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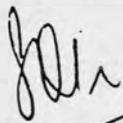
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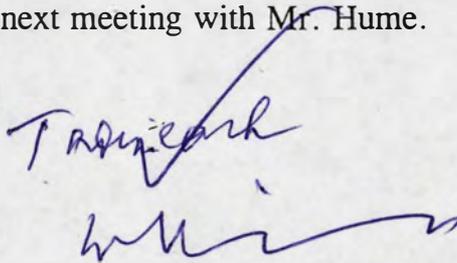
Telephone call from Quentin Thomas

1. I had a phone call from Mr. Quentin Thomas of the NIO this afternoon, to up-date me on the contact between John Hume and Michael Ancram in London earlier today.
2. Mr. Thomas said the meeting had been a relatively brief one. Against the background of yesterday's murder the British side felt it would be inappropriate to supply draft answers to the questions Hume had conveyed to them. They had therefore confined themselves to supplying to Mr. Hume a series of questions of their own which they asked him to put to Sinn Féin.
3. Hume had said that he thought the questions were pertinent, and touched on areas that he himself had already discussed with Sinn Féin. He said he would be in touch with Gerry Adams this afternoon, and proposed to revert to the British next week. The British side, in turn, assured him they would continue work on replies to the questions that he had raised, and if they were satisfied that Sinn Féin were engaged in a serious exercise, they would take work on their responses forward at their next meeting with Mr. Hume.



Sean Ó hUiginn

13 February 1997



17/2/97

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS FROM HMG

1. What assurance will there be that, if the IRA declare an unequivocal restoration of the ceasefire, it will indeed be genuinely unequivocal, that is to say lasting and not simply a tactical device; and how would that assurance be reflected in words and deeds?
2. When Sinn Féin join the negotiations they will need to make a total and absolute commitment to the Mitchell principles. In view of the close association between Sinn Féin and the IRA, what assurances will there be that the IRA will not resort to violence to influence the course of negotiations or alter any aspect of the agreed outcome with which they disagree?
3. Is it the case that if Sinn Féin were to join the inclusive talks process, they would be ready to abide by all the agreed provisions and rules of procedure?
4. Do Sinn Féin understand that if they were to join the inclusive talks they would first of all have to commit themselves to the principles in paragraph 20 of the Mitchell report and that if, during the negotiations, they demonstrably dishonoured their commitment to those principles, they would no longer be entitled to participate in the negotiations?
5. Martin McGuinness said, in a statement of 14 November 1996, that the issue of arms should be dealt with to the satisfaction of all the participants in the process of negotiations. It seems to us that, for that to happen, the only likely area of agreement is around the compromise approach set out in paragraphs 34 and 35 of the Mitchell report and which the report asks all parties to consider. Is Sinn Féin prepared to endorse that compromise approach to decommissioning, under which some decommissioning would take place during the process of all party negotiations?
6. What contribution would Sinn Féin and the IRA expect to make to confidence building in the event of a restoration of the IRA ceasefire, bearing in mind the observations in Chapter VII of the Mitchell Report?