

20/03/97

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B E DUBLIN

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From: V E Sutherland
HM Ambassador
Date: 20 March 1997

PS/Michael Ancram (L&B) - B

cc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B)
PS/Sir John Wheeler (L&B)
PS/PUS (L&B)
PS/Sir David Fell
Mr Thomas
Mr Bell
Mr Watkins
Mr Leach
Mr Wood (L&B)
Mr Beeton
Mr Brooker
Mr Hill
Mr Perry
Mr Steele
Mr Maccabe
Mr Stephens
Mr Lamont, RID
Mr Holmes, No 10 - By fax
Mr Budd, Cabinet Office - By fax

F.4
Jm 20/3.

BLOODY SUNDAY

1. Since my minute of yesterday issued, Richard Clarke and I have gleaned two further snippets of information, both in confidence.
2. Colm O Floinn, DFA, told Richard that Tom McGurk passed his dossier of information on Bloody Sunday, in confidence, to the DFA on 26 February. He subsequently decided to publish his information in the Sunday Business Post on 16 March. Staff in the DFA studying this material have found it consistent with material already in their possession. The Irish will probably approach us formally about this in a few weeks time, (cf the Tanaiste's statement reported yesterday). Before then they are likely to raise specific questions in Maryfield in order to clarify certain points of detail. The Army have in parallel been asked to approach my DA about the McGurk article (he will stick to our public line).
3. Meanwhile, Paddy Teahon told me this morning that he has now had sight of some of the material from the DFA. In his own view, some of the most incriminating material was wto be found in written comments by British civil servants. He did not enlarge on this, nor explain how such comments came to be on papers available to the Irish authorities.

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COMMENT

4. I do not know what to make of these comments. They do not throw any light on the critical question of whether the Irish have uncovered genuinely fresh evidence. However, Paddy's comment about minuting by British civil servants has unfortunate overtones for those familiar with the Scott Enquiry.

(Signed)

V E Sutherland