

CONFIDENTIAL

SUSPENSION OF IRA OPERATIONS

Lines to take

- over the past few days we have experienced, both in Northern Ireland and in England, some very serious and repugnant atrocities attributed to the IRA which have caused massive disruption and, in some cases, a possible threat to life.
- no democratic society should have to tolerate these types of incidents, which have bedevilled NI and GB for the past 25 years.
- I am therefore not going to go overboard about today's announcement. There is no justification whatsoever for violence in a democratic society, especially when the option of political negotiations is available. Any halt to terrorist violence is better than violence continuing.
- but this announcement has not been made in the terms of the lasting and unequivocal ceasefire which we, the Irish and American Governments, have insisted on and which is owed to the people of Northern Ireland.
- all decent people will hope that this so called suspension of activities will turn out to be the beginning of the genuine and lasting ceasefire that is needed. If that were to be the case, and if Sinn Fein were to commit itself exclusively to peaceful methods and to the democratic process, then the way would be open for them to be invited to the talks. But it is premature to start making predictions about invitations. First and foremost it is up to Sinn Fein and the IRA to show, through words and deeds, that the violence really is over for good, only then does the question of an invitation arise.

SOFs/30650/LB