

CONFIDENTIAL

Nevertheless it was encouraging that recorded crime had fallen in all parts of Britain.

Northern
Ireland

Previous
Reference
CM(94) 10.2

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND said that a temporary cease-fire had been called by the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) at short notice and had lasted from 5-7 April. This had aroused more interest than it deserved. The Government had had to work hard to counter well-intentioned but misguided responses from political and religious leaders of the Catholic community in Northern Ireland and initially from the Taoiseach. The Government had restated their insistence that only a permanent cessation of violence would open the way to the conference table. During his recent visit to North America he had met leading political figures in the United States and Canada and had found widespread support for the principles set out in the joint declaration agreed with the Irish Government in December. The transformation since his visit the previous year was very marked. This more positive attitude had also been noticeable during the visit of the leader of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), Mr James Molyneaux, to the United States. There continued to be some pressure for the Government to clarify the joint declaration. His response had been that the declaration did not need clarification, nor had Sinn Fein identified a single area which required clarification. Terrorist attacks on security forces in Northern Ireland were continuing; a police officer had been killed in Derry earlier that week and two others injured. The necessary security measures would continue to be taken, including strengthening the base at Crossmaglen to which the Irish Government had taken some exception on grounds of lack of notice. A joint operation involving police forces from mainland Britain, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland had broken up racketeering, drug and fraud activities which had been an important source of terrorist funds.

In discussion it was noted that the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Army were favourably disposed towards the joint declaration although there was scepticism about whether this would lead to a long term cessation of violence. Mr James Molyneaux's visit to the United States had been helpful both in exposing senior political figures here to the

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Ulster Unionist viewpoint and in making the UUP aware of the change of attitude in the United States towards Northern Ireland as a result of the joint declaration.

The Cabinet -

1. Took note.

Commemoration
of D-Day

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NATIONAL HERITAGE said that, together with the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for National Heritage, he had earlier in the day met representatives of the Normandy Veterans Association and the Royal British Legion to discuss the misgivings which these organisations had expressed about the Government's plans for the commemoration of the anniversary of the D-Day landings. It had become clear in the course of the meeting that their only substantive concern was about the event planned to take place in Hyde Park in July. Most of the rest of the proposed programme was much welcomed by the two associations and only presented marginal problems. Discussions were still continuing about the Hyde Park event. It had been agreed that at the end of the meeting the representatives of the two organisations would confirm that the discussions had been constructive and helpful. They would not however, because of their need to consult their membership and national officers, comment on their detailed content.

In discussion it was noted that much of the press comment about the commemoration of D-Day related to events, of which there were more than 500 throughout the country, which had been organised by private or local organisations and for which the Government had no responsibility. The emphasis of the Government's own contribution had been on the defence-related events on the day of the anniversary itself. It was disappointing that Field Marshal Lord Bramall, one of the members of the steering group, had voiced his doubts about some aspects of the proposed programme after making no mention of them in his several meetings with Ministers earlier in the year. All commemorations relating to events of the Second World War tended to involve an element of celebration as well. This had been the case for example with the anniversary of the Battle of El Alamein. The veterans associations themselves, though concerned to ensure that the prime motivation in any programme should be that of commemoration, welcomed the inclusion also of elements designed to show successor generations what the situation during the Second World War had been like and to provide a reminder of the significance of what was being

CONFIDENTIAL