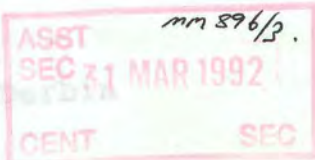


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P T DURBIN  
CPL DIVISION  
27 MARCH 1992



CC: PS/SofS (B)  
PS/MofS (L&B)  
PS/PUS  
~~PS/Mr Fell~~  
Mr Thomas  
Mr Ledlie  
Mr Alston  
Mr Bell  
Mr Steele  
Mr Devereall  
Mr Wood (L&B)  
Mr Maccabe  
Mr Cooke



1. MR HILL (Agreed David Hill 27/3/92)
2. PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (L)

MP Case 2731: Gerry Adams MP

Mr Watters profile  
D. Fell  
27/3/92  
Attached in [unclear]  
cd. [unclear]  
copy of [unclear]  
[unclear]

In his letter of 23 March to Mr Fittall, Mr Wall, No 10, seeks advice on whether or not to respond to a letter from Gerry Adams of 23 March to the Prime Minister covering a copy of the Sinn Fein discussion document "Towards a Lasting Peace in Ireland". Mr Wall would also like a summary and brief analysis of the document. This has been provided by PAB Division and you may care to glance at it.

Mr Adams' letter reiterates well worn themes; the alleged lack of legitimacy of "British rule in Ireland", and the failure of partition. It goes on to refer to the message of the discussion document i.e. the need for a new initiative - the United Kingdom to join with the Republic of Ireland to end partition and to join with all the political parties in Northern Ireland in "this democratic project".

Given the Government's practice of not engaging with Sinn Fein in political discussions, no substantive reply should be sent to Mr Adams letter even at Private Secretary level. Since Mr Adams also

3rd you are wrong, unless you are arguing for a change from existing practice.

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I think Mr Adams is entitled to a "band" PS reply

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delivered the document in person to No 10 I see no need to send an acknowledgement of receipt of the letter and document.

A draft PS reply to Mr Wall together with the requested summary and analysis of the SF paper is attached.

SIGNED: Peter Durbin

P T DURBIN

Constitutional and Political Division

OAB Ext 6575

We fully endorse your presumption that the Prime Minister should not reply. As you know the Government has declined to talk to Sinn Féin on the future political or constitutional arrangements in relation to Northern Ireland - the very issue which the discussion document addresses - and it is not policy for any Government Minister to write in person to or talk to representatives of Sinn Féin. Besides the arguments of principle for upholding this policy when Sinn Féin is known to be no more than the political face of the Provisional IRA, any departure from it would be greeted with outrage and suspicion by the Unionist parties and make it difficult to retain their confidence. In these circumstances it would not be appropriate for the Prime Minister (or indeed an official) to respond substantively to Mr Adams.

We have considered whether an official acknowledgment of receipt of the document should be sent. But since Mr Adams delivered the material in person to No 10 this seems superfluous. We therefore recommend against even that.

Finally I attach, as requested, a summary and brief analysis of the discussion paper. As you will see whilst its contents may not be acceptable the argument is quite cleverly presented and is another indication of the way in which Sinn Féin is seeking to present a more acceptable face to the world.

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Wall Esq  
Downing Street  
London  
W1A 2AA

FOR SIGNATURE BY PS/SECRETARY OF STATE

LETTER FROM GERRY ADAMS: "TOWARDS A LASTING PEACE IN IRELAND"

Thank you for your letter of 23 March in which you requested advice on whether or not the Prime Minister should reply to Mr Adams' letter covering the Sinn Fein discussion document "Towards a lasting peace in Ireland".

We fully endorse your presumption that the Prime Minister should not reply. As you know the Government has declined to talk to Sinn Fein on the future political or constitutional arrangements in relation to Northern Ireland - the very issue which the discussion document addresses - and it is not policy for any Government Minister to write in person to or talk to representatives of Sinn Fein. Besides the arguments of principle for upholding this policy when Sinn Fein is known to be no more than the political face of the Provisional IRA, any departure from it would be greeted with outrage and suspicion by the Unionist parties and make it difficult to retain their confidence. In these circumstances it would not be appropriate for the Prime Minister (or indeed an official) to respond substantively to Mr Adams.

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**SINN FEIN POLICY DOCUMENT: TOWARDS A LASTING PEACE IN IRELAND**

Background

Sinn Fein launched a new discussion paper on its peace policy on 18 February in Belfast entitled 'Towards a Lasting Peace in Ireland'. It was presented to, and accepted by, the annual Ard Fheis (annual conference) at the end of February.

2. The policy document builds on the earlier paper 'A Scenario for Peace' issued in 1987 and is considerably longer than its predecessor. It should be seen against the background of the debate within the Republican Movement over the best strategy to be adopted in pursuing its overall aims. A summary of the document is attached at Annex A.

Progress

3. Disappointingly, the document does not reflect any marked change in Sinn Fein's position on the central issues of their policy of seeking British withdrawal and a United Ireland. The paper seeks to justify these two elements from every conceivable angle, using the type of language that is entirely typical of the dogmatic approach which is characteristic of previous such papers. It is also less forward than both Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness have been in recent months when talking about 'the armed struggle', and the care they have argued needs to be shown to avoid civilian deaths and purely sectarian attacks. The paper does however state explicitly that 'armed struggle' is recognised to be an option of last resort when all other avenues to pursue freedom have been attempted and suppressed. The document spends some time justifying the fact that all other avenues have been pursued and suppressed by the British Government policy to deny 'the Irish people' their right to self-determination, and the determination of HMG to continue to justify a 'partitionist solution' with the Unionist 'veto' that implies.

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4. Whilst there is some softening on language in this new policy document, when compared to the 1987 paper, it does not mirror the extent to which public utterances by Sinn Fein spokesmen have changed in reacting firstly to the assertion in November 1989 by the Secretary of State that Sinn Fein might be treated as a normal political party were it to renounce violence and secondly the speech in November 1990 in which the Secretary of State made clear that Britain had no selfish, strategic or economic interest in remaining in Northern Ireland.

5. This policy paper does not repeat demands made in 'A Scenario for Peace' for the Government of Ireland Act to be repealed and for the British Government to make a public statement that Northern Ireland is no longer considered a part of the United Kingdom. The omission probably does not, however, reflect a change in policy.

5. The document does not explicitly discuss the possibility that Sinn Fein/PIRA might renounce violence in order to enter talks with HMG, nor does it argue (as spokesmen have persistently in recent months) that HMG should talk to Sinn Fein. In fact the paper envisages the 'armed struggle' will continue until Government policy changes. The document does however envisage a larger role for the Irish Government recommending the British and Irish Governments 'consult together to seek agreement on the policy objective of ending partition'. Interestingly the role of Unionists is openly assessed and acknowledged, although the 'solution' offered that the British Government should make clear that the Unionist veto will not continue is as far from the mark as much of the analysis in the paper.

6. As repeated at Sinn Fein's election campaign launch on 19 March, the European dimension is brought out, and the paper recommends that the United Nations should be involved in the process of economic and political reunification, perhaps through the device of an international conference.

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## OWARDS A LASTING PEACE IN IRELAND: A SUMMARY

(All headings and page references are taken from the Sinn Fein policy document.)

### National Democracy and Peace (Pages 1-3)

1. The paper argues that the Irish people have been deprived of permanent peace, justice, democracy, equality of opportunity and stability by the refusal of the British Government to allow the Irish people to exercise their right to self-determination. That policy, and the steps taken to maintain it, is the root cause of the problems facing Northern Ireland and between the peoples of Ireland and Britain. Partition and the 'Unionist veto' need to be removed to allow the national and democratic rights of 'the national minority' to be exercised.

2. Self-determination is defined at length in accord with Republican thinking and, the paper argues, has been 'consciously and deliberately fractured in the interests of the British Government'. Unionists are a national minority of about 20% of the Irish nation, and have a veto only as a consequence of the falsely-based process of partition for which the British Government is responsible. Partition cannot be justified in the face of the express wishes of a clear national minority.

### Irish Sovereignty (Pages 3-5)

3. This section comprises a series of quotations from 'holy texts', in which the justification of Irish nationhood, national independence and sovereignty have been asserted. These include the 1916 Easter Rising Proclamation, the Declaration of Independence by the first Dail in 1919, the 1937 Irish Constitution, the new Ireland Forum report of 1984, the Irish Supreme Court decision on the McGimpsey case relating to the compatibility of the Anglo-Irish Agreement with the Irish Constitution and by international law as embodied in the UN international covenants of civil and political rights and on economic, social and political rights. Furthermore the paper argues partition is in contravention of the UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples whose position is endorsed by the final act of the Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe.

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British Rule: Division and Coercion (Pages 5-8)

4. This section details the way the British Government has fostered division, a policy which can be seen in the three-stranded talks process which distracts attention from the cause of the conflict: the British presence in Ireland. The section rehearses the arguments about the British Government's position on the constitutional position given the statement by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland about Britain having no selfish, strategic or economic reason for remaining in Northern Ireland, and the Labour Party's policy position of 'unity by consent' in Ireland. The paper argues these positions are set aside by the position outlined in Article 1(a) of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, and by the strategy over the past 20 years of the British Government.

5. This section also argues that the social and economic consequences of partition have been disastrous, as there has been a duplication of effort by the existence of two states, resulting in the external dependency of both. Partition has caused unemployment, industrial underdevelopment, emigration and poverty in both states and job discrimination in Northern Ireland. A new united Ireland, it is argued, would be a pluralistic, tolerant and open society, respecting the freedom of conscience and of choice of the individual.

Conditions for Democracy and Peace (Pages 8-9)

6. Sinn Fein asserts in this chapter that the search for peace is everyone's responsibility (including the international community), and that peace needs self-determination as its cornerstone. An end to conflict is an objective, but for it to be of lasting value it must be done in the context of addressing the key causes, otherwise it will merely postpone a re-emergence of violence. To bring about peace, the two Governments should make the ending of partition a common policy aim, and co-operate to bring it about as quickly as possible taking account of the need for 'maximum consent' (but not majority consent within Northern Ireland) to the process and the minimisation of costs of all kinds. All interested parties, including Unionists, should be consulted about this process.

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Armed Conflict in Ireland (Pages 9-10)

7. This passage gives a historical perspective of the conflict from a Republican viewpoint, arguing the present phase of conflict began with the Home Rule crisis of 1912. The section rehearses arguments about repression of the Catholic community in the late 1960s and early 1970s, arguing it is British Government rather than any section of the Irish people which is responsible for the conflict.

8. The paper makes clear 'the armed struggle' is an option of last resort, and indicates that given failure to alter course by HMG, it is likely to continue 'for the foreseeable future'. An alternative strategy to 'the armed struggle' (but consistent with the aims outlined above) would be welcomed by Sinn Fein but it is for those opposed to the current strategy to advance it.

The British Government (Pages 10-11)

9. This section outlines a large number of reasons why partition should be ended, most of which have featured in the argumentation above. The policies of the British Government as outlined in the Anglo-Irish Agreement reflect a preference for the status quo and Sinn Fein asserts that suggestions that HMG only remains in Northern Ireland to recognise the wishes of Unionists are flawed. The policies of HMG are an attempt to shirk its own responsibility for the conflict by placing it on the shoulders of the Irish people. The British Government created the problem and should seek to persuade Unionists to join a United Ireland. If it does not, Unionists will remain intransigent.

The Dublin Government (Page 11)

10. The role of the Irish Government in resolving the conflict is a large one, which has been neglected by successive governments in Dublin. The Irish Government should assume its national

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responsibility and develop a strategy to persuade the British Government of the failure of partition, the Unionists of the benefits of a United Ireland and the international community of the need to support Irish national rights. In the meantime the Irish Government should promote and defend the population of Northern Ireland and resist moves to amend Articles 2 and 3 of the 1937 Constitution.

A Strategy for Change (Pages 11-13)

11. Sinn Fein claims in this section to have begun the policy of developing maximum unity in the peaceful pursuit of democracy and peace, and argues others should join in this strategy, along the lines outlined in the section on conditions for peace and democracy. Failure of the British Government to act should lead the Irish Government to institute an international campaign seeking support in Britain, among those of Irish descent abroad and in international fora.

The Role of the Nationalist Parties (Page 13)

12. The political influence of professedly Nationalist parties, such as the SDLP and Fianna Fail, should be harnessed to increase the sympathy for unity in Westminster, Brussels and the US, and to demonstrate the British Government is not the honest broker it claims to be. The parties should also ensure human rights abuse is monitored and highlighted.

The Unionists (Pages 13-14)

13. The role of Unionists in any peace process is acknowledged. The paper says Sinn Fein would like to see the conflict between Irish nationalism and unionism be resolved by constructive dialogue and debate. The British guarantee of the continued existence of Northern Ireland must be lifted in order to allow this to happen. The Unionist veto must be removed. The Protestant people have nothing to fear from a secular and democratic United Ireland. The fears of Unionists are recognised, and should be addressed by much-needed debate.

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The European Dimension (Page 14)

14. The background of changes in Europe will have implications for Ireland, which should be taken account of. The popular consensus in Europe is that a united Ireland is essential for peace. The Conference of Security and Co-operation in Europe should check human rights abuse. This section also says that the profound changes in Europe need imagination and vision, and Irish Republicans will not be found wanting in this area.

The United Nations (Page 15)

15. The failure to resolve the conflict in Northern Ireland may necessitate UN involvement. All those who seek peace and democracy should urge the UN Secretary General to ensure all barriers in the way of Irish unity are removed so that the freely expressed will of the people can be reliably ascertained. The UN Secretary General should also request annual reports from HMG on its role in Northern Ireland. There should not be a peace keeping force introduced as such a deployment might become permanent, and withdrawal would become contentious. One possible course would be for the UN to convene an international conference (on request from both Governments, or just the Irish Government) to break the deadlock. This conference would involve all interested parties in Ireland as well as international experts, and examine constitutional guarantees of rights for all including the protections to be afforded to minorities in a united Ireland. The expertise and experience of the UN would be invaluable in 'creating a democratic and peaceful future for the whole of Ireland'.

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