

Meeting with Sinn Féin

Wednesday 17 July 1996

The meeting dealt with three areas

- A - the current situation and the 10 August
Apprentice Boys parade
 - B - the Irish Government's approach to Sinn
Féin
 - C - the requirement of an IRA ceasefire, the Belfast
negotiations and a political settlement.
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Sinn Féin made the following points [their delegation included a series of Sinn Féin people active at local level in Derry, Belfast and Mid Ulster]

ONA

- ♦ the anger in Nationalist areas is such that there cannot be a return to business as usual
- ♦ senior IRA figures had been heckled last week when they urged restraint
- ♦ the reality could be clearly seen in Derry where what happened stemmed from deep seated frustration, where a new young generation had been responsible and where attempts by Sinn Féin, and Martin McGuinness in particular to stop the riots had failed [Tim Dalton mentioned separately that he had information from the Gardaí confirming the latter point]
- ♦ the occasion of the 10 August Apprentice Boys parade had the potential for huge unrest if not properly handled

- ♦ Sinn Féin would play their part in reaching an acceptable outcome [essentially that proposed by John Hume at the SDLP meeting on Monday] but it was important that avoiding the Bogside part of the city wall] but this was possible only if the current anger was not misread
- ♦ Sinn Féin argued for Irish official presence [one said a Government Minister] as had been the case in Garavaghy Road last year.

ONB

Sinn Féin argued that they should have a meeting at Ministerial level. The Government would [and should] meet David Trimble who had acted contrary to the Mitchell Principles last week. People in Nationalist areas in the North did not believe fair play was being accorded by this position. At a separate level Sinn Féin argued for a special session of the Forum to which Orange Order representatives and Northern Nationalist representatives at local level would be invited.

Gerry Adams welcomed the position adopted by the Taoiseach on Friday. He said this needed to be made part of an ongoing strategy of communication by

the Irish Government at all levels in particular at US and EU, including a specific graphic case the reality of the plastic bullets.

ON C

Overall Sinn Féin argued for a review of the Irish Government's approach to the North at a series of levels

- the current situation up to 10 August
in particular
- the relationship with Sinn Féin, and
- the talks process.

In a limited group [only Gerry Adams and Pat Doherty on the Sinn Féin side] Gerry Adams said a ceasefire could be achieved and they were working for it. We were aware of the approach made by John Hume to Prime Minister Major. Gerry Adams felt such a statement was the key to achieving the ceasefire.

He speculated on a role for Senator Mitchell in the process [Problematic in his Chair role but ? another American presence].

We, as officials,

- stated the action that the Irish Government, directly and through officials, had taken in the recent and current situation
- discussed instances to be taken up at the Anglo Irish Conference tomorrow, and
- repeatedly, and in different ways, said that an IRA ceasefire was the key to resolving the relationship with Sinn Féin and taking the talks and political settlement issues forward.