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TO

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FROM: Ambassador
DATE: 29 January 1997

cc FA/APS
Press

cc: PS/PUS
PS/Sir David Fell
Mr Thomas
Mr Stephens
Mr Bell
Mr Holmes, PS/PM - by fax

File
Jm 3/2.

Mr Lamont, RID

BLOODY SUNDAY

1. You may have seen in the press a reference to an exchange in the Dail on 28 January about Bloody Sunday. The Verbatim reads:

Mr Andrews : Is it the Taoiseach's intention to call on the British Government to investigate recent allegations arising from the Widgery tribunal? Will he use his contacts with No. 10 Downing Street to re-open inquiries into this matter, which occurred in 1972?

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle : That matter would be more appropriately raised in the form of a parliamentary question.

Mr Andrews : With respect, I believe the Taoiseach might respond to my query because this is a very important matter.

The Taoiseach : The answer to the Deputy's question is "yes". That matter is engaging the attention of the Tanaiste. We understand the strong feelings of the families concerned and their belief that the reputations of their loved ones have not been vindicated in the appropriate way. The Government is anxious to pursue the matter through all normal diplomatic channels and I will take a personal interest in it."

2. I asked Sean Donlon whether anything particular lay behind this. He said not. The Taoiseach had had no advance warning, and his reply was designed to ensure that it gave no opening for the matter to be raised again in the Dail. Certainly the Taoiseach had no intention of raising the matter formally with us.

3. I then reminded Sean of the suggestion he had made over lunch last week that I might call on the Taoiseach again. I said I had not raised this during the Presidency, but would now welcome the opportunity. Sean said he would pursue the matter. If an appointment is arranged, I shall be grateful for suggested points to raise.

(SIGNED)

Veronica Sutherland
Ambassador

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