was also a record year for the small business community, with more than 1,300 new businesses established.

51. But as well as promoting greater prosperity and employment, we want to see these equitably distributed in terms of the two main groupings and geographical spread. It is solely to promote greater fairness and equity that Parliament passed the Fair Employment Act in 1989, and that we remain committed to a level playing field between the two communities in the labour market. I cannot imagine a tranquil and stable Northern Ireland without measures such as these. Fairness threatens no-one; and one must question the motives of those who challenge steps to promote it.

52. Some see our aim to treat both communities equitably as a threat. Not so. Our aim is to achieve a tranquil society, based on respect for the individual; on both communities respecting each other; and on the Government respecting each community. Everyone has responsibility in this regard, at individual and collective level. Includes Government and Orange Order. Perhaps the Order might reflect on whether its pattern of marches and its behaviour at marches too often engender a lack of respect for individuals and the other community. Should not all of us always ask if our attitudes and actions promote respect and harmony or detract from them? All of us are challenged in this way.

Peroration

53. Looking to the future, if the present end to IRA violence proves to be permanent and if the reaction of the violent men on the "loyalist" side also proves positive, we have an unrivalled opportunity to achieve peace and stability in Northern Ireland. Such an opportunity has not existed for 25 years and should be grasped wholeheartedly by all sections of the community. Long term peace and stability requires a political settlement. I have a rational hope that we can succeed in achieving a political accommodation that will be widely acceptable across NI. The ingredients are there. The Government is determined to persevere. Working for peace and stability will not be easy but I urge each member of the community to play their own part in their daily lives both in their actions and their attitudes towards each other. I salute the courage of all those over the last 25 years who have worked for peace and reconciliation. More courage will be required to reach a settlement but I hope and trust that this will be achieved.

DRAFT PRESS RELEASE

7 September 1994

Speaking tonight to members of Comber Orange Lodge, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Sir Patrick Mayhew QC MP, reaffirmed the Government's commitment to support the democratically expressed wishes of the people of Northern Ireland and to work towards a widely acceptable comprehensive political settlement.

In speaking about the IRA ceasefire he said that, "The Provisional IRA appear to have taken the opportunity to follow the democratic path which was the only realistic opportunity open to them".

"As the Prime Minister has said, this is a welcome development, if indeed it proves to be a full and permanent end to the violence which has divided the community for so long and blighted the lives of so many. Time will tell".

On the peace process he said:

"We all want peace in Northern Ireland. Not peace at any price. But peace through democratic means and agreement.

Discussions on a political future can only be joined by democratically mandated parties which establish a commitment to exclusively peaceful methods and which have shown that they abide by the democratic process.

We shall be watching what happens very carefully in the coming days and weeks, and pay close attention to what people say, so that we can make a proper, careful judgement on the right time to move forward, exploratory dialogue with Sinn Fein."

On political development the Secretary of State made it clear that any settlement that is likely to be widely acceptable must be broad enough to encompass all three main sets of relationships: those within Northern Ireland; those within the island of Ireland; and those between the British and Irish Governments.

He also sought to allay concerns about the discussions between the British and Irish Governments on a Framework document.

"There is no question of the two Governments imposing a solution on the people of Northern Ireland. Agreement and consent is the key."

"Neither Government is seeking joint authority."

He indicated that any settlement is likely to include the following elements: a shared and mutually acceptable understanding of those important constitutional matters known to be in issue; the establishment of locally accountable democratic institutions in Northern Ireland which provide an appropriate role for

representatives from both main parts of the community; new arrangements for contact, co-operation and working together within the island of Ireland; and new arrangements between the two Governments.

The final section of the Secretary of State's speech covered economic and social policy in which he highlighted the promotion, during 1993/94 of a record 2,309, inward investment jobs and more than 1,300 new businesses established last year.

He concluded by saying that if the cessation of violence proved permanent and that the 'loyalist' side responded positively, this provided an unrivalled opportunity to achieve peace and stability which had not existed for 25 years. He urged each member of the community to play their own part.

[A copy of the full text of the speech is attached.]

QUESTIONS TABLED BY MEMBERS OF THE LODGE

LODGE 1140

Would you say that Northern Ireland's constitutional status within the Union is 'complete', or would you prefer to say that Northern Ireland's constitutional status within the Union is 'permanent'.

Line to take

As I said earlier, the firm bedrock of all the Government's policies is that Northern Ireland is part of the UK. This is recognised in both national and international law. I can guarantee that there will be no change to that position unless or until that is the wish of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland. This was expressly reaffirmed in the Joint Declaration of 15 December 1993.

At present the majority support the Union with Great Britain and that, I firmly believe, is unlikely to change, if ever, for a long time.

LODGE 1057

Would you agree that a more assertive position adopted by your Government, rather than the neutral stance chosen on Northern Ireland's Constitutional Future, would create a better atmosphere for political negotiations with Unionists.

Would you concede that because of this neutral stance, Unionists have hardened their attitudes, sensing a sell out! - to the extent that independence is being voiced as a bottom line option.

Therefore how far can you go tonight, toward declaring to us, that your Government's preference and primary objective is to strengthen the Union and persuade the electorate that Northern Ireland's best interests remain within the United Kingdom and will be protected and guaranteed by your Government.

Line to take

Let me make it clear that there is no question of a sell out or of this Government being lukewarm on the Union. The Prime Minister made this perfectly clear during his speech to the Conservative Conference in October of last year. He said: "At the heart of our philosophy is an abiding belief in the right of the people of Northern Ireland to determine their own future. Unlike the Labour Party we are not in the business of securing the break-up of the United Kingdom. For us the Union, and all it means, is immensely important. In all parts of the United Kingdom including Northern Ireland, the Union has the decisive support of those who live there. So I give this assurance to the brave and resilient people of Northern Ireland, for our part we will always back your democratic wishes".

The only circumstances in which Northern Ireland might leave the Union is on the basis of that that was the will of a majority of the people who live there. Equally, the Prime Minister has made it clear in respect of Scotland that no nation can be held irrevocably in the Union against its will.

LODGE 1037

The Orange Institution crosses all Pro-Union Political Parties. With them we share the common aim of strengthening the Union. We look across the political spectrum and see the anointed Pan Nationalist Front, headed by Reynolds - Hume and Adams pushing to destroy the Union.

John Humes talks of a divided people when it is he who has created the division. John Hume is not interested in the Union! He talks of 'our' people, when it is clear that he is not one of us. He excludes Unionists, when with Adams he concurs that there will be no internal solution. They both talk of the 'Peoples of Ireland' as a whole determining the future. But we Unionists are not peoples of Ireland we are peoples of the United Kingdom.

We want and have made preparations for an 'internal settlement' that is the best way to open up the space needed to engage in external matters.

What more do you consider necessary for the Unionist leadership to do or say in order to convince your Government that Unionist desire to stimulate non-Unionist participation and encourage their allegiance to a new Assembly founded on the principles agreed within an internal settlement.

Line to take

I agree that it is crucial that we should have arrangements which both sides of the community can support.

As I said in my speech, the political reality is that because of the differing ideas and differing ultimate objectives of the Talks participants, agreement on internal arrangements is only likely to be reached in the context of Northern Ireland's other relationships: those within the island of Ireland and those between the two Governments.

As a practical demonstration of Unionist desire for cross-community participation in government, the Government welcomes the development of responsibility sharing and rotation of offices in some District Councils. I am sure that this has shown the political parties what is possible and achievable, as well as contributing to good community relations.

Each individual and each group can contribute to the growth of trust between both communities by respecting each other and their aspirations.

LODGE 1035

Before entering into formal discussion. What credible evidence do you require from Sinn Fein that the Republican movement at large has met the stipulation of there being an acceptable permanent renunciation of violence linked to a total cessation of violence?

Do you expect Sinn Fein to be able to control and guarantee the permanency of non-violence on behalf of the Provisional IRA - the INLA and any off-shoots of Republican terrorism?

Regarding discussion - will the agenda for dialogue with Sinn Fein depart or differ in any aspect from the dialogue with Constitutional Parties?

Line to take

I have already said that it would be enough if we could hear them say, for example, 'This is over for good'. There then has to be a period when deeds match up to words.

We will enter preliminary exploratory dialogue with Sinn Fein within 3 months of a public and permanent renunciation of violence.

The purposes of such a dialogue would be threefold:

to explore the basis upon which Sinn Fein would come to be admitted to an inclusive political talks process to which we are committed but without anticipating the negotiations within that process;

to exchange views on how Sinn Fein would be able over a period to play the same part as the current constitutional parties in the public life of Northern Ireland;

to examine the practical consequences of the ending of violence.

Phrases such as "the Peoples of Ireland" and the "Island of Ireland" are repugnant to us. They smack of brain washing and attempts to give credence that this Island is constitutionally an entity. They are concocted by devious word-smiths who want to squeeze us out of the United Kingdom.

We sense crookedness being hatched by Dublin, aimed to entice us into accepting a joint referendum poll both here and in the Republic.

Being Brits ourselves, we can imagine the Republican Propaganda firing into overdrive as it circumvents the media. Full reign would be given to bashing the Brits and accumulating the Brits Out Vote.

Can you assure us that, only the electorate of Northern Ireland will have the right to register its opinion by way of referendum on the future constitutional position of Northern Ireland?

Line to take

Yes. Northern Ireland's position as a part of the United Kingdom is enshrined in law. The Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973 states:

"It is hereby declared that Northern Ireland remains part of Her Majesty's Dominions and of the United Kingdom, and it is hereby affirmed that in no event will Northern Ireland or any part of it cease to be part of Her Majesty's Dominions and of the United Kingdom without the consent of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland voting in a poll held for the purpose of this section in accordance with schedule 1".

The wish of a greater number of the people of Northern Ireland will be determined by a numerical majority of those validly voting in a poll fairly and explicitly organised for this purpose.

LODGE 244

We need to have our constitutional position 'Defined' in black and white to enable us to actually see what values the Government put in retaining the Union.

Can you spell out for us the ramifications of any alterations likely to be made to the current constitutional status quo?

Further can you indicate that as a direct result of new structures for governing Northern Ireland, would such arrangements be declared a replacement of the Anglo-Irish Agreement?

Thus: meaning that the operation of the Anglo-Irish secretariat would be defunct and that no other type of agency would give the Irish Republic a role allied to the decision taking process, relevant to the internal affairs of Northern Ireland.

Line to take

The constitutional position of Northern Ireland cannot be defined any more clearly than it has been in the Northern Ireland Constitutional Act 1973.

As for the future of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, my predecessor said in the House of Commons, in March 1991 when he announced the current talks process, that both we and the Irish Government have said that we 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. That remains our position.

LODGE 100

The Lodge I belong to is an ex-Serviceman's Lodge. Our tradition is inspired by local heroes who paid the supreme sacrifice for their King and Country. That tradition also encompasses those who fell in the Second World War.

To this day we continue to reflect the courage of those who have served their Queen and Country. All men and women in Service then as now did so to protect our Civil and Religious Liberty, they fought to secure freedom and to prevent tyrants from displacing democracy.

What do you consider to be an encroachment on British values and British territory? How would you protect democracy and liberties against encroachment? How do you define territorial entitlement and how best would you rebuff another who sought to establish a foothold in your jurisdiction through posting a territorial and constitutional counter claim?

Line to take

Our views on the Irish constitutional claim have been well documented.

No British Government has ever accepted the territorial claim in Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution; we regard these Articles, as presently formulated, as unhelpful to the kind of relationships we would like to see between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. While any change in their status is a matter for the Irish Government and people, the British Government has welcomed the Irish Government's confirmation in the Joint Declaration, that it would be willing to initiate constitutional change within the context of an overall settlement.

Our policy in Northern Ireland is based on the principle that Northern Ireland should not cease to be part of the United Kingdom without the consent of a majority of people living there.

DISTRICT

For over 30 years Comber has been waiting on the completion of a road by-pass system. The situation has reached stress-point, and traffic danger looms daily in the Town.

We understand that nothing is likely to happen to improve matters in the foreseeable future. In fact the time scale of another 4 years before any movement has been indicated. Comber cannot wait 4 months let alone 4 years.

Line to take

The Secretary of State may wish to point out that the roads budget is insufficient to meet the many increasing demands upon it and that priorities must, therefore, be established. The Secretary of State can advise the delegation that he will advise Mr Smith of their concerns and ask him to look at the priority awarded to the scheme when he next reviews the roads programme. At the same time he might make it clear that the current outlook does not give any great cause for optimism.

Background

The present Comber By-Pass (stage 1) was constructed around 1960 but with the growth of traffic over recent years congestion in the town centre has increased to an unacceptable level. It is proposed to address the problem by extending the existing by-pass in 2 further stages. Stage 2, estimated to cost £2.6m and linking the Killinchy Road to the Newtownards Road, is presently programmed to start in the 1997/98 financial year. Stage 3, a link from the Ballygowan Road, is not included in the current 5-year major works programme.

Stage 2 was originally programmed to start in the 1992/93 financial year but had to be delayed as a result of the reduced funding made available for major road works in the 1991 Public Expenditure Survey. The scheme was further delayed following the outcome of the 1992 Public Expenditure Survey. Given the continuing pressures on public expenditure the best that can be hoped for is that the scheme does not slip further.