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CONFIDENTIAL



British Embassy
Dublin

5 December 1996

John Holmes Esq - By fax
No 10 Downing Street
LONDON
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Dear John,

ANGLO/IRISH SUMMIT: 9 DECEMBER

1. Thank you for ringing me this morning to tell me about your conversation with Paddy Teahon. You told me that you had explained to him the problems about issuing a joint communique on Northern Ireland after the Summit on Monday. This would inevitably cause some British commentators to criticise it for perceived inconsistencies with the Prime Minister's statement in the House on Thursday 28 November.
2. I had to ring Paddy on another subject this morning and we got on to the Summit. I thought it wise to check his position.
3. What follows is I think correct because I made him repeat it all at least three times. Paddy's understanding is as follows:
 - i) After the Summit meeting on Monday there will be a short ~~annotated~~ joint communique saying little more than that the meeting happened and useful discussions took place.
 - ii) There would then be a press conference on which both Leaders would speak from separate pieces of paper. These are likely to contain some common positions but also some different nuances given the different approaches of the two governments. These pieces of paper will be agreed in advance by officials. Paddy was not specific as to whether you and he would agree these documents or whether it would be done between the NIO and DFA. He was going to discuss that with Sean O hUiginn.
 - iii) Lastly and most importantly there would be a private agreement between the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister that if a credible IRA ceasefire was put in place then Sinn Fein would be invited to take part in the talks within a specific timeframe.
3. The important thing was that there should be no surprises on either side.

Yours ever,
Vernon.

V E Sutherland
HM AMBASSADOR

cc: Colin Budd Esq, Cabinet Office - By fax
PS/PUS - B
Mr Lyndsey - B

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