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FAX TRANSMISSION

24

IRISH EMBASSY
17 GROSVENOR PLACE
LONDON

SWIX 7HR
(0171) 201 2512
FAX: (0171) 823 1072

To: Anglo-Irish Division
Press
Secretariat

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From: Helen Blake

Subject: Prime Minister's Questions, 26 November 1996

COMMENTS:

Rev. Martin Smyth Has the Prime Minister noticed a change in emphasis between the 'hard-man, soft-man' of IRA/Sinn Féin? Martin McGuinness is now promising to move heaven and earth, I know he has tried to move earth in the past I don't believe he has any influence in heaven, but on the other hand Mitchell McLaughlin is now threatening if the Prime Minister does not come up to his terms that there will be lethal consequences. Will the Prime Minister speak on behalf of the nation that we are not prepared to bow to the threats of terrorists?

Prime Minister As the Honourable Gentleman knows, and as the House wholly accepts, IRA terrorism is utterly unacceptable for any purpose, at any time in any place. It is also completely counter-productive if there was any suggestion that terrorism will bring Sinn Féin to the negotiating table. It emphatically will not bring them to the negotiating table. If I may quote what the Taoiseach said recently, with which I entirely agree, if republicans are committed to peace as they say they are, let them call a ceasefire now, and make it a credible ceasefire.

PST, PSS, S/S Ó hUiginn,
Counsellors A-1, Section,
Messrs Teahon, Donlon &
Dalton, Ambassadors
London & Washington, Joint
Secretary