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SECURE-FX TRANSMISSION

SECURE FAX No 14

URGENT

21 February, 1995.

To: Dept. of the Taoiseach
For: Mr. George Shaw

From: Dept. Foreign Affairs
From: Sean O hUiginn.

As requested, copy of report on conversation with John Hume follows. This is particularly sensitive and should be given only to the Taoiseach.

2 pages to follow.

SECRET
NOTE RE
SDLF/DAD/
UUP
Discussions

Copy on to PST
PSS 14/2

Immediate have fax Mr Donlon
Sela
21/2

SECRET

Meeting between Messrs. Hume, Molyneaux and Paisley

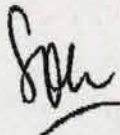
20 February, 1995

1. I had a telephone call from Mr. John Hume late last night. He was highly elated at the outcome of his meeting with the two unionist leaders. He said they had agreed, subject to referral to their respective parties, to institute a series of consultations, based on the European and local government electoral mandates, to discuss all of the relationships involved in the Northern Ireland problem. They would meet again next Monday to consider the party reactions, and, hopefully, to proceed with their plan.
2. Mr. Hume stressed the importance of keeping the matter secret for the time being. He was informing only Mr. Mallon and the Taoiseach and Tanaiste. I agreed to alert them to the need for the strictest confidence when passing the matter on.
2. I congratulated Mr. Hume on what would obviously be a major breakthrough, if the unionist parties agreed to sit down in a five party grouping including Sinn Fein. It would solve many procedural problems and give a major boost to the prospects for comprehensive negotiations. I asked him if Sinn Fein had been consulted or informed about the matter. He said not yet, that he had simply indicated to them that he would have "major good news" to bring to them.
3. His assumption is (almost certainly correctly), that the attraction of dialogue with unionists would outweigh for them any reservations they might have on the internal format of the proposal. On this last point Mr. Hume stressed that the agenda would cover all of the relationships, and therefore problems should not arise for Sinn Fein in that

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- area. He said it would be a Northern Ireland forum under another name (I think it is to be a consultative convention).
4. Mr. Hume said that the atmosphere between the three leaders had been "incredibly positive". At the end, Molyneaux shook his hand warmly and congratulated him for "having got a lot of people off hooks".
 5. Assuming there are no unwitting misunderstandings on the question of Sinn Fein participation, Mr. Hume will have brokered, in a creative way, the unionist concern to appear to be engaged in dialogue on a Northern Ireland basis with the likely interest of Sinn Fein of getting into direct talks with the unionists, even if on a predominantly Strand One basis.
 6. Mr. Hume asked what we knew of the Strand One British proposals and whether they were "on our lines". To my relief, I established that "our lines" now mean the Panel and Assembly model, rather than the external commissioners. I said we did not have the document, but that a detailed briefing given to the Taoiseach and Tanaiste by Mr. Mayhew on Saturday seemed very reassuring from that point of view.
 7. I asked about loyalist paramilitaries. Mr. Hume said the unionist parties were opposed to involving them in this exercise, but "he was working on it".



Sean O hUiginn
21 February, 1995