

FROM : R C WEST
SIL DIVISION
4 FEBRUARY 1994

Miss Murphy
669/93

- cc PS/Sir John Wheeler (L&B) - B
- PS/Michael Ancram (L&B) - B
- PS/PUS (L&B) - B
- Mr Thomas - B
- Mr Legge - B
- Mr Steele - B
- Mr Bell - B
- Mr Williams - B
- Mr Watkins - B
- Mr Wood (L&B) - B
- Mr Daniell - B
- Mr Leach - B
- Mr Maccabe - B
- Mr Bramley - B
- Mr Archer, RID - B
- Mr Kyle - B
- Mr Brearley - B

ASST SEC 131/2
- 7 FEB 1994
CENT MUM SEC

274/2
- 4 FEB 1994
in the...

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (L&B) - B

NORTHERN IRELAND BROADCASTING RESTRICTIONS

The National Heritage Secretary is due to announce the conclusions of the review of the broadcasting restrictions today, in an arranged PQ.

2. I attach lines to take. Press enquiries should be referred, in most instances, to the DNH.

(signed)

R C WEST
SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL DIVISION
4 FEBRUARY 1994

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**REVIEW OF NORTHERN IRELAND BROADCASTING RESTRICTIONS :
ANNOUNCEMENT OF CONCLUSIONS**

Line to take

- The Secretary of State for National Heritage has consulted the regulatory authorities as well as having the benefit of the views of the broadcasters and a number of other organisations. He has weighed these up alongside the concern expressed by a number of Members of Parliament about broadcasts of interviews with Mr Gerry Adams towards the end of last year.

- On his advice, the Government has decided that now is not the time for change, but the matter will be kept under consideration in the light of further developments.

- There is substantial public support in the UK for the principle that terrorists and their apologists should not enjoy the same unfettered access to the broadcast media as those who are committed to, and respect, the standards and restraints of peaceful democracy.

Questions and Answers

- Q.1. Do you not share the concern about the lipsynching of interviews with Mr Adams?
- A.1 Many people were deeply offended by the appearance of Mr Adams on television immediately following the terrible outrage on the Shankill Road. But the Government is not convinced that this alone justifies a change in the restrictions at present.
- Q.2 Is the Government satisfied with the way the restrictions are working, and the anomalies which arise?
- A.2 The Government believes that the restrictions are serving the purpose that was originally intended - to prevent

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spokesmen for terrorist organisations, para-military organisations and those who support them having direct access to television and radio. We will, however, keep the way the restrictions are working under close review.

Q.3 It is not anomalous that RTE can be seen by many UK viewers, particularly in Northern Ireland?

A.3 The decision not to renew the Order under Section 31 of the Irish Broadcasting Act is a matter for the Irish Government. Broadcasters in the Republic will continue to observe the requirements imposed under Section 18 of the Act.

Q.4 Can you maintain these restrictions in the world of satellite transmission?

A.4 Broadcasters licensed in the United Kingdom, whatever means of transmission they use, must abide by the restrictions. It is not the policy to censor Sinn Fein. Their words can be fully reported on British television and in the press. To the extent that British viewers want to watch foreign broadcasts of Mr Adams or others, that is a matter for them. *?? double edged.*

Q.5 If the Provisional IRA/Sinn Fein accept the Downing Street declaration, will the Government remove the restrictions?

A.5 That is a matter to be considered at the time. At present there is nothing which justifies changing the restrictions.

Q.6 Have you made this announcement as a result of/in reaction to media coverage of Gerry Adams' visit to the USA?

A.6 No. We have repeatedly indicated that we would make known the conclusions of the review at the earliest possible moment.

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Q Isn't UK the laughing stock of the western world, offering Gerry Adams an easy propaganda point during interviews on US media?

A.7 While Sinn Fein continues to support the use of violence and murder to pursue their political ambitions, it cannot be right to accord them the same direct access to British television and radio.

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