

CONFIDENTIAL

165523  
MDHOAN 5506

CONFIDENTIAL

FM FCO

TO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON

TELNO 966

OF 021624Z OCTOBER 97

AND TO IMMEDIATE NIO LONDON, NIO BELFAST, DUBLIN, BIS NEW YORK  
AND TO IMMEDIATE BOSTON, ACTOR, WHIRL*Rle*  
*Barbe.*  
*31x.*

YOUR TELNO 2197

SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF IRA AS TERRORIST ORGANISATION

## SUMMARY

1. We can accept US policy of designation. But we should continue to press for assurance that a breach of the ceasefire by PIRA would result in designation. It would be helpful if the US could make this clear in future contacts with Sinn Fein.

## DETAIL

2. Randy Bell, UK and Ireland Desk in the State Department (visiting), spoke to Stephens, NIO on 1 October on lines similar to Steinberg in TUR. He said that it would be explained that the decision on the IRA would be kept under review in the light of whether they abided by the ceasefire. One of the factors in the decision had been the need to be able to defend any designation in open court, if challenged. It would therefore not be possible to rely on intelligence material.

3. Stephens advised that Trimble should be told of the position during his visit. He warned that Trimble's opponents were looking for evidence to demonstrate that Trimble had joined a process designed only to deliver concessions to Republicans. He suggested that the Americans should think carefully about the decisions presentation with that in mind. In particular they might want to draw attention to other powers that would limit IRA fund-raising and other activities even without designation. He also warned against allowing any perception to develop that there was little risk for the IRA in preparatory activities, notably arms procurement, which fall short of full-scale resumption. Bell agreed to consider these points.

PAGE 1  
CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL

1655  
MDHOAN 5

4. There is no possibility of changing the US decision on this. Besides Stephens' points above, however, we should consider ways to make the best of the decision. As TUR notes, good presentation will be vital. We see value in continuing to press the Americans to make a commitment to designate PIRA if they break the ceasefire and be willing to make this public if asked. Secondly, we should press them to make this clear to Sinn Fein in future contacts. If non-designation can raise the price to PIRA of a resumption of violence, it may yet serve a purpose.

COOK

YYYY

DISTRIBUTION

52

MAIN 24

NORTHERN IRELAND

RID

ADDITIONAL 28

.NORTHERN IRELAND  
 .(NIO)  
 CAOFF1//PS/SEC/MR FISHER  
 CAOFF2//MR PAKENHAM//MR FITALL  
 CAOFF2//ASS STAFF  
 CAOFF2//MR WILLIAMS J  
 CAOFF2//MR SANDERSON  
 CAOFF1//HD OD  
 MOD  
 PS/PM  
 PRESS SECRETARY/PM  
 HO//PS/HOME SEC  
 HO//HD TPU  
 HO//MS CHECKSFIELD  
 N SCOT Y//SUPT. B SQUAD  
 NIO//PS/S OF S  
 NIO//LORD DUBS

NIO//MR STEPHENS TPU  
 NIO//MS BHARUCHA  
 NIO//MISS O'SULLIVAN  
 NIO//PS/MR A INGRAM//MR WOOD  
 NIO//PS/MR P MURPHY  
 NIO//PS/MR A WORTHINGTON  
 NIO//PS/PUS(L)  
 NIO//SIR J CHILCOT  
 NIO//MR MACCABE PAB  
 NIO//MR THOMAS  
 NIO//BROOKER  
 NIO//MR LEACH  
 ATT GEN//MR GRANGE  
 ATT GEN//MR P RYCROFT  
 ATT GEN//PRIVATE SEC  
 SECURITY SERVICE

NNNN

PAGE 2  
 CONFIDENTIAL