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From the Private Secretary

12 September 1996

PIRA POSITION PAPER

... The Prime Minister was recently given the attached paper, which it is claimed is the current strategy document to which PIRA are working. It is said to be authentic apart from the heading, which was added later.

I would be interested to know whether we have seen this document, or anything like it, before and for your comments on its contents. It looks like a paper drawn up to justify the 1994 ceasefire by setting out the political strategy behind it. One point of interest is the spelling out of TUAS as "Total Unarmed Struggle". I have seen suggestions in the press and elsewhere that TUAS in fact stood for something rather more sinister.

JOHN HOLMES

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SM

6. It is up to the Dublin Government to bring about N.S.D. in the shortest time possible.

7. The unionists have no veto over discussions involved or their outcome.

8. A solution requires political and constitutional change.

The briefing paper of April deals with Strategic Objectives and events to that date in more detail than this paper. However, a brief summary is helpful.

Our goals have not changed.

A United 32 County Democratic Socialist Republic.

The main Strategic Objectives to move us towards that goal can be summarised thus:

To construct an Irish nationalist consensus with international support on the basis of the dynamic contained in the Irish Peace Initiative. This should aim for:

on the absolute right of the Irish to N.S.D. without external imposition.

(a) The strongest possible political consensus between the Dublin Government, an S.F. and the SDLP.

(b) A common position on practical measures moving us towards our goal.

(c) A common nationalist negotiating position.

(d) An international dimension in aid of the consensus (mostly U.S.A. and E.U.)

The Strategic Objectives come from prolonged debate but are based on a straightforward logic, that republicans at this time and on their own do not have the strength to achieve the end goal.

Hume is the only SDLP person on the horizon strong enough to face the challenge.

The struggle needs strengthening; most obviously from other nationalist constituencies led by SDLP, Dublin Government and the emerging I.A. (Irish American) lobby, with additional support from other parties in E.U. rowing in behind and accelerating the momentum created.

consensus would be among grassroots.

The aim of any such consensus is to create a dynamic which can:

There is potentially a very powerful American lobby to back any particular

1. Affect the domestic and international perception of the republican position, i.e. as one which is reasonable.

Clinton is perhaps the first U.S. President in decades to be substantially influenced

2. To develop a northern nationalist consensus on the basis of constitutional change.

At this time the British government is the most popular in the E.U. with other E.U.

3. To develop an Irish nations consensus on the same basis.

4. To develop Irish America as a significant player in support of the above.

roughly the same direction.

6. It is up to the Dublin/London Government with all parties to bring about N.S.D. in the shortest time possible.
7. The unionists have no veto over discussions involved or their outcome
8. A solution requires political and constitutional change.
9. An agreed united and independent Ireland is what republicans desire. However an agreed Ireland needs the allegiance of varied traditions to be viable.

Contact with the other parties involved have been in that context.

There are of course differences of opinion on how a number of these principles are interpreted or applied.

In particular:

on British rule breaching the principle of N.S.D.

on the absolute right of the Irish to N.S.D. without external impediment

an interpretation of what veto and consent mean

on the issue of timescales.

Nevertheless differences aside, the leadership believes there is enough in common to create a substantial political momentum which will considerably advance the struggle at this time.

Some substantial contributing factors which point towards now being the right time for an initiative are:

Hume is the only SDLP person on the horizon strong enough to face the challenge.

Dublin's coalition is the strongest government in 25 years or more.

Reynolds has no historical baggage to hinder him and knows how popular such a consensus would be among grassroots.

There is potentially a very powerful I. American lobby not in hock to any particular party in Ireland or Britain.

Clinton is perhaps the first U.S. President in decades to be substantially influenced by such a lobby.

At this time the British government is the least popular in the E.U. with other E.U. members.

It is the first time in 25 years that all the major Irish nationalist parties are rowing in roughly the same direction

5. To develop a broader and deeper Irish nationalist consensus at grass roots level.
6. To develop and mobilise an anti imperialistic Irish peace movement.
7. To expose the British Government and the Unionists as the intransigent parties.
8. To heighten the contradictions between British unionism and Ulster loyalism
9. To assist the development of whatever potential exists in Britain to create a mood/climate/party/movement for peace.
10. To maintain the political cohesion and organisational integrity of Sinn Fein so as to remain an effective political force.

Present British intentions are the subject of much debate and varied opinion. However, what can be said is that sometime preceding the D.S.D. of December '93 a deal was done with the U.U.P. to keep the Conservatives in power.

This becomes an obstacle to movement.

The D.S.D. does not hold a solution.

Republicans are not prepared to wait around for the Brits to change, but as always we are prepared to force their hand.

It is nonetheless important to note that there has been no recent dialogue between the Brit government and Republican representatives since November '93.

The Republican position is that if the Brits want to talk they should do it through normal political channels.

At the end of the April briefing it states "Our strategic objectives should guide all our actions. Given that these are our guidelines we must now look at what options are and what initiatives we can undertake."

After prolonged discussion and assessment the leadership decided that if it could get agreement with the Dublin Government, the SDLP and the I.A. lobby on basic republican principles which would be enough to create the dynamic that would considerably advance the struggle then it would be prepared to use the TUAS (Total Unarmed Struggle) option.

We attempted to reach such a consensus on a set of principles which can be summarised briefly thus.

1. Partition has failed.
2. Structures must be changed.
3. No internal settlement within 6 Counties.
4. British rule breaches the principle of N.S.D. (Nationalist Self Determination).
5. The Irish as a whole have the right to N.S.D. without external impediment.

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These combined circumstances are unlikely to gel again in the foreseeable future.

The leadership has now decided that there is enough agreement to proceed with the Tuas option.

It has been stated from outset that this is a risky strategy.

Its success will depend greatly on workload. All activists must be pro active.

Those who continue their present work need to double effect.

If you find yourself idle help in another field.

Tuas has been part of every other struggle in the world this century.

It is vital that activists realise the struggle is not over.

Another front has opened up and we should have the confidence and put in the effort to succeed on that front.

We have the ability to carry on indefinitely.

We should be trying to double the pressure on the British.

For various reasons, which include the sensitivity of discussions up to this point, communication up and down the organisation has been patchy.

Since we are now entering a more public aspect to the initiative communication should be a less encumbered matter and therefore more regular than before.

Arabella can find space in the diary, but we are a bit nervous that other things might crowd in around that period. We therefore think it is sensible to hedge our bets.

Content to agree in principle to take this on, but with a let-out a few days before if time is simply not going to allow?

