

24 JUL '96 11:59 PARLIAMENTARY SECTION

P.3

Talks process

The recent violence only reinforces the urgent need for dialogue through multi-party talks. There is a heavy responsibility on all the participants not only to continue the talks but to move from the current procedural wrangles to the substance of the issues.

It is time for the leaders of all the constitutional parties to show leadership. I hope recent dreadful events will serve to jolt all concerned into positive action.

Meeting with Loyalists

Yesterday's meeting with representatives of the PUP and UDP was one of a series of meetings with parties involved in the multi-party negotiations.

I stressed the importance of the Loyalist ceasefire which has made possible their entry into the negotiations. Both parties are playing an important role in maintaining the ceasefire, and a constructive role in the Belfast talks. Both fully signed up to the Mitchell principles of democracy and non-violence. Those I saw were elected members of the Forum and participants in the Talks.

Both parties joined me in condemning the recent violence, intimidation and defiance of the rule of law from both sides of the community.

Parades

I utterly condemn the scenes of violence we have witnessed across Northern Ireland this month. The scenes we have witnessed have no place in this country. The search for peace will certainly not be assisted by such behaviour. The way ahead is through dialogue.

Decision to reroute the Drumcree march was an operational one for the RUC, as was the later decision to allow through a limited, low-key march. Suggestions that the police acted on anything other than the interests of public order are wrong.

My RHF the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has announced a review of the handling of parades and will be making clear the details shortly.

We are ready to look at this with a fresh eye, as rapidly as we can. But there are no magic solutions: only local agreements on the ground can arrest conflict and violence.

Punishment beatings

These barbaric attacks must stop immediately. There is no excuse for these wicked acts which cause serious injuries. Those with influence must do all they can to prevent further incidents, which are explicitly ruled out by the Mitchell principles of democracy and non-violence.

6110

Jackie

Stuart wings
the Calmest
every morningto update
these lines
for PM.This is the
most recent
version which
you may
wish to
keep (ve).Holly
24/7

Sinn Fein

The success of the talks is not dependent on Sinn Fein participation. The two governments and the participating political parties between them represent the views of the overwhelming majority of the people of Northern Ireland. They are perfectly capable of reaching an agreement on a settlement which could marginalise the men of violence and underpin a lasting peace.

I would prefer them to be there but they have excluded themselves. IRA terrorism is morally wrong and completely unjustified and has denied Sinn Fein the opportunity to participate in what I trust will turn out to be an historic process.

Cut off all links with Sinn Fein

There has been no ministerial contact by either government with Sinn Fein since the end of the IRA ceasefire in February.

Other than at meetings of bodies dealing with social and economic issues that have included Sinn Fein representatives, the only substantive contacts the Government has had at official level with Sinn Fein since February have been to deal with technical matters arising from the Entry to Negotiations Act and to deliver the message on 10 June as to why they could not enter the negotiations.

Sinn Fein should never be able to enter the talks?

After Manchester, Osnabruck and the finds in London, it is difficult to see Sinn Fein as credible participants in a peaceful process. It would not be sensible to decide now that they should be excluded for all time. But it is up to Sinn Fein to convince us that they can join the process, through an unequivocal ceasefire which is credible, and not simply a tactical device.

Decommissioning

We have made clear that there must be decommissioning during the process of multi-party talks, as proposed by Senator Mitchell. Recent events only confirm the importance of this confidence-building measure.

FROM: S G BREARLEY
PARLIAMENTARY CLERK
24 JULY 1996

ASSISTANT SECRETARY
SECURITY POLICY & OPERATIONS 1

RECEIVED 24 JUL 1996

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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE (B)

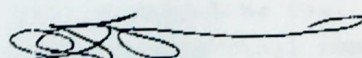
PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (L&B)
PS/MICHAEL ANCRAM MP (L&B)
PS/SIR JOHN WHEELER (L&B)
PS/BARONESS DENTON (L, DANI, DED)
PS/MR MOSS (DOE, DHSS)

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Mr Legge
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Mr Leach
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Mr Perry
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Mr Campbell-Bannerman
Ms Checksfield
Miss Harrison (L&B)
Ms Mapstone
Mr Whysall (L&B)
Mrs McNally (L&B)
Mr Webb
Ms Hastings

Mr Hughes

PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS

I attach for information a copy of the lines to take that were prepared for use by the Prime Minister at question time yesterday.



S G BREARLEY

FM/PARLY/18663