

*cc: Proc.**c-EO o/r**NBPM  
file**jh 13/9.*

Prime Minister ✓

**NORTHERN IRELAND POLICY AND ITS PRESENTATION**

Having read NI(96)7, I am satisfied that the new arrangements it proposes for managing the presentation of Government policy on Northern Ireland and the terrorist threat are sensible additions to our existing efforts.

I particularly endorse, in the context of the proposed strengthened committee on Irish Terrorism (TIO), extending the membership to include police and security service representatives, as well as the Permanent Secretaries of the Ministry of Defence and the Northern Ireland Office. I also endorse the creation of a new committee - the Northern Ireland Strategic Information Committee - chaired by the Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office, comprising officials (both administrators and information specialists) from the Northern Ireland Office, the FCO, No 10, the Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Defence and the Home Office.

Both sets of proposed structural changes will, I am confident, make for a more sharply-focussed Government activity in the fields of policy presentation and countering and commenting on terrorists acts and propaganda.

I am also content with the proposal that the NIO's "Weekly Information Strategy" document should be more widely circulated within Whitehall, and that other Departments be invited to contribute to it.



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My officials are also prepared, if colleagues agree, to prepare forward briefing on key points of Government policy for the information of other Departments.

Signed

PM

9 September 1996

PS/Secretary of State (B&L)  
PS/Sir J Wheeler (B, LA DPT)  
PS/M Ancora (B&L)  
PS/Sir Denton (DOE, DANIEL)  
PS/Mr Moss (B&L)  
PS/PUS (B&L)  
PS/Sir David Fell  
Mr Legge  
Mr Bell  
Mr Leach (B&L)  
Mr Steele  
Mr Watkins  
Mr Wood (B&L)  
Mr Benson  
Mr Hill (B&L)  
Mr Lavery  
Mr Maccabe  
Mr Perry  
Mr Priestley  
Mr Stephens  
Ms Checkfield  
Ms Mapstone  
Mr O'Mahony, T&U  
Mrs McNally (B&L)  
Mr Holmes, No 10 (via  
PS/Sof9)  
Mrs Collins, Cab Off  
HMA Dublin  
Mr Lamont BID, FCO  
Mr Westmacott, Wton (via BID)  
Mr Campbell Bannerman

## NOTE FOR THE RECORD

9 SEPTEMBER: SUMMARY, AM

1. At the start of the proceedings, the Chairman made a statement denying as 'unfounded and untrue' speculation that he would shortly leave the talks; though, as the Government was aware, there would be occasional days when he would need to be absent to fulfil other commitments.

2. The DUP had prepared a 'Notice of Indictment' against the DUP and UUP. The Chairman proposed to allow the two parties to prepare a response; then circulate both documents to the other participants. After some debate about procedure and an agreement, it was agreed that the 'notice' would be circulated first; then the DUP and UUP would have until tomorrow at 10 to prepare a response. The talks would adjourn in the meantime, the Chairman urging participants to engage in bilaterals about the rest of the opening agenda.

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