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*Taoiseach
It appears all this is
eventuated by today's
event*

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16*

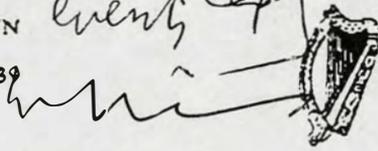
PST: PSS: Messrs. Teahon,
& Dalton:
Ambassadors London &
~~Washington~~: Joint Secretary:
Counsellors A-I

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16-6-97

EMBASSY OF IRELAND
2234 MASSACHUSETTS AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008

13 June 1997

DISCUSSIONS WITH WHITE HOUSE

Dear Secretary

In my absence in New York earlier yesterday, Adrian O'Neill spoke at length to the Director for Europe at the White House, Mary Ann Peters, about the terms of the draft British Aide Memoire to be given to Sinn Féin. Ms Peters said that the points conveyed, which were based on the Taoiseach's letter and your call, would be looked at very seriously by the White House.

Subsequently, Jim Steinberg told me that the White House had agreed with and conveyed our thinking to the British. He shared our view, in particular, that the initial language on decommissioning in the text could well be a deal-breaker unless modified. Overall, he found that the British recognised the validity of the views conveyed. He expected, therefore, that they would come back to us quickly with a more acceptable text, including on the critical decommissioning issue.

As regards the possible timing of Sinn Féin's entry into talks, Steinberg strongly shares our view that this is primarily a presentational issue. Most of the elements required to bring Sinn Féin on board are already in the Aide Memoire. The problem is that their presentation leaves something to be desired. It might just be acceptable if the document were to remain secret. However, if it were ever to emerge into the public domain, the formal reference to a six weeks delay could pose serious problems for Sinn Féin. All this was unnecessary given the reality that the talks would be in adjournment for almost all the six weeks period and that

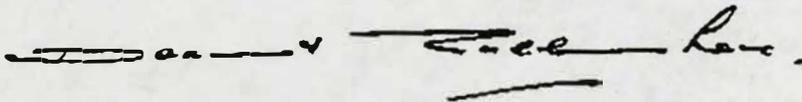
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Sinn Féin would, in effect, have equality of treatment with the other parties during this time. The British need, therefore, to get the presentation and tactics of their paper right.

Steinberg also said that he has been keeping in touch with Adams and other party leaders in the North. He is finding the Sinn Féin leader to be quite cautious at present; while "the tone is not bad", Adams seems to be waiting to see what is in the joint governmental paper on decommissioning before committing himself. In this regard, and clearly reflecting some lobbying by the British, Steinberg asked that we speed up the work on our side on the decommissioning paper. He emphasised that he would like to see a joint paper agreed at the earliest possible date.

In your absence in Belfast, I have been staying closely in touch with David Cooney on the above, who has been keeping me fully up to date.

Yours sincerely



Dermot Gallagher
Ambassador

Seán Ó hUiginn Uas
Secretary
Anglo-Irish Division
Department of Foreign Affairs