

SECRET AND PERSONAL  
From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



ASST  
SEC 27 MAY 1994

CENT SEC

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

PS/S&S(L) 1 of 9 WHITEHALL  
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

hcc PS/S&S(B) — 2 of 9

PS/PUS(L+B) — 3+4 of 9

PS/Mr Fell — 5 of 9

Mr Legge — 6 of 9  
26 May 1994

Mr Thomas — 7 of 9

Mr Bell — 8 of 9

Mr Maxwell — 9 of 9

Stephen Lamport Esq  
Deputy Private Secretary  
St James' Palace  
LONDON  
SW1A 1BS

Dear Stephen,

BRIEFING FOR HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES: THURSDAY 2 JUNE 1994

Final arrangements have now been made for my Secretary of State and senior NIO officials to make a presentation on the Government's policies in Northern Ireland to His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales in Old Admiralty Building from 2.15 pm until 3.30 pm on Thursday 2 June. The proposed structure for the briefing is attached.

I also attach a background briefing paper which provides an overview of the Government's policy in Northern Ireland and seeks to set the scene in advance of the presentation, which will not itself cover the same ground.

If there is any additional information which you, or His Royal Highness, require before next Thursday's presentation please do not hesitate to let me know.

Yours sincerely,

Sz Rogers

SIMON ROGERS

SECRET AND PERSONAL



SECRET AND PERSONAL

## STRUCTURE FOR THE PRESENTATION

- Opening remarks and : Secretary of State 5 minutes  
Overview of NIO
- 1. Policies
- Economic and Social : Mr David Fell, CB 10 minutes  
Policies Head of the Northern  
Ireland Civil Service  
and Second Permanent  
Under Secretary of  
State, Northern Ireland  
Office
- Security Policy : Mr Michael Legge, CMG 10 minutes  
Deputy Under-Secretary  
of State, Northern  
Ireland Office  
(Belfast)
- Political Policy : Mr Quentin Thomas 10 minutes  
Deputy Under-Secretary  
of State, Northern  
Ireland Office (London)
- Questions/discussion : HRH/Contributors 25 minutes
- Meet staff : HRH/Secretary of State 15 minutes
- TOTAL 75 minutes

Others present:

Sir John Chilcott, CB, Permanent Under Secretary of State,  
Northern Ireland Office.

Mr Mike Maxwell, Assistant Secretary, Central Secretariat,  
Northern Ireland Office.

Mr Ken Lindsay, Secretary of State's Private Secretary, Northern  
Ireland Office.

SECRET AND PERSONAL

SOF5/22563



CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

GOVERNMENT POLICY IN NORTHERN IRELAND - AN OVERVIEW

1. Introduction

1.1 This paper explains, from first principles, the fundamental objectives of British Government policy in Northern Ireland. It accordingly summarises:

- our primary goal;
- the problems we face; and,
- how we are overcoming them.

2. The Goal of British policy

2.1 Successive British administrations in Northern Ireland have been seeking peace, stability, reconciliation and prosperity for the people of Northern Ireland within a framework of harmonious relations with the rest of the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, and within the context of our membership of the European Union. And, in this search, successive Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland have been supported by the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and the six Northern Ireland Departments (NIDs), the successors of the Ministries of the former Stormont Administration.

2.2 The present Government is seeking to achieve this goal by:

- promoting agreement among all the people who inhabit the island of Ireland and working together with the Irish Government to that end;

4.2 Moreover the NI administrative system is wholly within the British - a co-ordinated and coherent approach to all aspects of Government policy which recognises that the fundamental political, security, and economic and social problems of Northern Ireland are closely inter-related; and,



## CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

- policies informed by the principles of equality of opportunity, equity of treatment and parity of esteem, irrespective of political, cultural or religious affiliation or gender.

3. Constitutional basics

3.1 In keeping with our obligations under domestic and international law, the Government is committed to the democratic principle that Northern Ireland will not cease to be a part of the United Kingdom without the consent of a majority of the people who live there. Thus, Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom because that is what most of its inhabitants choose. It will remain so unless that situation changes. Such a majority desire for a change in status, as shown in successive free and democratic elections, clearly does not now exist. Nor is there any reason to expect it to in the foreseeable future. However, if a majority of people come clearly to wish for and formally to consent to the establishment of a United Ireland, the British and Irish Governments are committed to introduce and support in their respective Parliaments legislation to give effect to that wish.

4. The problems facing the British Government

4.1 One must neither overstate nor regard the problems of Northern Ireland as wholly exceptional. For Northern Ireland shares many problems with other parts of the United Kingdom as well as with some other peripheral regions and countries of the European Union: for example, high unemployment; 'sunset industries'; remoteness; no indigenous energy resources; and rural under-development.

4.2 Moreover the NI administrative system is wholly within the British tradition; the education and legal systems have more in common with England and Wales than with Scotland; English is the mother tongue of the overwhelming majority of the population.



## CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

4.3 On the other hand, Northern Ireland also suffers from a community divided, roughly speaking, on sectarian lines.

5. The big problem - A divided community

5.1 Northern Ireland's political, social and economic difficulties have, at their root, deep divisions of allegiance within the community, plus a corresponding lack of common identity. These divisions are reinforced and reflected in economic and social disparities, real or imagined, and by the fact that both sections of the community see themselves as potentially threatened minorities: Unionists/Protestants\* within the island of Ireland; Nationalists/Catholics\* within the North.

5.2 Although it is Catholics who are traditionally regarded as 'alienated' from the NI State, there is growing evidence of Protestant 'alienation' based on a belief that 'history', and the thrust of British policy is against them.

5.3 The nature of the division, with many in the minority (Catholic) community arguing that their interests can only be protected in a United Ireland or by giving the Irish Government a formal role in relation to Northern Ireland - raises acute issues of constitutional status and gives the problem an international as well as a domestic character. It can also call into question the legitimacy of the State and its agencies, including, crucially, of the security forces and the system of criminal justice who remain in the forefront of the fight against terrorism.

---

\* (The bracketing of religious and political affiliation is a working simplification only.)



## CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

6. The need for a 'connected' approach to Government

6.1 The communal divisions have also found expression in, and been exacerbated by terrorism from both sides of the community. This terrorism exploits and exacerbates community tensions - further weakening the economy. But in intensifying unemployment, it provides a recruiting ground for terrorists and adds to our difficulties in achieving a durable political settlement leading to instability which in turn .... In short, Northern Ireland's political, security and economic and social problems are all intimately and inseparably interconnected, and Government policy must take account of all these interrelationships.

6.2 In order to create the conditions for a peaceful, stable and prosperous society, we therefore pursue mutually reinforcing policies in the following areas:

- Security where we seek a continuing reduction in the levels of terrorist violence from whatever source through the firm and fair enforcement of the criminal law by the police supported by the Armed Forces, while maintaining political and community pressure on the terrorists for a permanent cessation of violence;
- encouraging constructive political dialogue with and between the constitutional parties in Northern Ireland;
- policies by strengthening the economy, not least by encouraging inward investment where on many of the key indicators (eg unemployment) Northern Ireland is the most disadvantaged region of the UK;
- maximising the value of the EC contribution, both economic and social. (The EC contributed more than £600 million to Northern Ireland in the period 1989/93; more than £1 billion has been earmarked from the Structural Funds over the period 1994/9.) The European Community has also



## CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

decided to renew its grant of 15Mecu to the International Fund for Ireland, established in 1986 by the British and Irish Governments following the Anglo-Irish Agreement and required to spend 75% of its resources in Northern Ireland;

- policies for eliminating discrimination on the grounds of political or religious allegiance by the toughest code of fair employment legislation in Europe; the further protection of human rights; by action programmes targeted at the areas of greatest social and economic deprivation in Northern Ireland which are predominantly, though not exclusively - Catholic;
- policies for enhancing the relationship with the Republic of Ireland so as to:

promote the achievement of a comprehensive political accommodation;

enhance the minority community's support for and confidence in the formulation and execution of policies (including security policies) while under Direct Rule;

maximise security co-operation; and,

augment mutually beneficial cross-border co-operation in economic, social and cultural matters.

## 7. Political Development

7.1 No less central is the contribution to political development - which the Joint (or 'Downing Street') Declaration of December 1993 also seeks to promote - to the achievement of our strategic goals.

7.2 Ever since 1972, when Westminster took over direct responsibility for Government in Northern Ireland, policy has been based on a recognition that a final solution to the problems of the



## CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

Province - including an eventual end to politically inspired violence - will only come if we collectively establish institutions which are accepted across the whole community as legitimate and all incentives to seeking political change by means of violence removed. The search for such a lasting accommodation has had a chequered history. However, the painstaking diplomacy which brought the Unionists back into the political process following the trauma for them of the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985, made it possible to relaunch, in 1991, political talks in Northern Ireland.

7.3 What the Government has since been trying to do through this 'Talks Process' is to build on their understanding that a stable, durable and widely accepted settlement will require the consent of all the key players: of the Northern Ireland constitutional parties, and of the Irish Government as well as the British Government.

7.4 Both the British and Irish Governments are: "Setting out to achieve a new beginning for relationships within Northern Ireland, within the island of Ireland and between the peoples of these islands" (Hansard 26 March 1991 Cols 765-6). The 'ground rules' then set out before the House of Commons by Mr Brooke remain the agreed basis for the Political Talks process. Even though there could be changes in the format of future multilateral talks, if that is what all the participants wanted, the principles remain unchallenged. It has also been accepted that: "Discussions must focus on three main relationships: those within Northern Ireland, including the relationship between any new institutions there and the Westminster Parliament; among the people of the island of Ireland; and between the two Governments. It is common ground between all the parties that hope of achieving a new and more broadly based agreement rests on finding a way to give adequate expression to the totality of these relationships" (Hansard op cit).

7.5 Following multilateral talks in Belfast during 1991 and 1992, agreement in principle had not, however, been reached by the end of the period set aside for Talks in November of that year, even though virtually all key issues had been touched on in greater or less



## CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

detail. And, although it has not so far proved possible to relaunch the kind of formal, multilateral talks that all the parties then agreed were 'necessary and desirable', the Talks process has continued, behind the scenes ever since both in terms of a continuing dialogue between the Government and the Northern Ireland Parties, and also with the Irish Government.

8. 'Peace'

8.1 However, while the Talks process remained in being throughout 1993, it was overshadowed by the emphasis on 'peace' - meaning inducing the IRA and its political wing, Sinn Fein (and all other organisations using violence for political ends) to renounce violence for good. This process rests with the Joint Declaration of December 1993 which was commended to the House of Commons by the Prime Minister (Hansard 15 December col 1071) thus: "The Joint Declaration represents the commitment of the two Governments: for peace and democracy, and against violence. Its objective is to set a framework for peace. A framework which reflects our responsibilities to both communities, in a way that is fully compatible with the undertakings we have both given and with the objective of the Talks process which both Governments had begun in January 1991".

8.2 At the risk of great oversimplification, the two most important features of the Declaration apart from the brute fact of the British and Irish Governments standing shoulder to shoulder on political and constitutional issues of the first importance, are:

- both Governments are agreed that it is, and must be for the people of Northern Ireland to determine their own future;
- a confirmation that, if Sinn Fein renounces violence, they will be able to participate in future democratic discussions.



## CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

9. Security

9.1 Despite the intensive political efforts to achieve a permanent cessation of violence, there has been no significant diminution in terrorist activity by both republican and loyalist groupings over recent months. Provisional IRA attacks actually rose sharply in the immediate aftermath of the Joint Declaration, and although there was a brief 3-day ceasefire at Easter, violence has escalated again recently, with particular emphasis on attacks on the security forces. Loyalist activity has been at even higher levels, frequently involving random sectarian murders. Already 32 people have been murdered so far this year.

9.2 The police and Armed Forces have nevertheless achieved notable successes in their efforts to disrupt terrorist activity and bring to justice those responsible for terrorist crime. There have been considerable numbers of finds of weapons and explosives, and already this year 171 people have been charged with terrorist offences. Calls for a security "crackdown" are misleading in that they imply something is being held back: all the resources of the Security Forces are already fully committed to the goal of the defeat of terrorism within the framework of the law. The two pieces of legislation which have been specifically designed to combat terrorism - the Prevention of Terrorism Act (which is UK wide) and the Northern Ireland Emergency Provisions Act - were both recently renewed by Parliament.

10. The Future

10.1 But whether or not Sinn Fein ever respond positively (and the Government's response on 19 May to 20 questions on the Declaration from Sinn Fein allegedly seeking 'clarification' has removed whatever scope passed to us by the Irish Government for equivocation and procrastination that issue may have given them), the Joint Declaration still represents a hopeful development if mainly in terms of political development.



CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

10.2 If, with the added impetus the Joint Declaration was intended to provide, we succeed in bringing together the NI parties for further multilateral talks and help them to reach a successful conclusion, then a possible agreement might include:

- new arrangements for the internal, devolved government of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom which are workable, fair and command the allegiance of the whole community;
- new institutional arrangements for consultation and co-operation between new institutions in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland which are, again, workable, fair and command the allegiance of the whole community;
- a revised Anglo-Irish Agreement, this time acceptable to both parts of the community in Northern Ireland; and,
- a resolution of the vexed constitutional questions, including the dropping of the Irish territorial claim on Northern Ireland, based on the principles of democratic consent.

11. Conclusion

11.1 Northern Irish affairs remain notoriously volatile and unpredictable. Problems deeply rooted in history cannot easily be solved - least of all by Englishmen and others from outside the Province. Economically, Northern Ireland is a very small entity, vulnerable to developments elsewhere. Any confident prediction of early or total success in any major area of policy, including the Talks or the ending of terrorism, would therefore be rash.

11.2 Nevertheless, and come what may, the Government will remain faithful to its fundamental aims and objectives (as set out in section 2 of this paper). In particular, and so long as Direct Rule lasts, they will not only continue to make the most determined



efforts to deliver fair and effective governance across the whole community, but they will also continue to seek ways of improving it still further.

- 10 -

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

SMJ/AUSL/13396