

DRAFT LETTER FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO SEND TO

Peter D Robinson Esq MP
Strandtown Hall
96 Belmont Avenue
BELFAST
BT4 3DE

August 1996

Thank you for your letter of 29 August referring to the statement reportedly issued by the CLMC. In response to that, John Wheeler yesterday made the Government's position entirely clear. I attach a copy of his statement in case you have not seen it.

2. You also mention the participation in the negotiations of the PUP and UDP. As you know, the conduct of the negotiations is exclusively a matter for those involved in them; and the Rules of Procedure agreed on 29 July provide (in rule 29) a mechanism for addressing any representations which may be made to the effect that a participant is no longer entitled to take part because they have dishonoured the principles of democracy and non-violence. In accordance with rule 29, you may therefore wish in the first instance to address any representations which you wish to make in this area to the Independent Chairmen.

British Embassy, Dublin

29 August 1996

STATEMENT BY THE RT HON SIR JOHN WHEELER QC DL MP, MINISTER OF STATE
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND:

"Any threat of exclusions by terrorist gangs, if true, is totally unacceptable in a democratic society. The only proper way of dealing with alleged wrongdoing is within the rule of law."

29 August 1996

1. August has been a quiet month in Dublin. There is widespread relief that the talks process, however fragile, has resumed after a period of uncertainty. The recent events have passed without incident. Nevertheless, in the absence of the major players, there has been little real level Irish thinking on Northern Ireland. The Taoiseach returned to his office last Friday, while the Taoiseach is still in Kerry. Sean O'Riada only returns from leave at the weekend. What follows therefore must be treated with caution as it reflects the personal views of officials (principally Tashon and Donlon in the Taoiseach's office and Montgomery in the DFA.)

Northern Ireland Politics

2. Irish officials admit that they had underestimated the strength of the feeling that divided the two communities in Northern Ireland. The general view is that events at Drumahaire and after will have made it more difficult for the Unionist parties, (and particularly the DUP) to compromise, and that progress at the talks when they resume is likely to be slow. There is increasing recognition of the need to reassess opinions about the future of the Union if there is to be any chance of getting them to negotiate seriously. But at the moment the Unionist position is ruled out as unacceptable in advance of an overall settlement. The Taoiseach is trying to set up meetings with the Unionist

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