

17. Jun. 1997 14:35

S OF S PRIVATE OFFICE 1712106722

No. 6329 P. 2/4

CONFIDENTIAL and PERSONAL

c-18

FROM: QUENTIN THOMAS  
Political Director  
17 June 1997  
QT/MR/108

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE(L&amp;B)

cc

PS/Mr Murphy(L&amp;B)

PS/PUS(L&amp;B)

PS/Sir David Fell

Mr Steele

Mr Stephens

Mr Beeton

Mr Brooker

Mr Hill

Mr Maccabe

Mr Ray

Mr Budd CabOffice-~~XXXX~~Mr Holmes No.10-~~XXXX~~

File  
M 25/6.

PHONE CALL FROM MR McGUINNESS

At 12.30pm today Mr McGuinness phoned me unannounced. (He was given the number last week, after initial contact between Ms O'Hanlon and Mr Beeton to arrange a call.)

2. McGuinness spoke cautiously asking me how I was (as he has usually started such conversations).
3. I said that I was shocked by yesterday's murders.
4. McGuinness said that they clearly they have problems. But Sinn Féin would not be deflected from the search for peace. He hoped I would acknowledge that over the last 3 years great efforts had been made to carry things forward.
5. I emphasised that the Government had taken risks. It had authorised meetings despite the absence of a ceasefire. Fully knowing the risks, it had sent the Aide Memoire last week. It now doubted the good faith of Sinn Féin and wondered whether the whole exercise had been cynical.

- 1 -

CONFIDENTIAL and PERSONAL

QT/MR/108-17.6.97



17 Jun. 1997 14:35

S OF S PRIVATE OFFICE 1712106722

No. 6329 P. 3/4

**CONFIDENTIAL and PERSONAL**

6. McGuinness mentioned that of course Sinn Féin had no control over events on the ground. I rejected that. Either the movement had some coherence, as I believed, or it did not.
7. McGuinness said that the exchanges between us had been valuable; he recalled that in sending the Aide Memoire we had mentioned the possibility of going through the document in a meeting and said they would like to take that up.
8. I said that, as had been made clear in public, that was impossible.
9. Was all contact impossible? asked McGuinness. I said that I could see no possibility of contact unless Sinn Féin could make the moves necessary to re-establish good faith. The ball was in their court. They knew what they had to do.
10. McGuinness sought to assure me that Sinn Féin was committed to resolving the outstanding matters. As to good faith I must know, he said, that there were great difficulties on both sides. I had acknowledged this at our first meeting, he recalled.
11. I said that I was aware of the depth of misunderstanding. I also said that I was conscious that the underlying realities did not change. But he must understand that there was no way in which we could remain in contact in present circumstances. It was for Sinn Féin to restore good faith. They had our Aide Memoire. It was open to them to respond. They knew what they had to do.
12. Did that mean, asked McGuinness, that we could not speak again on the phone. I said I thought it impossible for us to remain in touch without some sign of good faith. But for the moment the reality was that he had my phone



17. Jun. 1997 14:36

S OF S PRIVATE OFFICE 1712106722

No. 6329 P. 4/4

**CONFIDENTIAL and PERSONAL**

number and if the phone rang I would answer it. However I would report this conversation and I might well be instructed to disconnect the line.

13. McGuinness said he heard what I said and would continue to try to find a way through.

14. I have told Mr Beeton that, if Siobhan O'Hanlon phones him, he should simply say that McGuinness and I have spoken and he has nothing to add.

**Comment**

During the conversation I was cool, rather than hostile. McGuinness was urging his case, if not quite pleading. I imagine he was seeking to keep some channel open; to convey that they "had some problems"; and that they would not - in words echoing the Prime Minister's - be deflected from the search for peace.

*(Signed: Quentin Thomas)*

QUENTIN THOMAS  
11 Millbank  
Ext.6447