

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM: Tony Beeton
XDS
7 December 1994

DB127/94
RECEIVED - 8 DEC 1994

113

DESK IMMEDIATE

PS/Secretary of State (L&B)

1. Mr. Beeton
2. XDS file

- PS/Michael Ancram (L&B)
- PS/PUS (L&B)
- PS/Mr Fell
- Mr Legge
- Mr Thomas
- Mr Brooke
- Mr Leach
- ~~Mr Watkins~~
- Mr Williams
- Mr Wood (L&B)
- Mr Currie
- Mr Brooker
- Mr Maccabe
- Mr Stephens

1. ~~cc to [redacted]~~ 9/12

2. back to receipt

to
P. 2

384/12

LETTER TO QUENTIN THOMAS FROM MARTIN MCGUINNESS

The attached letter to Quentin Thomas from Martin McGuinness was sent by fax this afternoon. It is a response to the letter we sent to Sinn Fein on 1 December 1994. The letter confirms that Sinn Fein will approach the discussions in a 'constructive and responsible manner' although it refers mischievously to the 'recommencement of dialogue'.

2. It is apparent from the text that Sinn Fein's opening position is that we can move speedily beyond exploratory dialogue and they may therefore resist our proposed agenda. The only other feature on the draft agenda sent to them which Mr McGuinness addresses is confidentiality. He indicates that this is an issue we can discuss at the first meeting although his statement that Sinn Fein is committed to as much openness and transparency as possible may mean that we have to deal in effect with an open public dialogue.

CONFIDENTIAL

SIL/EM/24738

CONFIDENTIAL

3. In summary, there is nothing in the letter which necessitates changing our own approach to the opening meeting. If we can it will still be necessary to discuss procedural issues including an agenda for future meetings and to make and discuss our opening statement. We will retain as an initial objective the attempt to agree a work plan with the Sinn Fein delegation which would imply a longer rather than a shorter process.

SIGNED

TONY BEETON
Exploratory Dialogue Secretariat
OAB Ext 6564

CONFIDENTIAL

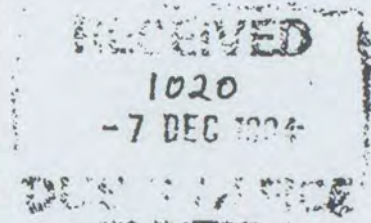
SIL/EM/24738



51/55 Bóthar na bhFál, Béal Feirste BT12 4PD

7 December 1994

QUENTIN THOMAS
Northern Ireland Office
Whitchall
London SW1A 2AZ



A Chara

The Sinn Féin Ard Chomhairle has authorised me to respond to your letter of 1 December 1994.

Sinn Féin welcomes the recommencement of dialogue with the British government and we will approach the discussions in a constructive and responsible manner.

At the first meeting on Friday, 9 December, I will be leading the Sinn Féin delegation. We are, at present, finalising arrangements for the Sinn Féin delegation and I will telephone you on Thursday with details of same.

We have nominated Siobhán O'Hanlon to act as a contact with Tony Becton and to ensure that there is no confusion over practical arrangements. Ms O'Hanlon and Mr Becton have already spoken and exchanged contact telephone numbers.

Friday's meeting can initially deal with the practical arrangements for the dialogue and can then move speedily onto the issues which Mr Adams raised in his letter to Mr Major on 24 November.

The primary issues we wish to deal with are the rationalisation of contact between Sinn Féin and your government at all other levels on an equal footing with all other political parties and based on our electoral mandate and the logistics of all party negotiations which are the essential next stage in the peace process. These inclusive negotiations, led by the London and Dublin governments, need to address all issues relating to a lasting settlement without preconditions, without vetos and without any attempt to predetermine the outcome of those discussions.

We are confident that with political will and application, we can move quickly through the agenda for bilateral discussions and speedily into inclusive all-party negotiations led by the two governments.

Sinn Féin is an Irish republican party and it is our firm belief that the route to peace in our country is to be found in the exercise by the Irish people of our right to national self-determination without external interference or impediment. This analysis will inform our contribution to the important discussions which lie ahead. We are firmly committed to the search for a lasting peace based on a democratic settlement, as evidenced by the initiatives we have already taken to sustain and advance the peace process. We will continue to contribute positively to the process of healing and national reconciliation.

We understand and accept that on occasions there will be a need for confidentiality in our discussions. However, Sinn Féin is a democratic party and we are committed to as much openness and transparency as is possible in our discussion with you and other parties. We can of course discuss this issue at our first meeting.

I have asked Ms O'Hanlon to talk to Mr Beeton to give him the necessary information for Friday's meeting. I have also asked Ms O'Hanlon to make arrangements for me to telephone you on Thursday.

I look forward to talking to you and to a positive discussion on Friday.

Is mise

Martin Mc Guinness

MARTIN MCGUINNESS