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CENT SEC

FROM: C G MACCABE
POLITICAL AFFAIRS DIVISION
24 January 1995

REF NO: XD/R3

cc PS/Michael Ancram (DENI, B&L) - B
PS/Sir John Wheeler (B&L) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Mr Fell *Q* - B
Mr Legge - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Brooke - B
Mr Daniell - B
Mr Leach - B
Mr Shannon - B
Mr Steele - B
Mr Watkins *in the M. Ag. sec* - B
Mr Williams - B
Mr Wood (B&L) - B
Mr Brooker - B
Mrs Brown - B
Mr Dodds - B
Mr Stephens - B
Director, TFU - B
Mr Beeton - B
Mr P Lever, Cabinet Office
HMA, Dublin - B
Mr Lamont, RID - B

PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B

EXPLORATORY DIALOGUE: RECORD OF THIRD MEETING, 16 JANUARY 1995

The third meeting of exploratory dialogue with Sinn Fein began at 11.40 am on Monday 16 January 1995 in Parliament Buildings, Belfast. It started 10 minutes later than scheduled at the Sinn Fein team's request, to let them have an extended pre-meeting discussion in their delegation room. The Government team was led by Quentin Thomas and included Stephen Leach, David Watkins, Chris Maccabe, Jonathan Stephens and Tony Beeton. Martin McGuinness led the Sinn Fein team and was accompanied by Bairbre de Brun, Gerry Kelly (secretary), Sean McManus and Siobhan O'Hanlon (notetaker).

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2. Mr McGuinness spoke first. He explained that Ms de Brun was substituting for Lucilita Bhreatnach because Ms Bhreatnach, as the party's General Secretary, was heavily involved in preparing for the forthcoming Sinn Fein Ard Comhairle. Mr Thomas responded by welcoming Ms de Brun and the rest of the delegation and apologising for the change of meeting room, and our inability to provide a hot lunch, which were the result of the Parliament Buildings fire on 2 January. He suggested moving straight to the agenda that had been agreed with Sinn Fein and Mr McGuinness assented.

Record of meeting

3. Mr Thomas said the Government team had carefully considered Sinn Fein's suggestion that there should be a verbatim record of the XD proceedings. Their conclusion was that it would be a mistake. It was not done for any other meetings between Government representatives and political parties and would be an impediment to the development of the full and frank exchange of views that was needed. If either side were in any doubt about what the other had said, they could seek clarification in writing; and if the point was reached where it was essential to be absolutely certain of the two sides' detailed positions, papers could be exchanged. In sum, what we were seeking was a series of meetings that were orderly, but not unduly formal. Rather surprisingly, Mr McGuinness put forward no counter-arguments, saying simply "That's fine".

Written response to Sinn Fein's papers of 9 and 19 December 1994

4. Mr Thomas read out the statement attached at Annex A (less paragraph 14, 'Summary of questions'). He said the Government team were ready to answer questions on it, but the Sinn Fein team might prefer to take it away for consideration. He added that the workplan attached (which he did not read out) might also come up under agenda item 7 - 'Future workplan'. Mr McGuinness did not

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reply but Ms O'Hanlon distributed a further Sinn Fein paper - 'Towards a Negotiated Settlement 3' - to the Government team. A copy is attached at Annex B. Mr McGuinness then read it out, omitting the passage in parenthesis in the third and fourth lines on page 2.

5. Mr Thomas thanked Mr McGuinness for this contribution. He said the answer to question 5 - "What time-scale do you envisage for these talks?" - could be found in paragraph 10d of HMG's paper which said the Government did not wish to set any deadline on the process. As for when all-party talks might start, this was answered in paragraph 10a.

6. Mr Thomas then said he wished to make some comments on the Sinn Fein paper. He began by expressing particular interest in the passage in the second paragraph on page 4 which states: "We wish to use our influence on all matters, in a positive way and with the aim of advancing the peace process. How we use our influence and how much influence we have is a matter of judgement for us." He said he accepted that the Government team might be more optimistic about Sinn Fein's position and influence than Sinn Fein themselves were; but at least the paper acknowledged that a range of issues was involved and this was helpful. Our assessment that Sinn Fein's influence may be greater than they would want to claim had been conditioned by several recent statements. For example, commenting on the exchange of documents between HMG and Sinn Fein, Gerry Adams had said on 29 November 1993: ". . . Sinn Fein sought and was given a commitment from the leadership of the Irish Republican Army, that it would suspend operations for two weeks to enable us to explore the potential of the British Government's assertion . . ." And again, following the IRA cessation of military operations on 31 August 1994, Adams said Sinn Fein had ". . . made two assessments, on request, to the IRA . . . and it was then up to those people [the IRA] to hold their own consultations and come to their own decisions."

7. Continuing, Mr Thomas said HMG were not seeking to make decommissioning of weapons a pre-condition for Sinn Fein's entry into inclusive dialogue, as questions 6 and 7 of Sinn Fein's paper

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implied. Nor were we saying that unless the matter was resolved to our satisfaction the peace process would be at an end. However, the actuality was, in principle and practice, that there had to be progress on the arms issue if the process was to move forward.

8. As regards question 8, which asked if it was HMG's position that other parties could exercise a veto over Sinn Fein's involvement in all-party talks, **Mr Thomas** stated, as he had done at the previous meeting, that HMG might well think the time had come for Sinn Fein to enter all-party talks before the Unionist parties reached this conclusion. In these circumstances, Unionists could not "veto" Sinn Fein's participation in such talks, although the reality would be that in the event of a Unionist boycott they would be rather less than all-inclusive. **Mr Leach** added that the view that it was necessary to make substantial progress on the arms issue was shared by the Irish Government. This had been confirmed by **Mr Bruton** on 20 December at Downing Street.

9. Moving the discussion on, **Mr McGuinness** said that in view of HMG's announcement the previous day that in future Ministers would be prepared to receive Council delegations including Sinn Fein representatives, he regretted that there was still no Ministerial presence at XD. He continued that he also wanted to place on record Sinn Fein's regret that HMG had briefed the US Government on the details of the second meeting of XD. He said the Sinn Fein team would study HMG's paper carefully, but already he was very disappointed with the first sentence on page 2. (It reads: "The Government believes that as a matter both of principle and of political reality substantial progress on the issue of decommissioning would be necessary before Sinn Fein could and would be included in such a dialogue.") Surely, he asked, this imposed a pre-condition on Sinn Fein's involvement in all-party talks? He described it as "an amazing statement" when one considered that for five years up to November 1993 there had been contact between HMG and Sinn Fein, and during all this time there had been no mention of arms decommissioning. The question of

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whether HMG had invented a "newborn" condition had therefore to be examined. Furthermore, there had been no mention of decommissioning in 1972 when William Whitelaw had met the IRA; or in 1975 when there was extensive contact between HMG and the IRA. Consequently, it was nonsense for HMG to say they were taking a principled stand on the issue now.

10. In a reprise of his remarks at XD2, **Mr McGuinness** reminded us that he and his colleagues were present at XD as representatives of Sinn Fein, a democratic party "with a mandate from tens of thousands of people on the island of Ireland." HMG's problem was that they could not accept Sinn Fein had any right to parity of esteem. The IRA's decision to cease military operations almost five months ago had transformed the situation, yet HMG were intent on stalling the peace process. Soldiers were still patrolling the roads of South Armagh, Tyrone and elsewhere. HMG made much of the removal of the broadcasting ban and the lifting of some Exclusion Orders, but what HMG had to understand was that the process they and Sinn Fein were engaged in required all these things; but much, much more as well, namely a political initiative by both Governments to bring Sinn Fein into all-inclusive talks.

11. **Mr Thomas** took the floor. Regarding the allegation about HMG briefing the US Government, he reminded Mr McGuinness that at the first XD meeting HMG's position had been that there was advantage in treating XD as confidential. On the other hand, Sinn Fein argued that it should be transparent. The compromise had been that if both sides identified an issue that should be treated in confidence, both would comply with this restriction. No such issue had been identified at the last meeting and the Sinn Fein team could not have it both ways.

12. As for Mr McGuinness' professed amazement that HMG had a "principled" position on arms decommissioning, **Mr Thomas** said that as Mr Leach had brought out (in paragraph 8 above), the Taoiseach

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shared this view. By way of confirmation, he gave the following quotation from what Mr Bruton had said on 20 December at Downing Street:

"My view is that the decommissioning of arms is a very important issue; it is important that substantial progress be made on that issue in the present phase of preliminary discussions but it is one of a number of issues which have to be addressed; it is important to build confidence in the peace process as well."

He said HMG agreed with everything he had quoted.

13. Continuing, Mr Thomas adverted to Mr McGuinness' suggestion that HMG were seeking to deny Sinn Fein's electoral mandate. He said this could not be further from the truth: it was precisely because HMG recognised that Sinn Fein had an electoral mandate that they wanted them involved in all-party talks as a "main" party.

14. Mr Thomas' next point concerned the question of Ministerial involvement in XD. It had been mentioned before but he thought it was worth saying more. He proceeded to read out the paper attached at Annex C, and then Mr Beeton handed copies to the Sinn Fein team. He added, in relation to the recent announcement that in future Sinn Fein representatives could be included in cross-party Council delegations meeting Ministers, that he had told the Sinn Fein team about his intention to recommend this policy relaxation to Ministers at the previous meeting. In relation to Ministerial involvement in XD, however, what it came down to was that if there was engagement on the central issues in a workmanlike way, Ministers would be eager to join the fray. Mr McGuinness asked if this meant Ministers would be involved sooner rather than later, ideally "within the next couple of weeks". Mr Thomas said it did not mean this; everything depended on satisfactory progress being made. But he thought if such progress was made at, say, weekly meetings, Ministerial

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involvement would come no later than Easter, and possibly well before that.

15. Mr McGuinness did not respond directly to this remark but asked for a short break so that his team could consider "several issues". The break began at 12.28 pm and lasted until 12.52 pm.

16. When the meeting re-commenced, Mr McGuinness said he wanted to comment on the Taoiseach's Downing Street remarks. He said the essential point was that the Irish Government were taking a pragmatic view of the arms issue, and that Bertie Ahern, John Hume, Seamus Mallon and even elements in the RUC (according to an article in the previous day's 'Observer') thought we should be moving as quickly as possible to all-party talks. As he had said at an earlier meeting, the Irish pragmatism was even shared by some members of the British Establishment.

17. On a point of detail, Mr McGuinness said that at the end of paragraph 6 of HMG's paper, and again in paragraph 8, there were references to "democracy" in Northern Ireland. He wanted to put on record that Sinn Fein did not accept the "Six County State" was a legitimate political entity. And the reference to HMG's Strand 1 proposals at paragraph 10a reminded him that the announcement that there were to be Strand 1 proposals had taken many people by surprise. Without prejudice to Sinn Fein's rejection of the Joint Declaration, the idea of Strand 1 proposals was a departure from it and, moreover, a departure from the basis of the Brooke talks. Mr Thomas said it might be helpful if he reiterated the basis of the 26 March 1991 statement (to which all the parties involved in the Brooke talks had subscribed). Strand 1 concerned the internal arrangements for the governance of Northern Ireland, Strand 2 the relationships between North and South, and Strand 3 between HMG and the Irish Government. The work the two Governments had been doing on the Joint Framework Document concerned Strands 2 and 3 and was being carried out against the background of the 1992 talks having

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ended inconclusively, and having been subject to the "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed" formula. HMG had taken the wise view that it would help to carry things forward if they published Strand 1 proposals at the same time as both Governments published the JFD. The Irish Government were not involved in Strand 1, therefore the Strand 1 proposals would be HMG's alone. Neither of the documents would be a blueprint, or an attempt to impose a solution, but both would provide a framework within which agreement might be found in the three-stranded process.

18. Mr McGuinness said it was surprising there had been no mention of Strand 1 proposals at the start of the Brooke talks. But, wishing to draw this part of the discussion to a close, he would take away HMG's paper and, for the present, had nothing more to say on the subject.

Economic meeting

19. Ms de Brun opened this topic by addressing us briefly in Irish. Her first remark in English was that as she knew the HMG team did not speak a lot of Irish she would address us in English. She said that in relation to the conference for Mayors and Chief Executives in London on 23 January, Sinn Fein had a major difficulty with the format. The conference was a follow-up to the Belfast Investment Forum, yet 24 of the 27 Mayors and Chief Executives to be present would be Unionists. In the circumstances Sinn Fein were calling for a new arrangement that recognised the Party's electoral mandate - 12.5% of the vote - and the fact that the Party represented some of the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland. As some of these areas were in Belfast, where Sinn Fein were strongly represented, their Belfast Councillors had written to the Lord Mayor, Hugh Smyth, asking him to discuss economic development with them. But he had refused.

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20. Mr Watkins said it was not wholly correct to see the meeting as a follow-up to the Investment Forum. Its agenda was wider and would include employment and unemployment, environmental matters and the European Union. The composition of the delegates had been determined by the wish to have District Councils represented at the highest level, namely Mayors/Chairmen and Chief Executives. The guest list had been constructed without regard to party and those who would be attended^{ed} would be expected to represent all the citizens of their respective areas. Sinn Fein were not the only party to be excluded because it had no current Mayors or Chairmen. For example, the Alliance Party would not be represented either. Ms de Brun said it was not the current composition of the Councils' hierarchies that annoyed Sinn Fein, but the criterion by which the conference delegates had been chosen. The conference might not be a follow-up to the Investment Forum, but it was certainly a "follow-on". Mr Watkins said the European Assistance Package created a very interesting situation. Contrary to normal practice, the European Union, and Ministers, were very keen to be informed by local opinion on how the money might be spent. Consequently there would be extensive consultation with interested parties and he would expect Sinn Fein to be fully involved in this. The best way of looking at the Downing Street conference was as a one-off, part of a much wider initiative in which Sinn Fein could be involved.

21. The next subject Ms de Brun referred to was Meanscoil Feirste. She said the issue was central to the question of parity of esteem, especially as the school had provided figures to show how DENI could fund it without setting a precedent. She said 18% of secondary schools in the "Six Counties" had less than 300 pupils yet they received Government finance. So there was no reason why the small Irish-speaking community, which was actually showing rising pupil numbers, should not get funding. Granted there had been some small steps in the right direction but generally DENI had not been helpful and had failed to meet the growing demand.

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22. Responding, **Mr Watkins** referred to the fact that **Ms Bhreatnach** had made similar points at the first two XD meetings. He then mentioned **PS/Michael Ancram's** letter to **Gerry Adams** of 12 January which gave a detailed account of the Government's decision in regard to **Meanscoil Feirste**, and Irish language school funding generally. He said he had noted all **Ms de Brun** had said and had absolutely no difficulty with the concept of Irish language education. But there was a difference between doing nothing to prevent the development of such education, and actively promoting the Irish language. As **PS/Michael Ancram's** letter made clear, the criteria used in the **Meanscoil** case were exactly the same as those applied to applications by any other independent, or integrated, school.

23. **Ms de Brun** also referred to what she described as "the denial of the rights of Irish speakers in prisons in Great Britain". **Mr Watkins** replied that he was not an expert on English prisons, where the number of prisoners from ethnic minorities was much greater than in Northern Ireland, but he knew the prison system here was very progressive. **Ms de Brun** said the particular case she was thinking of involved a husband and wife who had been prevented from speaking in Irish during a recent visit. **Mr Thomas** said this point would be noted. As regards **Ms de Brun's** remarks about the funding of **Meanscoil Feirste**, and Irish language education generally, he would be happy to relay these to **DENI**. The fact that **Meanscoil** had been raised at each XD meeting suggested to him that the symbolic resonance of the funding issue was even greater than the funding issue itself. **Mr McGuinness** said all this pointed to the growing interest in the Irish language in Northern Ireland. It was very important that people in Government should take cognisance of it and respond imaginatively. **Mr Thomas** asked if there were lessons to be learned from the practice in the Irish Republic. **Ms de Brun** replied that there were, for example the "Galway experience" where special funding criteria existed for Irish language schools. **Mr Watkins** added that the "early day" (ie start up) funding criteria were

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better in the Republic, but once projects came on stream the funding was not as generous as in Northern Ireland. He said it would be very helpful to have a paper from Sinn Fein on Irish medium education to ensure HMG understood the Party's position.

Mr McGuinness' response was to say we should move on to the next item on the agenda.

Prisons

24. Mr McManus began by stating that the situation in Full Sutton had deteriorated since the last meeting of XD. Four Republican prisoners in the SSU had been told their periods of solitary confinement would last indefinitely. Sinn Fein representatives should have access to Republican prisoners in GB in the same way that Loyalist representatives had access to their prisoners in Northern Ireland. If this did not happen the crisis would escalate. There was also the question of transfers from GB to Northern Ireland prisons, which should be speeded up.

25. Mr Leach explained the position in GB, which was that visits to Category A prisoners were normally restricted to family and personal friends. There was no provision for Party visits. But if the "personal friend" was also a member of Sinn Fein this would not prevent them visiting, and might provide an answer. Mr Beeton said he had tried to relay this information to Mr McManus before Christmas, but could get no further than an answerphone, on which he had left a message. Mr McManus said he was not aware of this. Whatever the criteria were for prison visits in GB, it would be "wise and judicious" to waive them on this occasion. Mr Leach said this was not something for the NIO, but for the Home Office. He thought a change in the policy towards Party visits was unlikely, and that the "personal friend" route was the most likely to succeed.

26. This was followed by a short exchange between Mr McManus and Mr Maccabe on the rate of transfers of Republican prisoners from GB

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to Northern Ireland. Mr Maccabe explained the present arrangement for extended temporary transfers. There were sound operational reasons why such transfers had to be conducted in a staged fashion but if Mr McManus had any particular prisoners in mind, and would provide their names, we could make enquiries. Mr Leach added that Sinn Fein might find it helpful to have a paper from HMG on prisons matters generally, but no-one took him up on this.

27. Turning to the question of Army patrolling, Mr McManus said the cessation of RUC accompaniment by the Army during daylight hours was welcome but had been off-set by an increase in Army patrolling in South Armagh. There was also the matter of the "preposterous" joint police/Army raid on the O'Donnell home in Coalisland during which severe damage had been caused. He said there could be no justifiable reason for military involvement in such an operation. Mr Leach sought to explain the background to the O'Donnell case. The police had been acting on good information that two people had been seen outside the house with a long-barrelled weapon. Authorisation had been obtained to search the premises and when this search was carried out it transpired that the weapon had been a legally-held shotgun (as an aside he said this showed not all legally-held weapons were held by Unionists). Mr McManus replied that the fact there were over 100,000 legally-held weapons in Northern Ireland should have tempered the security forces' reaction. They might have guessed they were not dealing with a terrorist incident and acted responsibly, rather than indulging in house-wrecking. Their actions had been symptomatic of what was happening in a lot of rural areas and was an indictment of HMG's failure to stamp out this kind of behaviour four and a half months into the IRA ceasefire.

28. Mr Leach said that this was unfair. There had been real progress on several fronts, most recently the cessation of Army patrolling during daylight in Belfast as Joe Austin and Alex Maskey had acknowledged. This had followed the decision to reopen all

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cross-border roads. And hadn't the Chief Constable said there was scope for further "demilitarisation"? If recrimination was in order, one could ask what the IRA had done to improve the situation as targeting and punishment beatings continued, and not a single bullet had been given up.

29. Mr Thomas said that while on the question of punishment beatings he wanted to say how concerned we were that these should stop. As remarks after the last meeting of LXD had shown, our concern was shared by the Loyalist political representatives. Mr McGuinness said that Gerry Adams had put Sinn Fein's views on the record and both Adams and himself would speak about the matter again. In reality such activity had reduced - and this reduction had been acknowledged by the Chief Constable - and there were also doubts about the reasons behind some beatings. Furthermore, the issue was being highlighted by the media who were starved of other stories.

30. Mr Thomas enquired as to what exactly Mr McGuinness had said publicly about punishment beatings. He replied that he had expressed disapproval, on behalf of Sinn Fein. Before the matter could be explored further he said we needed to move on to the next topic. He said he wanted to challenge Mr Leach's assertion that all cross-border roads were now open, for this was not so. He had been particularly annoyed by the Prime Minister's statement that it could take up to three years to reinstate all the crossings. Mr Leach replied that what he had said was that the decision to open all roads had been taken. Around 50% were physically open but, especially where bridges had been destroyed, there were some difficult engineering problems to be solved. Before the DOE could adopt or re-adopt a road, various statutory requirements in the Health and Safety field had to be met: it was not simply a matter of throwing down a load of tarmac and rolling it out.

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Future workplan

31. Mr McGuinness said the Sinn Fein team would consult Party colleagues about the workplan attached to our opening statement. Ms O'Hanlon would pass on any comments to Mr Beeton.

Any other business

32. Mr Thomas said that at earlier meetings the Sinn Fein team had mentioned the possible need for private meetings, perhaps involving two on each side. He said if Sinn Fein saw a need for private and unpublicised meetings of this sort he was ready to recommend to Ministers that we should agree to that. This could be followed-up by telephone. Such meetings could well have a valuable part to play in ensuring that the peace process was carried forward and that the exploratory dialogue reached an early and successful conclusion. Mr McGuinness thanked Mr Thomas for this offer and said this kind of meeting could indeed have a part to play. He would take away the idea and consider it. (Comment: this idea has not been mentioned in any briefings of the US Government, Irish Government or the press and it should not be.) Mr McGuinness then asked for another adjournment "for further reflection and some lunch". A break of half an hour was agreed.

33. The meeting resumed at 2.10 pm. Mr Thomas said he assumed Sinn Fein were planning to publish 'Towards a Negotiated Settlement 3'. Mr McGuinness said they were. Mr Thomas said we would be publishing our opening statement, but without the workplan attached. His speaking note on Ministerial meetings with Sinn Fein (which had been distributed) would not be published either. Mr McGuinness said he would be telling the press that the Sinn Fein team had received HMG's written response to their documents and had taken away a copy for consideration. He would be describing the meeting as "business-like". Mr Thomas suggested "business-like and constructive" but Mr McGuinness replied (with a broad smile) "you can say that: we've still to make up our mind." Mr Thomas then read

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out HMG's draft press line attached at Annex D. Mr McGuinness said he had no difficulty with it.

34. Mr McGuinness then said he wanted to summarise Sinn Fein's position. He began by stating that HMG's position was minimalist. While Sinn Fein recognised that some changes had taken place, things were not happening quickly enough. For example, there was no reason why each and every soldier could not go back to Britain "where they came from". The peace process must be consolidated and built upon. Sinn Fein's electoral mandate must be recognised and built upon too. He continued by making what he described as "a very important point". He said Sinn Fein's role in the peace process had been a crucial one. This was widely recognised. HMG had made decommissioning of arms a pre-condition, even though they said they had not. What HMG had to recognise was that whatever position Sinn Fein had, it could not allow this position to be undermined by British insistence that the decommissioning of arms was a pre-condition to all-inclusive talks. The removal of arms on all sides was crucial but even more important was the need to remove the reasons for conflict. The British had been trying to defeat the IRA for 25 years and had failed. It now seemed they were trying to get Sinn Fein to do the job for them. But the effect of this was to undermine Sinn Fein's position. HMG had to take the political initiative if there was to be an end to a conflict that had bedevilled everyone on these islands for 25, 75, even 800 years.

35. As to what would happen if Sinn Fein did not get what they wanted, he could ask the same question of HMG. After all it was they who during the Treaty negotiations in 1920 had threatened "great and terrible war", if they did not get their way. There should be no delay, no stalling, for the eyes of the world were on everyone involved in the peace process and were watching carefully to see if the Irish question could really be resolved once and for all.

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36. Mr Thomas said he could agree with many of Mr McGuinness' remarks. But there was also quite a lot he disagreed with. HMG were continuing to drive the process forward and believed that no issue of concern to either side should be excluded from the deliberations. As regards the decommissioning of arms, Mr McGuinness' remarks anticipated a discussion that had not taken place. It was incontrovertible that Sinn Fein had great influence in the Republican community, and views on the arms issue which were of great interest to that community. After all, even the Alliance Party had views on arms decommissioning, and no-one suggested they had a military wing. The real difficulty was that Mr McGuinness maintained that arms decommissioning had nothing whatsoever to do with Sinn Fein. But the fact remained that certain linkages were involved, not just between Sinn Fein and the arms issue, but between several of the matters for consideration in XD, and all these would have to be looked at in the round. Mr Leach added that Sinn Fein could be misdirecting themselves if they thought the pre-condition for progress was IRA surrender. What the Prime Minister and others were looking for was "substantial progress" on arms. Mr Thomas said there was no value in revisiting the Treaty negotiations, and he did not see himself as an apologist for David Lloyd-George. The situation today - with HMG having stated that they had "no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland" - was very different from the situation 75 years ago.

Date of next meeting

37. Mr Thomas said he would like to set a schedule of meetings at about weekly intervals. The details could be discussed by Ms O'Hanlon and Mr Beeton. Mr McGuinness replied that when the Sinn Fein team had considered this proposition they would authorise Ms O'Hanlon to get back to Mr Beeton. Mr Thomas proposed that the next meeting should be held on Friday 27 January, but Mr McGuinness

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said unfortunately he was not free on that date and suggested
Wednesday 1 February. This was agreed.

38. The meeting ended at 2.20 pm.

[signed CGM]

C G MACCABE
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