

DRAFT

Contact with Sinn Féin

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

Official contact was maintained in the belief that it would be more likely to be of assistance to Sinn Féin in persuading the IRA to restore the August '94 ceasefire than would a policy of total refusal of Government contact.

The Government has done everything possible to facilitate Sinn Féin's entry into the negotiations launched on 10 June. Sinn Féin have been provided, through official contacts, with all the information they could possibly need to make a decision to go to the IRA and seek a restoration of the complete cessation of violence which they announced in August, 1994.

The Government is seriously concerned that, despite this, Sinn Féin has clearly not managed to persuade the IRA to restore the ceasefire. The killing 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, provide no grounds for confidence that the IRA intends to allow Sinn Féin to follow the road of peace and democracy.

The Government having carefully reviewed the situation is not, however, convinced that it should, at this time, terminate all contacts, including existing limited official contacts, with Sinn Féin. It has decided to leave open the possibility that further contact will take place at official level but only for the purpose of obtaining an up-to-date assessment of Sinn Féin's actual prospects of persuading the IRA towards peace, against the background of that

organisation's recent acts of violence. In this context, the Government will wish to see clear answers to two simple questions:-

- (i) Has Mr. Adams yet gone to the IRA to ask for a cease-fire, and if not, why ?
- (ii) Does Sinn Féin continue to support the "armed struggle" of the IRA ?

Following that contact, the Government will again review the case for keeping open a line of communication with Sinn Féin.

In the meantime, the Government remain committed to making a success of the multi-party negotiations, which represent the best prospect for political progress for many years. The Government are determined that there can be no veto by violence over these negotiations.