

28. JUL. 1997 11:50

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CONFIDENTIAL

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Press**R.4
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FROM: QUENTIN THOMAS
Political Director
28 July 1997
QT/MR/169

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE(L&B)

cc

PS/Mr Murphy(L&B)
PS/Mr Ingram(L&B)
PS/PUS(L&B)
PS/Sir David Fell

Mr Steele

Mr Stephens

Mr Bell

Mr Leach

Mr Watkins

Mr Hill

Mr Brooker

Mr Perry

Mr Priestly

Mr Maccabe

Mr Beeton

Mr Lavery

Mr Whysall

Mr N Warner

~~Mr C Budd Cab Office-Fax~~~~Mr Lannon RND/PCO-Fax~~~~Mr A. Dublin-Fax~~~~Mr J. Holmes No. 10-Fax~~

Mr Thomas(B)

LIAISON GROUP: A WORD WITH MR O hUIGINN IN THE MARGINS

In the margins of the Liaison Group Mr O hUiginn returned to two issues I had raised in the meeting proper.

2. First he said that the Taoiseach had challenged Adams about the reported preparations for a robbery in Ballsbridge, as reported in some of the Irish papers that morning. Mr Ahern had asked Adams to consult whoever he needed to before reassuring him about it. The Taoiseach had emphasised that any such adventure would be regarded as a breach of the ceasefire.

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3. Mr O hUiginn said that he understood a prosecution might not prove possible. It was clear that some of preparatory work had been underway but it was not clear that it was being planned on behalf of the IRA, or as some freelance criminal activity.

Secret deals between the Irish Government and Sinn Féin

4. Mr O hUiginn also returned to the question of what if any assurances the Irish Government might have given to Sinn Féin. Mr O hUiginn confirmed that certain things had indeed been said. He had given them a "negative vetting" and thought they were consistent with established positions. Some of them were reflected in the Taoiseach's speech on 24 July.

5. Mr O hUiginn implied that there was a bit of paper and said he would recommend that we should be briefed on whatever had been said particularly as "the Prime Minister has been so open with us about transactions with Sinn Féin".

6. I said I thought that this could be an important confidence-building measure between the two Governments, hinting that we had good reason for suspecting that there was indeed some understanding between the Irish Government and Sinn Féin.

(Dictated by Mr Thomas & Signed in his absence: Marie Rebello)

QUENTIN THOMAS
11 Millbank ☎ 6447

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