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~~Taisearh~~
ms in c

not handed in - would have
been seen on TV

FOR: M BROWNE/EMBASSY, LONDON

FROM: B NOLAN

DATE: 23 May 1998

25A

PAGES: 2

by
Taisearh
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26.5.98

Early comments by Secretary of State, following announcement of referendum result,

23 May 1998:

Secretary of State: In my view there has been a democratic vote. The majority of both communities have said Yes, based on the principle of consent. I assume and hope now that we move to an election where people choose candidates who will work to implement that Agreement. I have to say that Jeffrey Donaldson and Joel Patton have both accepted that this is a majority vote and there is a way forward. I haven't heard anything of that from the others in the No campaign. All I have heard is them saying that they want a replay. I've never heard of a replay when it's 3-1 and that's what it is. So I hope that they acknowledge what the majority of people have said and build for the future because that is what the democratic mandate of this referendum vote says.

Interviewer: The Prime Minister has said on several occasions that this deal is a package, either everything works or nothing works. Is your attitude now that the people of Northern Ireland have overwhelmingly voted for all of the package including the contentious areas like prisoner releases, RUC reform and the proposals in relation to decommissioning and the lack of any real linkage in the Agreement between decommissioning and Sinn Féin or the Loyalist parties taking any seats in the future Assembly.

Secretary of State: All I can say is wait and see the Bill before you make assumptions about how things are interpreted in law, but the simple answer to your question is yes. All along, it has been a package, all along there have been parts that some people don't like and

others like. That's the nature of an accommodation, that's the nature of the Agreement and I think today - and we've seen in the last weeks in the campaigning - many victims' families who have suffered along with the rest of us, but a greater pain and suffering on their part, have said, many of them, some have been unable and that is quite understandable, to bring themselves to vote Yes, but many have. I think if they can and they can say 'on balance this is a package that I want for peace, if I have to take some bits I don't like too, then that is the situation we are in'. I don't believe many people did it on some dimensions happily but they took the package. That's what we must remember, there is no cherry-picking, you take the whole thing, so all the dimensions you mentioned are part of it.

End

②
by m. Loughlin Copy.
not handed in
to the Taoiseach
- scarcely necessary at this stage
(25A)

FOR: M BROWNE/EMBASSY, LONDON

FROM: B NOLAN

DATE: 23 May 1998

PAGES:

Early comments by Tony Blair following announcement of referendum result, 23 May 1998:

Blair: The vote was an overwhelming Yes vote and it is pretty clear that a majority of Unionists as well as a majority of nationalists voted Yes. There will be some people who have got misgivings. I think that some people voted No who would vote No to anything but some people voted No because they were worried and fearful of the future. And I think we can overcome those doubts and misgivings and I think if we handle ourselves with the same sense of responsibility in Northern Ireland that has been evidenced over the last few weeks, then we can actually build a lot of support and build the confidence that is necessary to make all these various institutions work. And, you know, if we manage to do that, the future for Northern Ireland could be tremendous in terms of investment, jobs, of peace, prosperity, of children growing up with no one asking whether you're Catholic or Protestant, where you've come from, but what you are and what you can do for yourself and the rest of the community.

Interviewer: And, given that it was such a resounding Yes vote, do you think that that sends a clear signal to those who have favoured violence?

Blair: I think two things are very clear after this vote. The people have spoken with a resounding voice in the Republic of Ireland, in Northern Ireland, in the whole of the island of Ireland, everybody has now said 'you can make your argument by words, by debate, by argument, by persuasion, but there is no place for the gun and the bomb and violence in the politics of Northern Ireland or the politics of any of the island of Ireland. All that is over

and gone and if we can really take that into our hearts and if people, even those who voted No, can find within themselves the will to try and make this work, then I think we have a tremendous and exciting future ahead of us.

Interviewer: But the pressure is now on you to deliver, isn't it?

Blair: The pressure is as ever on me to deliver. I want to say this to the people of Northern Ireland, and I said it a couple of days ago when I was there, they will see me back again and again, I want to work with people in Northern Ireland, this is a partnership between people and Government to make this work, to say look, the people have spoken, they have expressed their democratic will and Government and people are now going to go forward together and make this work.

Interviewer: The Prime Minister tells us he will be speaking to Bill Clinton later this afternoon. He has already been called by several European leaders including President Jacques Chirac to congratulate him on the outcome of the result.

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