

CAB

1800 HRS, FRIDAY 9 MAY 1997

"I want to assure you of our desire to make progress. We wanted to make an early and direct approach but we appreciate the need for sensitivity so let me reassure you that there is no intention on our part to make any of this public. Our desire is to help create conditions in which real progress can be made. The sooner this is done the better. We share your concern about events on the ground which are beyond our control. There are grave difficulties on our side also; not least among these is the treatment of the remand prisoner Roisin McAliskey, the delay in transferring sentenced prisoners in Britain back to Ireland and their conditions, the events surrounding the killing of Robert Hamill in Portadown, the actions of the RUC and the British Army and the ongoing loyalist attacks on our party and our community."

SOFS/BB