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NOTE

My wife and I were guests at a dinner party given at their home by Mr. & Mrs David Goodall (Cabinet Office) on Friday 9 December 1983. After dinner, Goodall drew me aside to speak about the Dowra affair. He made the following points:

- (1) He said that there was a serious lack of comprehension amongst Ministers and officials in London who found it difficult to understand how we reconciled our evident commitment to security on the one hand with the manner to which the Dowra affair was being pursued on the other. He said that developments in the Dowra affair were not going down well with Ministers. The Prime Minister was also bemused because the Taoiseach kept bringing the matter up at their meetings (and on the last occasion talked about it in some detail) while she was at several removes from the issue. He suggested that our pursuit of the case was counter-productive if, as he assumed to be the case, we wished to create a good political climate in which our concerns could be discussed next year.
- (2) The British were not saying that nothing untoward had occurred but rather that there was no evidence of such an occurrence. Forbes had made a statement in which he denied any wrong doing. The British side would need evidence if this statement was to be controverted.
- (3) Goodall referred to the sloppy way in which the case had been handled which was at odds with the seriousness which we appeared to attach to it. The complaint had not been submitted until long after the event, there was a further delay because Commissioner Wren had gone on leave and an interim reply from the Chief Constable, the dispatch of which had been the subject of a telephone call to the Gardai, had nonetheless gone astray. The

Chief Constable has now sent a full reply to the Commissioner: it appeared that we found this reply unsatisfactory but the nature of our difficulties were not entirely clear.

- (4) I asked whether the British side might not be attaching too much importance to meetings at Chief Constable and Commissioner level. I noted that Mr. Prior had said on 7 December that the Baldonnell panels were to be revived and that meetings to facilitate co-operation had been arranged between sub-ordinates of the Chief Constable and the Commissioner. Goodall said that when Mr. Prior and Mr. Barry met in Brussels, a number of things had been agreed, including a meeting between Mr. Prior and the Minister for Justice. Subsequently Mr. Barry had phoned to say that the meeting could not take place but that the Minister for Justice would meet the Attorney General. Mr. Prior was under the impression that the other matters agreed to and in particular the Baldonnell panels had not been cancelled and would go ahead.

- Adrian* (5) As to the meeting in Brussels between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach, Goodall mentioned that the Taoiseach had asked for an independent enquiry. However, the Prime Minister's understanding was that the Taoiseach had agreed to a meeting in the New Year between the Minister for Justice and Mr. Prior. (I was at some disadvantage in relation to this and the preceding item since reports on the meetings involved have not been received).

21 December, 1983.