



RESTRICTED - POLICY

QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

28 AUG 1997

Top: FA/PS

*« COS
FA/PS
or
AC*

The Rt Hon Dr Marjorie Mowlam MP
Northern Ireland Office
11 Millbank
London
SW1P 4QE

*File
for
28/8.*

Dear Mo,

THE CENOTAPH

Thank you for your letter of 31 July in response to my minute of 26 July to the Prime Minister about Sinn Fein representation at the Cenotaph ceremony.

We can certainly defer a decision on a Sinn Fein invitation until the second week in September, as you suggest, although invitations to party leaders would otherwise go out early in September. But I should flag up that, irrespective of the outcome of the current negotiations, I would have deep misgivings about including Sinn Fein.

While I accept what you say about the principles of democracy, many of the main participants would find the idea of a Sinn Fein presence at the ceremony deeply uncomfortable and some might even be deterred from attending. I do not think we ought to run the risk of considerable public criticism and a possible boycott of the ceremony which might well arise even if the invitation to Sinn Fein (which would be bound to become public knowledge) were declined.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister, Donald Dewar and to Ron Davies.

Yours ever,

Jack

JACK STRAW

RESTRICTED - POLICY