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Taoiseach

COPY TO:
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PSS
MR. P. TEAHON
MR. S. DONLON
MR. T. DALTON

Taoiseach
The caption in paragraph 6, not
to put the 'Apprentice Boys' parade 'up in lights'
is important. Contacts with Mr. John Hume and Mr. Seamus Mallon
The media will do so anyway but it is well for
our Ministers and spokesperson to give space to
Mr. Hume by 18.7.96.

1. I spoke last night to Mr. John Hume and this morning to Mr. Seamus Mallon about their meeting with Mr. Major yesterday.

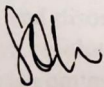
2. Both underlined the very strong message they had given to Mr. Major on the damage which had been done to nationalist confidence by the events in Portadown and subsequently. Mr. Mallon said he found no real appreciation on the part of the Prime Minister of the effect of British Government actions. Mallon had challenged Major to give "one good reason" why in the circumstances the nationalist community should either trust what he said or have confidence that he would deliver what he promised. Mr. Major objected vehemently to the imputation.

3. Hume, as he had made clear to the media, pressed for the talks to be given a new impetus and to be made "truly meaningful". Major said the British Government wanted to get into serious discussions in the Castle Building talks. Ancram said that he hoped the procedural aspects of the rules of procedure and the agenda for the opening plenary could be wrapped up within about three days.

4. Mallon had asked Major whether the British Government still stood by the Framework Document. Major said they abided by the "principles" of the Framework Document. Mallon objected that that was not enough and the document contained much more than principles. At that point, according to Mallon, Major had recourse to "waffle", saying that the document was really

a compromise between the Irish and British Governments as to what would be most acceptable, not British policy. (The somewhat illogical premise seemed to be that because it was a compromise, it had to be the departure point for a new compromise).

5. The SDLP did not find the meeting particularly encouraging. There was no provision for any further contact.
6. Hume, when I spoke to him, added a personal plea not to put the Apprentice Boy parade up in lights at the moment. He mentioned confidentially that he was to have contact with representatives of the Apprentice Boys very shortly, and was hopeful that an acceptable, or even magnanimous accommodation might be found with the local residents. He felt that any advance publicity or "hyping" of the issue in advance would be seriously detrimental to the possibility of a sensible private accommodation on the ground. I assured him I would pass that message on to our Ministers and press spokespersons.



Sean Ó hUiginn

18 July 1996