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TO: HQ, ANGLO-IRISH DIVISION FROM: DERMOT BRANGAN

ATTENTION: GERRY CORR

SUB: GERRY ADAMS' REACTION TO BRITISH CLARIFICATION RESPONSE

1. ATTACHED FOR YOUR INFORMATION IS A COPY OF AN ARTICLE BY GERRY ADAMS THAT WILL APPEAR IN TOMORROW'S EDITION OF THE IRISH VOICE.
2. IT MAY BE THE FIRST PUBLIC REACTION BY GERRY ADAMS TO THE BRITISH RESPONSE ON THE 20 POINTS OF CLARIFICATION SOUGHT BY SINN FEIN. ADAMS, WHILE CONCEDED THAT HE HAS NOT HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONSULT HIS COLLEAGUES ON THE RESPONSE, DOES CALL IT "AN IMPORTANT STEP IN THE SLOWLY EVOLVING PEACE PROCESS". HE ALSO HIGHLIGHTS THAT THE BRITISH RESPONSE DID ADDRESS SINN FEIN'S MANDATE, THE VETO, THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND ACT AND THAT ACCEPTANCE OF THE DECLARATION IS NOT A PREREQUISITE FOR NEGOTIATIONS.

C.C. MR. MICHAEL COLLINS, EMBASSY, WASHINGTON.

In Wall

I'M just back in Ireland after fulfilling a number of speaking engagements in Italy. It is interesting that a number of Irish people turned up at each of the meetings. Here is proof once again of how scattered is the Irish diaspora. The Irish in Italy, of course, have concerns other than political ones. The World Cup in the U.S. is of great concern because, of course, Ireland plays Italy in the first round. This dominated all of the small talk.

The British response to the Sinn Fein questions reached me while I was in Turin. All 21 pages of it. Whatever about the quality of these clarifications, the quantity is certainly at odds with London's previous assertions that no clarification for Sinn Fein was necessary, or indeed possible.

The provision of clarification, therefore, marks another step, a small one, some might say, but in my view an important step in the slowly evolving peace process.

The British document is a response to the initiative by Sinn Fein to break the deadlock in the peace process and was facilitated and assisted by the active and positive role played by the Dublin government. After the IRA suspension of activity last month, I pointed out that the significance of this initiative lay, not in its duration, but in the fact that the IRA had undertaken it. At that time I said that this would not be lost on the policy makers at Downing Street. So also was the recent development on the issue of clarification. Its significance lies as much in the fact that the British government responded to the initiative from Ireland, as in the substance of the response itself.

I have not yet had an opportunity to discuss the British clarifications with colleagues here in Ireland. Of the few people I have met since my return last night, all have acknowledged the significance of this latest development, though many registered disappointment at some of the British responses. This is a problem which Republicans will have to deal with as we conclude our assessment of the Downing Street Declaration, as part of moving forward into another phase of the peace process. It would obviously have been much more helpful if the British government had responded in a direct, unambiguous and comprehensive manner to all the questions we put to them.

All political parties here are in the last two weeks of the election to the European Parliament. So Sinn Fein will not meet formally to consider how the peace process will be advanced until after these elections. The Ard Comhairle (National Executive) will meet this weekend, and of course, the British clarifications and how we proceed from here will be one of the matters up for discussion. As

always, we will be seeking to do this in a positive way, and to address the British responses in a flexible manner. By then, I, of course, will be more fully briefed on the situation than I am now as I write these lines. A lot has happened in the short time that I was absent from Ireland. The Unionist death squads have returned to Dublin again, leaving one man dead and one seriously wounded. It should not go unnoticed that the death squads are most active when there is a perception of nationalism moving forward. Twenty years ago, bombs in Dublin and Monaghan caused the greatest number of fatalities in any incident in the Troubles. If the weekend bomb had exploded, a new grisly record would have set. There was a British military intelligence involvement in previous attacks in Dublin, and there is no clarification required about the intentions of the bombers, or their sponsors. Like the campaign against Catholics in the North, actions in the South are aimed at terrorizing and intimidating popular opinion.

There was also a bomb in the Sinn Fein office in Belfast City Hall. This seriously injured two workmen. As I pen these lines, there is a news report of another bomb at the Newry Sinn Fein office. All these actions point toward collusion between elements of the British forces and the Unionists. An issue I hope to return to in the future. The papers provided by Aer Lingus on my flight home were filled with speculation about a possible Loyalist ceasefire. I think this is most unlikely, although the IRA have said in a statement that a Loyalist ceasefire will bring an end to its targeting of Loyalists. The Unionist leaders response to the Dublin bombing was ambiguous. They obviously see it as an attempt to weaken the resolve of the Dublin government in pursuing the peace process. Republicans will not be intimidated, nor will we be diverted from our commitment to establishing a peace settlement. The Dublin government should not be intimidated either from its efforts. The increase in Loyalist activity hasn't happened by chance. It began six years ago with the South African arms shipment which was procured with the help of British intelligence. The Loyalists are not reactive. There is a coordinated effort to kill Nationalists or Catholics, in furtherance of Unionist political objectives.

This is the background against which we all must move towards a negotiated settlement. Of course, this must also involve the Unionists. Twenty one pages of carefully crafted British responses to the Sinn Fein questions will mean little to Sean or Sinead Citizen if they think that the stick of Loyalist terrorism is being wielded more energetically than the carrot of British clarification. But, of

course, converting the rhetoric of peace into tangible and demonstrable results is a challenge facing us all.

Important questions were put to the British by Sinn Fein. They may have fudged some of the answers, but they also have undoubtedly addressed some of the issues involved. These include Sinn Fein's mandate, the veto, the Government of Ireland Act, that acceptance of the Downing Street Declaration is not a pre-requisite for negotiation.

Are these responses adequate?

I have long pointed out that a lasting peace must be carefully and patiently constructed. Peace needs change. It must have a solid foundation. As we have seen, there is a yawning gap of mistrust between Nationalists and the British government which must be bridged. This will happen more effectively and with more likelihood of permanency as a result of small but sure steps. undoubtedly the provision of clarification constitutes one of these steps. Therefore, this in itself is helpful. After all, we are dealing with centuries of history. The peace settlement in South Africa came after patient and persistent efforts by both sides.

The actions of the Unionist death squads and their allies in the British Crown Forces shows that a peace process cannot focus only on one source of armed actions. A process which aims to tackle only one source of violence is in its conception and construction flawed and ineffective. The last 25 years of failed British initiatives aimed at crushing the Republican struggle demonstrates this. We have moved beyond this. We are clearly at a new and, for everyone, a challenging situation. I remain confident that with commitment, imagination and patience, that the peace process can be advanced and a peace settlement constructed which will deal with the causes of conflict and lead, therefore, to a real and lasting peace in Ireland..