

03-FEB-1997 17:18 FROM BE DUBLIN

TO 900441718399044 P.02

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From: V E Sutherland  
 HM Ambassador  
 Date: 3 February 1997

Mr Stephens (L&amp;B) - B

cc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - B  
 PS/Michael Ancram (L&B) - B  
 PS/Sir John Wheeler (L&B) - B  
 PS/PUS (L&B) - B  
 PS/Sir David Fell - B  
 Mr Steele - B  
 Mr Thomas (L&B) - B  
 Mr Bell - B  
 Mr Watkins - B  
 Mr Hill - B  
 Mr Maccabe - B  
 Ms Bharucha, IPL - B  
 Mr Lamont, RID - B  
 John Holmes Esq, No. 10 - By fax  
 Colin Budd Esq, Cabinet Office - By fax

File  
 John  
 3/2.

**LUNCH WITH WALLY KIRWAN (TAOISEACH'S DEPARTMENT) 3 FEBRUARY:  
 NORTHERN IRELAND**

1. Richard Clarke and I lunched today with Wally Kirwan, mainly to talk about East-West exchanges (on which I shall be reporting separately once I have cleared my mind on the way forward).
2. We discussed the North briefly, agreeing that the slow progress in the talks was depressing, and that it would be important to find a "soft landing" fairly soon (cf John Holmes' letter of 1 February recording the Taoiseach's conversation with the Prime Minister).
3. One new piece of information emerged: Wally revealed that the Irish have just received a letter from Gerry Adams demanding immediate entry into talks. Wally said that previously, when Irish officials had been meeting Sinn Fein, they had ignored such missives. This time, however, Wally thought they would probably reply, just in case this approach represented a glimmer of hope over a new cease-fire. On this, however, Wally said the Irish remained pessimistic. They had no intelligence to suggest a cease-fire was a serious likelihood. Indeed all the information they had pointed in the other direction. Nevertheless, Wally's personal opinion was that the election period (up to and including the local elections in Northern Ireland) presented a further window of opportunity for a renewed cease-fire, which might be linked to a promise of entry into the talks "after 1 June". He did not say whether this possibility would feature in the reply to Adams.

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4. I am seeing Paddy Teahon tomorrow and will explore this further.

(Signed)  
V E Sutherland  
HM AMBASSADOR

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TOTAL P.03