

SECRET and PERSONAL

FROM: Q J THOMAS, DUS(L)  
27 September 1993  
DUSL/MR/41988

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE(L&B)-[1&2] cc PS/PUS(L)-[3]  
(MR STEPHENS)\*/+ Mr Deverell-[4]\*  
Mr Cooke o.r.-[5]+  
Mr Rickard-[6]\*  
Mr C Glyn-Jones-[7]+  
Mr Beeton-[8]  
Mr May-[9]\*  
PS/Sir R Butler-[10]+  
→ File copy-[11 of 11 copies]  
\* Mufax via Liaison(L)  
+ via Liaison(L)

MEETING WITH O hUIGINN: JOINT DECLARATION INITIATIVE (J.D.I)

As will be seen from the attached note for the record, much of my meeting with O hUiginn last Friday concerned the JDI. He gave me the attached (much improved) text (JD.8). He also made it clear that the Irish government, while not resiling on the commitments to further work on overt political development, remains focussed on the JDI. This gives rise to both substantive and handling issues.

2. Matters have been greatly complicated by the Hume/Adams demarche, which O hUiginn mentioned as an unlikely future possibility. Whatever Hume/Adams have in mind it is apparently not JD8: O hUiginn told me that while Hume had approved it, it would not be shown to the Provisionals in advance of HMG's reaction.

3. On substance, on the evidence of this text (even though it is not acceptable as it stands), we may be close to something which it would be wrong to reject. This depends on a number of factors:

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(i) whether the JDI scheme could be acceptable in principle: that is, a joint declaration in something like these terms, leading to the establishment by the Irish government of a Permanent Irish Convention "to consult and advise on the steps required to remove the barriers of distrust which at present divide the people of Ireland and which stand in the way of the exercise in common by them of self-determination on a basis of equality". HMG is given no direct role in respect of this Convention, save by virtue of being party to the Declaration in which the Irish government announces that it is being established;

(ii) whether the judgement of the Irish government/Hume that a text of this kind would be accepted by the Provisionals is right;

(iii) whether, in exchange for this, the Provisionals intend, and can deliver, a cessation of violence. We are told that this is what is on offer, but have no independent confirmation of it. (Our general judgement, however, is that if the PAC commit themselves to peace it will be because they are confident that it will hold; and that our judgement on this is unlikely to be better than their own. Their lives may depend on them getting it right.);

(iv) whether the loyalist paramilitaries would respond by abandoning their own campaign, which they have always said is responsive to IRA terrorism. The crucial question is whether they would believe they had been sold down the river, and actually or prospectively abandoned by HMG. Properly construed, the Joint Declaration (if amended to be acceptable to HMG) should not involve that risk;

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(v) whether the short term impact on the Talks Process is acceptable. The initial impact is likely to be fatal, as the Unionists (and, possibly, the Alliance Party) would retreat until reassured about HMG's intentions. In the longer term, if peace held, the situation would be transformed to the good;

(vi) the effect on opinion in Great Britain. The achievement of peace, on terms consistent with HMG's principles, would be received with considerable enthusiasm and relief. (By contrast there is some risk that HMG would be criticised if it became known that it had rejected an opportunity for peace on terms which the public might regard as entirely acceptable. The hints of a possible Hume/Adams demarche are relevant.);

(vii) the international response, which is likely to be enthusiastic and supportive, even if the Irish government may claim a greater share of any credit;

(viii) whether acceptable language can be found and whether HMG, which has so far refrained from offering text itself, should now be a little more forward.

4. In the nature of things we cannot be wholly confident about the answers to all these questions. If the Joint Declaration could secure peace, from loyalists as well as republicans, I believe it would be at an acceptable price, despite some initial turbulent effect on the Talks. (There could also be some impact on Parliamentary arithmetic.) Accordingly, it might have been right to respond in a way which would enable the Irish government, which seems ready to accept the exposure involved, to probe the Provisionals further; but matters now depend somewhat on what the Irish government have to say about the

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Hume/Adams "report".

5. The conceptual elements of the Joint Declaration are also now very close to what might prove acceptable. There is no question of HMG being asked, for example, to commit itself to withdrawal, save on the achievement of unity by consent to which we are already committed, or to the proposition that a united Ireland is the right solution, or to "joining the ranks of the persuaders". The Provisionals, if the Irish government/Hume are right, will settle for less than the Labour Party's policy. The most problematic issue concerns the apparent need for some reference to "self-determination". My sense is that the Irish government, while clearly ready to draft in response to our concerns, may need some help in discerning the limits of acceptability to us. (I attach at Annex A, for illustrative purposes, a version of paragraph 4 which might be acceptable. It could be shown informally to the Irish side. Obviously there would only be point in doing that if we regarded the other elements of the JD approach as acceptable in principle.)

6. On handling, there are a number of options open to us, depending on the line we choose to take. Clearly the immediate need is to report this development to the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary. (There may be an opportunity to discuss it in the margins of Northern Ireland Committee on Thursday.) One possibility would be for the Prime Minister to remit this latest text to the Butler/Nally group and (Sir Robin Butler, to whom I am copying this will clearly have views), perhaps with a little more flexibility for textual barter; another is to enable me to carry my dialogue with O hUiginn a little further, partly under the guise of linguistic exploration relevant to the Talks process. (I will meet him in any case on Friday 1 October in the Liaison Group; though the JDI would of course be discussed only a deux.) The handling will of course have to be decided against the fact that the matter has been made the focus of intensive media interest.

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DUSL/MR/41988-27.9.93

FROM: Q J THOMAS, DUB(L)  
27 SEPTEMBER 1993  
DUSL/JEN/42000

7. I attach a draft minute to the Prime Minister's Private Secretary.

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

JOINT DECLARATION INITIATIVE (JDI): MEETING WITH MR O HUIGGIN  
24 SEPTEMBER 1993

It was envisaged at Sir Robin Butler's most recent meeting with Mr Nally that alongside the work the Liaison Group was tasked [SIGNED] Anglo-Irish IGC to undertake on forming a joint assessment of an acceptable outcome from the talks process, the two Heads should continue an exploration of principles and language relevant to the Joint Declaration Initiative. The Liaison Group as a whole is to meet in Dublin on 3 October. In preparation for that meeting Mr O hUiggin and I met in London on 24 September. Our discussion on overt political development is recorded in more detail separately. The main transaction was that I gave

Q J THOMAS  
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a first draft of the Joint Framework Document, as Secretary of State, and made it clear that we hoped for a serious engagement on this at the forthcoming meeting of the Liaison Group, and that we were ready to have an intensive series of meetings thereafter as was needed to enable us to report jointly to the IGC scheduled for 27 October.

2. In fact most of our discussion was focussed on the Joint Declaration Initiative. Mr O hUiggin presented us with a new text (attached, marked JDI). As recorded below, we had a full 15 or so part necessarily off-the-cuff and without commitment, discussion of the text, focussed on the crucial paragraph 4.

3. In presenting the paper Mr O hUiggin made the following points:

- (i) this new text had been seen and approved by