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Mr. M^c Loughlin Copy

*Passed on to the
Tadiseach
17.8.98*

Secure Fax

To: Mr. Paddy Teahon
From: Secretary Dermot Gallagher
Date: 17 August 1998
Pages: 1 + 4

17 AUG 1998

(Handwritten initials) 25A
(Handwritten signature)

To see the attached letter and enclosure please.



AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2
DUBLIN 2

17 August 1998

Dr. Martin Mansergh,
Department of the Taoiseach
Merrion Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Martin.

I know that you are working on a text for Sinn Féin. Perhaps you would fax the text soonest, please.

I enclose a draft prepared here.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dermot Gallagher'.

Dermot Gallagher
Secretary
Anglo-Irish Division

cc: Mr. Teahon
Mr. Dalton

Draft Sinn Féin

- The whole thrust of Sinn Féin's analysis and peace strategy is that the conflict in all its forms must be brought to an end. This can only be done by tackling the causes of that conflict. We believe that the process which we now have, to which Sinn Féin has made a major contribution, has the potential to lead us to an overall settlement which will address and resolve the causes of conflict and bring about lasting peace and justice. That is why Sinn Féin endorsed the Good Friday Agreement so overwhelmingly. We are committed to working with the Governments and the other parties to ensure that the potential of that Agreement is developed, evolved and realised to the full.

- In terms of how that process is taken forward and developed in the months and years ahead, let me be very clear. It is the unambiguous and absolute insistence of Sinn Féin, and the overwhelming majority of the Republican community, that the means by which we achieve these objectives are exclusively peaceful and democratic. On behalf of Sinn Féin, I reiterate that commitment today in the strongest possible terms.

- There is no place in that process for acts of violence such as that perpetrated at Omagh. There must be no more Omaghs. It is as simple as that. Never again must there be visited on any family on this island the kind of grief and suffering being experienced by those caught up in the explosion on the 15th of August.

- We all have responsibilities in ensuring that there are no more Omaghs. It is for all involved to look to those responsibilities and to discharge them. In particular, a major onus lies with the British Government, given all the history of the conflict. We welcome the more positive and engaged approach of the present Government and urge Mr Blair and Mo Mowlam to stick tightly to the

course they have set themselves with the Irish Government in this regard. The unionist leadership too must face its responsibilities. The history of conflict everywhere teaches that it can only be resolved by the full engagement in a direct dialogue and negotiation of the main protagonists. We must all, directly and face to face, begin the task of building a better future for all our people.

- For our part, Sinn Féin and the vast majority of the Republican family for which it speaks - and many of whose members have themselves suffered greatly also over the years - will not be found wanting in meeting our responsibilities. There is deep anger and dismay in the wider Republican community at what happened in Omagh and that community, and its constituent elements, joins with me in the utter condemnation of the act. I call again on all concerned to desist from such actions and to say so publicly and now. Omagh must be a line drawn under history. A threshold of wrong has been crossed which must never be crossed again. If we can ensure that that threshold is indeed never crossed again, perhaps Omagh can be remembered not just for the scale of the personal tragedy for all its victims, but as a decisive turning point in Irish history.
- That is the challenge for all of us to take up. I pledge here in Sinn Féin and the broad Republican community will play its part to the full in meeting that challenge and I call on all others involved to do the same.

[If pressed on whether the IRA support this statement:

The IRA speaks for itself. It has made, and continues to make, through its cessation of all military operations, a vital contribution to the development of a peace settlement. It has strongly supported the analysis of Sinn Féin throughout, and I am confident that it fully supports my statement on the way ahead - a statement, which I should

underline, is fully in line with Sinn Féin's consistent peace strategy and approach.

What I have done today is simply to provide Sinn Féin's assessment of the awful human tragedy of Omagh in the context of that overall analysis.]