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Government Statement

The Government today reviewed the security situation generally following detailed security briefing provided to the Taoiseach yesterday evening by senior Garda and Defence Force personnel.

The Government noted the progress made in the investigation of the killing of Garda McCabe and of the serious injuries inflicted on Garda O'Sullivan in Adare, and expressed its appreciation for the very considerable support and co-operation which has been received from members of the general public.

The Government was briefed also on the Manchester bombing outrage in which hundreds of people were injured and extensive property damage caused. The Garda Síochána remain in close contact with their opposite numbers in the U.K. and Northern Ireland on this and all similar acts of terror.

The Government reiterated its determination to face down the men of violence, to spare no effort in bringing those responsible to justice and to ensure that

neither they nor any of their associates will ever be allowed to damage the genuine efforts now underway by the representatives of the vast majority of the people on these islands to resolve the Northern Ireland question by exclusively peaceful and democratic means.

Following the breakdown of the IRA ceasefire and the Canary Wharf bombing on 9th February, the Government decided that it should terminate all Ministerial contact with Sinn Féin, but maintain limited official contact.

Official contact was maintained in the belief that it would be more likely to help restore the ceasefire than would a policy of total refusal of Government contact.

In the meantime, the Government did everything possible to facilitate Sinn Féin's entry into the negotiations launched on 10 June in its work on the preparations for those negotiations. Sinn Féin have been provided, through official contacts, with all the information they could possibly need, in this context. Everything has been done to make it possible for Sinn Féin to go to the IRA and seek from them a restoration of the complete cessation of violence.

The Government is seriously concerned that, despite this information and assistance, Sinn Féin has not yet got the IRA to restore the ceasefire. The murder of Garda McCabe in Adare, the serious injuries inflicted on Garda O'Sullivan, and the bombing outrage in Manchester in which hundreds of people were injured, and Sinn Féin's reaction to these outrages, provide no grounds for confidence that Sinn Féin is capable of pursuing normal democratic politics based on exclusively peaceful methods.

The question of further meetings, if any, with Sinn Féin will be kept under review in light, inter alia, of the responses by Sinn Féin to the questions put to them publicly last evening on behalf of the Government. These questions are

- (1) Has Mr. Adams yet gone to the IRA to ask for a ceasefire and if not why?
- (2) Does Sinn Féin continue to support the "armed struggle" of the IRA?

These are simple questions, which any political party should be able to answer. Democratic politicians in other jurisdictions will also be watching how Sinn Féin answers the questions.

The Government wants Sinn Féin to answer these questions for themselves in their own words. An answer is needed to these questions that is simple, genuine and convincing, not tactical or semantical.

18th June, 1996.