



SECRETARY OF STATE  
FOR  
NORTHERN IRELAND

Rt Hon Jack Straw MP  
Secretary of State for the Home Department  
50 Queen Anne's Gate  
LONDON  
SW1

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE  
11 MILLBANK  
LONDON  
SW1P 4QE

*File*  
*✓ Duty Clerk* *(I have told NIO)*  
*That we remain*  
*Can I see papers pls. wholly unambiguous*  
*to the idea of*  
*Philip 6/8*  
*of at the (united)*  
*Top PD*  
*cc. Senfor*  
*3P*  
*I think John wrote about*  
*this setting out PM's view.*  
*As can you check.*  
*Philip 6/8*  
*Yes - copy of*  
*John's letter attached.*  
*He has*  
*7/8/97*  
*4/9.*  
*received 6/8*  
*31 July 1997*

Dear Jack,

## THE CENOTAPH

Thank you for copying to me your minute of 26 July to the Prime Minister regarding the position of Sinn Féin in relation to invitations to attend the Cenotaph ceremony. By the end of August I may be in a position to judge that the IRA ceasefire has been unequivocally restored and that Sinn Féin meet the criteria which would require me to invite them to join the multi-party negotiations in Northern Ireland. Thereafter, probably on 9 September, Sinn Féin would be required to affirm its total and absolute commitment to the principles of democracy and non-violence set out in the report of the International Body; and from that point onwards I and my Ministerial colleagues will treat Sinn Féin like any other political party.

Given the principles of democracy, I see no basis for proceeding in any other way. The question of whether they take up their seats or take the Oath of Allegiance seems to me to be irrelevant: that is a matter for the House authorities; so far as Government is concerned, Sinn Féin elected representatives have a democratic mandate which should - once they have renounced terrorism - be fully respected. Against that background you might want to defer a decision on the question of whether or not to invite the two Sinn Féin MP s to the Cenotaph, and review the situation in the second week of September.





In practice I would not expect either of them to respond to an invitation. Republicans traditionally boycott such ceremonies and even mainstream nationalist politicians in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland have only begun to attend in recent years.

I am sending copies of this minute to the Prime Minister, Donald Dewar and Ron Davies.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Mo'.

**MARJORIE MOWLAM**

P.S. Sack, this is a difficult one -  
let's hold back to mid-September &  
review the situation.