

CONFIDENTIAL

DJW/42/10

FROM: D J WATKINS
US CENT SEC
DATE: 28 OCTOBER 1994

CC: PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B
PS/Sir John Wheeler (DFP,B&L) - B
PS/Michael Ancram (DENI,B&L) - B
PS/Baroness Denton (DED,DANI&L) - B
PS/Mr Moss (DOE,DHSS&L) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Mr Fell - B
NI Permanent Secretaries
Mr Legge - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Williams - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Brooker - B
Mrs Brown - B
Mr Canavan - B
Mr Dodds - B
Mr Stephens - B
Mr Maccabe - B
Mr Maxwell - B

*File
Contacts with SF.*

Departmental Private Offices

ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT : SINN FEIN CONTACTS

1. Following the Prime Minister's announcement on 21 October that he was prepared to make a working assumption that the IRA ceasefire was intended to be permanent, we have revised the advice to be given to officials on contacts with Sinn Fein.
2. The advice is attached. In essence, it represents a planned easing of access to Government by Sinn Fein which is now feasible in advance of the start of preliminary exploratory dialogue with that party. This advice should be read in conjunction with the existing Access to Government Guidance Circular (1/91) issued to Private Offices on 28 January 1991.

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APPROACHES TO GOVERNMENT BY MEMBERS OF SINN FEIN

3. In the current fast moving situation Departments are encouraged to consult Central Secretariat in any cases where there is doubt.

1. Following the Prime Minister's announcement that the Government was making a working assumption that the IRA ceasefire was permanent, the Secretary of State has agreed to minor changes in ^{HJ} operation of the restrictions on contact with Sinn Fein set out in Central Secretariat Circular 1/91 and Mr Spence's note of 29 September 1988 to SI Permanent Secretaries.

D J WATKINS

SC 28151

Endorsement from Sinn Fein representatives should continue to receive replies from officials or from the Minister's Private Secretary. However, whereas in the past the reply was required to be as brief and formal as possible, it has been decided that henceforth Sinn Fein representatives should receive the same length of reply as would councillors from any other party, containing a similar degree of detail. The tone of the reply should nonetheless remain cool and the style, particularly where the reply is responding to a combative or hostile letter, should be formal and restrained. Departments should consult Central Secretariat in any cases where there is doubt.

2. Senior officials should continue to obtain Ministerial authority for meetings with Sinn Fein representatives, and should keep Central Secretariat, CPL and PAS informed. Any events which might involve a Minister coming into contact with Sinn Fein representatives should be referred to Central Secretariat, who will provide advice in consultation with PAS and CPL Divisions.

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DJW/RC/RJ/27717 The on Sinn Fein attendance at receptions and presentations (including conferences) and on the supply of information to Sinn Fein, remains unchanged.

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APPROACHES TO GOVERNMENT BY MEMBERS OF SINN FEIN

ADVICE NOTE FROM CENTRAL SECRETARIAT

1. Following the Prime Minister's announcement that the Government was making a working assumption that the IRA ceasefire was permanent, the Secretary of State has agreed to minor changes in the operation of the restrictions on contact with Sinn Fein set out in Central Secretariat Circular 1/91 and Mr Spence's note of 29 September 1988 to NI Permanent Secretaries.
2. Correspondence from Sinn Fein representatives should continue to receive replies from officials or from the Minister's Private Secretary. However, whereas in the past the reply was required to be as brief and formal as possible, it has been decided that henceforth Sinn Fein representatives should receive the same length of reply as would councillors from any other party, containing a similar degree of detail. The tone of the reply should nonetheless remain cool and the style, particularly where the reply is responding to a combative or hostile letter, should be formal and restrained. Departments should consult Central Secretariat in any cases where there is doubt.
3. Senior officials should continue to obtain Ministerial authority for meetings with Sinn Fein representatives, and should keep Central Secretariat, CPL and PAB informed. Any events which might involve a Minister coming into contact with Sinn Fein representatives should be referred to Central Secretariat, who will provide advice in consultation with PAB and CPL Divisions.
4. The guidance on Sinn Fein attendance at receptions and presentations (including conferences) and on the supply of information to Sinn Fein, remains unchanged.

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5. This advice is clearly designed to cover only the interim period while we move towards the exploratory discussions. Further guidance will be provided in due course.

CENTRAL SECRETARIAT

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