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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



PS/SOS/L+B
PS/Sir J Wheeler (L+B)
PS/M Ingram (L+B)
PS/PUS (L+B)
PS/Mr Fell
Mr THOMAS
~~Mr WATKINS~~
Mr WILLIAMS
Mr STEELE
Mr BELL
Mr WOOD (L+B)
Mr BROOKER
Mr MACCABEE
Mr LEACH
Mr QUINN
Mr CAINE
Mr ARCHER, RID
Mr BEETON
Mr DANIELL

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

WHITEHALL

LONDON SW1A 2AZ

634/2

10 FEB 1994

CENT SEC

ASST
SEC

243/2

7

February 1994

11 FEB 1994

CENT

MBW

SEC

Roderic Lyne Esq CMG
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1A 2AA

Dear Roderic,

FLOATS

As agreed at the Ministerial meeting on 26 January, I attach a contingent Parliamentary Statement and press line to be deployed in the event of an IRA atrocity. The draft would be equally applicable to a major atrocity in Northern Ireland or Great Britain.

The square bracketed sections at the beginning of the statement would have to be amplified in the light of the circumstances of the incident - that would be for the Home Office in the event of an attack in Great Britain.

I am copying this to John Sawers (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Nick Macpherson (HM Treasury), Joan MacNaughton (Home Office), John Pitt-Brooke (Ministry of Defence) and Melanie Leech (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,

Sir Rogers

for JONATHAN STEPHENS

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DRAFT PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENT

[Details of Incident
Sympathy for victims/relatives etc.
Praise for response of emergency services
Review of security arrangements
Reassurance]

2. This atrocity has [brought tragedy and suffering to ...]. It demonstrates the emptiness of the IRA's agenda and the hypocrisy of their professed commitment to peace. They should know by now that this Government and the British people will not be shifted by terror; our determination to ensure that the democracy prevails is reinforced.

3. The IRA have furthered no cause by their actions. I endorse recent statement by Mr Seamus Mallon MP, Deputy Leader of SDLP, who pointed out that Sinn Fein had done more damage to the cause which they claim to espouse - Irish Unity - in the past 25 years, through their violence, than any other single factor. And he condemned them for rejecting the principle of self-determination for Ireland North and South.

4. In my statement to the House on 15 December, I informed Hon Members of the Joint Declaration which I and the Taoiseach had issued earlier that day. I described it as a framework for peace, a demonstration of the commitment of the two Governments for peace and democracy against violence. The events of this morning demonstrate just how important it is to stand by the principles of the Joint Declaration. We will not be moved by terrorism from the principles of democracy, consent and agreement.

5. The Joint Declaration promotes and safeguards the interests and aspirations of both main traditions in Ireland. It complements and underpins the three stranded talks process which seeks agreement on the key relationships between our people - within Northern Ireland; between Northern Ireland and the south and between the two Governments. That is the way forward.

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6. In my statement on 15 December I made it plain that if there was a permanent end to violence, and if Sinn Fein committed itself to the democratic process, we could be ready to enter into preliminary exploratory dialogue with it within three months. The choice is theirs. But we are bound to judge their commitment to peace by what happens on the ground. Today's atrocity gives the lie to their fine words about peace.

7. I can assure the House of the Government's continuing determination to see the criminal perpetrators of atrocities such as today pursued and brought to justice. There has been and will be no let up in our commitment to combat terrorism.

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BULL POINTS FOR PRESS LINES

[Security implications etc - dependent upon nature of the incident]

The Joint Declaration stands - a balanced framework agreed by the two Government based on adherence for democracy, consent and agreement. Terrorism will not shake us from these fundamentals.

The three stranded talks process, underpinned and complemented by the Joint Declaration, continues.

Events such as this morning's cannot be justified in the name of clarification - they demonstrate the hypocrisy of Sinn Fein on this point.

Sinn Fein and the IRA still have the choice - participation in the democratic process - or violence and the road to nowhere. The processes will continue whatever they choose.

Commitment to the investigation of terrorist crime by the police and bringing the perpetrators before the court where, if convicted, they will be sentenced. No let up in determination to combat terrorist crime.

Defensive, if asked can anyone reasonably be expected to sit down at talks with Sinn Fein after such an atrocity:- We will be looking for a genuine and permanent cessation of violence and commitment to the democratic process. Events on the ground and the prevailing circumstances will have to be taken into account in assessing that commitment.

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