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CONFIDENTIAL

10 November 1992

Mr Seán Ó hUiginn
Assistant Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs
Dublin 2

Discussion with Sir Timothy Daunt

Dear Assistant Secretary

Sir Timothy Daunt is the new Deputy Under-Secretary of State (Defence) at the FCO, having replaced Nigel Broomfield in September. He spent the last six years as Ambassador to Turkey. He joined me for lunch yesterday and, although he is still at the settling in stage in his new job, I thought you might, nevertheless, be interested in a few points that arose in the course of our conversation.

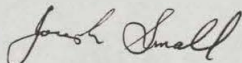
Daunt told me that his childhood was spent in Cork, although he was not born in Ireland. He had a quick introduction to Northern Ireland affairs on his return from Turkey as he attended the BIA week-end seminar at Oxford at the end of September. He noted in that connection from Mayhew's remarks at the final session that although the Secretary of State would have no difficulty in accepting a united Ireland, at the same time he would regret the departure of Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom. Daunt concluded that Mayhew was in essence a unionist at heart. I mentioned that Mayhew had taken with him to his new post a certain amount of "baggage" that had accumulated during his days as Attorney General.

The Current Talks: Sir Timothy Daunt said that the OUP were to introduce their paper that day although he did not betray any knowledge of its contents. We then discussed the role of Paisley and his DUP. I said that Paisley was making a mockery of the process and asked whether it was sensible or realistic to expect a meaningful outcome with his participation. All the evidence to-date seemed to indicate that anything Paisley would be prepared to accept would be so anaemic as to be useless. Daunt's initial reaction was that he should be kept on board because his exclusion would surely result in his

wrecking anything agreed with the OUP. Besides, it would be difficult for the OUP to do a deal without him because of the damage he could inflict on them electorally. I questioned this line of argument and proffered the view that Paisley is no longer capable of bringing supporters on to the streets in their tens of thousands, as was possible in the 1970's when the Sunningdale Agreement was under attack. The Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985 and the visit to Belfast in 1990 of the then Taoiseach, Mr Haughey, were good examples of Paisley's inability to muster his supporters. I emphasised that we needed a very substantial deal from the talks, otherwise we could not even contemplate constitutional change and Sir Timothy readily accepted that a rejection by our people of a constitutional amendment proposed by the Government would be a very unfortunate development. He then asked about our stance in regard to "could" and "would". I said there was no possibility of changing our position in vacuo as we would have to know first the nature and content of the overall package. He observed that it was a typical chicken/egg situation. At the same time he seemed to have second thoughts on the DUP's continuing role in the whole process.

President-Elect Clinton: We had a brief discussion about Clinton's commitments during the American election campaign. Daunt seemed to find some consolation in the fact that, on close analysis, the undertakings entered into by Clinton were not too serious after all. Nevertheless, the British seem to be worried about the idea of sending a special representative to Northern Ireland. A good way of heading this off, he said, was to restart the talks in mid-January, before Clinton's inauguration. It would then be difficult for the new President to pursue his idea. This will be a powerful argument at Mayhew's disposal as he tries to get the talks resumed in the New Year as the Unionists, including Paisley, have reacted very sharply to Clinton's proposal. I drew Daunt's attention to Clinton's criticism of the British army in NI. To my surprise Daunt readily accepted the validity of the criticism in some instances and he singled out the paratroop regiments as being particularly unsuitable for service in Northern Ireland. I alluded to their misbehaviour in Coalisland this year and in Derry in 1972 as proof of this. It was clear from his attitude that Daunt was influenced by what he heard at the BIA Seminar in Oxford in that connection.

Michael Mates: We had a brief discussion about Mates and Daunt accepted readily that he should never have been appointed to his present sensitive post. Daunt also questioned his intelligence. He accepted that given his influence with Heseltine he had to be given a job in the present Government but it would have been wiser to keep him away from Northern Ireland. I said that it is open to the Prime Minister to move him when making his first reshuffle in 1993.



Joseph Small
Ambassador