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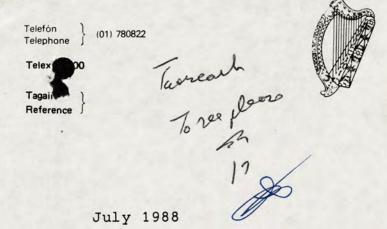
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Mr. Dermot Gallagher Assistant Secretary Anglo-Irish Division

Dear Assistant Secretary

AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA Department of Foreign Affairs

> BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH, 2. Dublin 2.

(c: by. Concaran)

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In the course of our contacts with Northern officials, we have occasional comments on the SDLP/Sinn Fein contacts. These are generally conventional and predictable. They range from scepticism to a degree of hostility and we have not bothered to report on them. It is taken for granted by all that the most that could be attainable is a split in Sinn Fein/IRA. It is perhaps worth mentioning, however, that a number of officials, including Sir John Blelloch, recently commented to me that they would regard such a split as a negative development. Blelloch assumed that an object of the exercise was to detach Gerry Adams from Martin McGuinness and commented that a rump IRA, uninhibited by any political considerations on INLA lines, could be even more dangerous than the present situation. I have since heard this echoed by a number of other officials, so it seems to be something of a settled view in the NIO.

Yours sincerely

Man & Hugim

PSM Nolly

Sean O Huiginn

Un hi forthy.

On resulting.

To reas pl

