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Reference Code: 2021/97/2

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Mr. F. Murray (24)
8/11/95

The Larkin
no m... Paddy

A fuller account of SF/Ancram meeting
Dissemination
(on return)
Do see please

COPY TO:	
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MR. F. MURRAY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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SECURE FAX 1134

4 November 1995

— if not given to you already
No of pages including this one: 5
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To:	HQ	From:	Belfast
For:	Second Secretary	From:	Brendan Callaghan

JM

7/11/95

to be kept
to be kept
JM 8/11

Sinn Fein-Ancram Meeting 3 November 1995

1. Terry Smyth of the British side has provided a further briefing on yesterday's meeting, based on Stephen Leach's note of the meeting.
2. The meeting lasted for 3 3/4 hours and started at 10.10 am. On the British side were Ancram, Thomas and Leach; on the Sinn Fein side, McGuinness, Kelly and O'Hanlon.
3. The meeting opened with a restatement by McGuinness of the SF position (the British Government was stalling, there was a sense of despair among nationalists, a firm date must be set for all-party talks). Ancram pressed them on the pointlessness of fixing a firm date. McGuinness agreed that unionist attendance at talks was essential; if a firm date was set, they would come on board. In a prepared statement, McGuinness said that SF would consider a twin track approach, provided it was realistic, led to unconditional round table talks and did not permit a unionist veto. SF would also co-operate with an international body, provided that an acceptable formula was found to define its remit. SF had already commissioned a submission to the body, which would be a response to the modalities paper given to them by the British some time ago and would cover topics. SF would consider the body's recommendations on its merits. They should recognise the urgency of the situation and agree the logistics for all-party talks.
4. Ancram said that setting an unconditional date for all-party talks would be meaningless. He could not see eminent figures from outside participating on that basis. It was not the British Government's intention that a date would be rolled back indefinitely; on the contrary, both Governments would be intent on reaching a target date, if there was co-operation from all relevant parties. McGuinness said that a target date would be subject to a unionist veto. They would only deal with SF in an elected assembly. Was there really any chance that nationalists and

unionists could reach agreement in preparatory talks? Ancram said that if all stuck to their bottom line there was no chance, but that a preparatory phase would enable movement to take place. Both Governments would encourage others to reach the target date.

5. At this point, SF requested a recess.
6. On the arms issue, Ancram said that he understood that SF's problem was with the description of arms in the body's proposed remit, that they wanted to avoid any term of moral censure. He also understood that SF accepted no moral equivalence between paramilitary and security forces arms as far as the body was concerned. McGuinness replied "evasively" that all weapons involved in the conflict were relevant. The discussion of this point was inconclusive.
7. Ancram canvassed language along the lines of "those arms and other materiel silenced by the events of 31 August and 13 October 1994" instead of "illegal". (Nothing was given in writing to SF.) Ancram said that he had not been authorised to put forward any alternative language, but he would see if colleagues would agree with any language which came from the meeting. If any formula such as the above were to be employed, the British Government would have to say that it did not include the Army. SF's initial reaction to this was hostile: such a formula would make clear that security forces arms were excluded and SF's thoughts on other causes of the conflict would be wasted paper. Ancram said that the body would be independent and that the British Government would not be dictating to it. In further discussion, McGuinness seemed to be under a misapprehension that the above formula would be followed by a statement to the effect that the security forces would be excluded. Ancram said that this would not be the case.
8. At this McGuinness became more interested. SF then requested a second recess, which lasted 40 minutes. At the resumption of the meeting, there was a change of tone. Mc Guinness said that the formula was too focused. It would leave no one in any doubt as to what arms were being referred to. Ancram said that he did not want to deny that the focus was paramilitary arms, but the formula described the arms in neutral rather than pejorative tones. McGuinness said that there had been many players over the past 25 years and that they all would have to be addressed. The SF submission to the body would cover all of these. The causes of the conflict included the security forces. He could not accept a remit which excluded recommendations on security forces weapons.
9. Ancram said that this was a demand for equivalence. No constitutional Government could accept that even an independent body could be established which would look at its own forces. It was wrong to say that the body would have to ignore any subject that went beyond its remit - its members would be independent. Kelly said that it would be the body's decision what it would examine, but it would have to have the option of steps on RUC/Army weapons. Ancram repeated that this would be unacceptable to the British Government, or to any constitutional Government.

He said that a serious difficulty had been uncovered - deeper than he had thought.

10. Other aspects of the building blocks paper were discussed. On paragraph 13, McGuinness queried whether it meant that Washington 3 still remained part of the British Government position. Ancram confirmed that it did. There was a "desultory" discussion on a suggestion by McGuinness that in paragraph 3 "seek agreement" should be used instead of "reach agreement" and that in paragraph 4 the reference to an elected body should be deleted since it endorsed the unionist position. Thomas stressed that it did not endorse the unionist position (it included the word "whether").
11. At this point McGuinness "surprisingly" proposed the attached draft communique. (The text was not handed over by SF, but was taken down by the British side. A copy may have been given by Rod Lyne to Paddy Teahon.) A further recess took place, this time at the request of the British side to consider the text. They say that the text is close to Tony Lake's, with two significant changes: the date set would be unconditional and the reference to paramilitary arms had been dropped.
12. On resumption, Ancram enquired as to the status of the draft. McGuinness "confusingly" said that it should be seen as the Hume-Adams document in joint communique form. As far as he knew, neither Hume nor the Irish side had seen it. Ancram said that it was a major document which he would consider carefully, especially the major difficulty that SF wanted the body to consider security forces arms. He said that he wanted to be clear that the phrase "a satisfactory process for the full and verifiable decommission of arms" in paragraph 4 of the document referred to security forces arms as well as paramilitary arms. McGuinness "wiggled" and said that all arms were relevant - their submission would cover all arms. It was up to the body what to do with it.
13. McGuinness said, in what appeared to the British side to be a rehearsed statement, that SF was disappointed at what the British Government had said. They had come hoping that a date could be set for talks and an inclusive approach to arms agreed. However, they had not been given a date and the Government did not see security forces arms as being included. SF had tried their best, but the Government had not moved an inch. Thomas denied this. The Minister had canvassed new language to meet the problem of language which had arisen at their last meeting. Ancram said that there was much to reflect on, not least the substantial text which they had been given. He would consider this with colleagues and would propose another meeting. McGuinness said he would like the Minister's comments on the draft. (He did not explicitly refuse to have another meeting.)
14. There was a brief discussion on how to handle the media afterwards. The British side assumed that this would be done on the normal lines, ie. an anodyne approach and no mention of the points made by either side. McGuinness did not respond and, according to Leach, avoided eye contact with the British side when leaving. Because, according to the British side, McGuinness told the press that the British

Government had rejected SF suggestions out of hand, had demanded the surrender of all IRA arms and proposed giving the unionists a veto, Ancram decided to release the building blocks paper, which showed that there was no talk of surrender and had offered a target date. A fixed date would negate the process. He had specifically agreed to consider the SF paper and had offered another meeting.

SINN FBIN DRAFT: 3 NOVEMBER 1995

The two Governments have agreed to launch the preparatory phase of all party talks in the peace process to begin not later than November 30 substantive political negotiations in round-table format to reach an agreed political settlement.

2. The two Governments will work jointly to lay the groundwork for the substantive round-table talks by seeking agreement among the concerned parties on the basis participation and agenda for the negotiations. The Governments will be ready to meet with the parties jointly and to convene a meeting with two or more parties at their request.

3. In parallel, the two Governments have agreed to establish an International Body under the eminent chairmanship of Senator George Mitchell to ascertain and advise the two Governments on the commitment of the respective political parties to exclusively peaceful and democratic means of influencing the body politic and on their commitment to the removal of all weapons from Irish politics. The International Body will also examine whether and in what context and manner the question of arms, now thankfully silenced, could be finally and satisfactorily settled. Senator Mitchell will be assisted by two other figures of international standing likely to inspire widespread confidence.

4. The Body will have the remit of reporting by the end of November whether it has established that a clear commitment exists to a satisfactory process for the full and verifiable decommissioning of arms. To reach its conclusions, the Panel can review other political issues that may be relevant to the issue of arms.

5. The International Body will report to the two Governments who will undertake to consider carefully any recommendations it makes and to give them due weight.

SINN FEIN DRAFT: 9 NOVEMBER 1995

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