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Meeting between the Tanaiste
and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland,
Hillsborough -- 5th September, 1994

Present were: Tanaiste, Sir Patrick Mayhew, Mr. Pew, the undersigned.

1. After initial courtesies the Tanaiste gave the Secretary of State a brief account of his very positive meeting with President Clinton. The President was taking a carefully balanced approach, addressing the concerns of both sides.
2. The Secretary of State recalled that Mr. Molyneaux's US trip had also been very positive. He himself had had a good meeting with Congressman Neal and Kevin Peterson.
3. Turning to the IRA cessation, Sir Patrick said that the concerns about its permanence or otherwise should not lead people to forget how marvellous the development was. The British Government had no doubt of the sincerity of the Irish side. It was a question of interpretation. It was clear there would have to be a verification period and the British Government had to keep the confidence of the unionists. Both he and the Prime Minister shared the view that if the notion of permanence was so simple to express, why not do so? If they had gone "snap" on the first day, they would be burying bodies in East Belfast. The development was encouraging, but something more was needed. There were pathological suspicions on the unionist side. Archbishop Eames had told him that after the experiences of the last twenty-five years, the unionist community was incapable of absorbing the new situation after a day or two. The reference to "suspension" in An Phoblacht had added to the difficulties. If he had been on record accepting

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permanence when that appeared, he would have been "hanged, drawn and quartered".

4. The Tanaiste went over the details of the lead-up to the announcement. He and the Taoiseach had been absolutely at one in making clear they would accept only a total cessation of violence. That had been conveyed at every level, including through the visiting American declaration. Both from the terms of the announcement itself, and the circumstances surrounding it, the Irish Government were fully satisfied that it involved a permanent cessation. It was pointed out also that Adams had confirmed that the Irish interpretation was "constructive and correct".
5. The Tanaiste said he had made abundantly clear that he understood unionist reticence. He accepted fully the need for each side to understand the other's position. The Irish Government would not be running with this initiative unless it was convinced that effectively the war was over. The British should not be "raising the fence" as the ceasefire continued to hold. The IRA had resisted so far the temptation to respond to attack. They had avoided any reservation about the use of violence for "defensive" purposes.
6. The Secretary of State said there was a strong feeling throughout the unionist community that there must have been some deal. However it was right to look at the whole "corpus" and to watch circumstances as they developed. Both he and the Prime Minister agreed that precipitate action would lose the confidence of the unionist community. Why could they not say permanent? The Tanaiste assumed that the psychology was that while they could take a decision to stop on their own account, they could not speak for future generations. He stressed the magnitude of the decision they had taken in their own terms, without any reservations and

without excessive "Brits out" rhetoric. Developments since the statement, such as the line taken by Cahill in the US, confirmed that a remarkable change had taken place. It was possible the British side were over-simplifying the attitude of the unionists. They had a strong interest in the cessation being consolidated. Certain influential unionists were urging us strongly to get Sinn Fein into the Forum and into politics. However if the British were negative, the unionists had little choice but to take their cue from that.

7. The Secretary of State repeated the need to be sure it was permanent, the sensitivities on the unionist side, etc. If they were not reassured on that point, they could not move on the broadcasting ban and other matters he wished to implement quickly. Responding to a concern on the Irish side that the British were gratuitously hauling up front difficulties that might well evaporate down the road, and were being unnecessarily negative when a wait-and-see policy would be equally safe from their point of view, the Secretary of State said that the difficulties faced were immediate ones. He confirmed to the Tanaiste that the Parliament would not be sitting until about the 18th October. The Tanaiste pointed to the supportive position taken by the Opposition parties in the South, including Mr. Bruton. The Downing Street Declaration protected the position of both Governments. The Secretary of State pointed out that Blair was now also supportive of the British Government position.
8. In the course of a discussion on loyalist attitudes, the Secretary of State said they hoped to get a word on loyalist thinking very soon. (Note: The inference seemed to be that it would be a positive one).
9. Sir Patrick returned to the question of permanence. The Tanaiste drew attention to the complexity of the Sinn Fein

position, and the obvious difficulties which Adams faced in bringing his people as far as he did. The Irish side stressed the qualitative differences between this and all previous ceasefire attempts. The Tanaiste stressed the difficulty the Republicans were likely to face in coming to grips with what could be a very thankless political reality. The Republicans had successfully cleared a number of important hurdles. There would be other tests, in particular the Forum, which would be based firmly on the consent principle. While understanding the concerns behind the British Government's reticence, the Tanaiste stressed that "if the Governments put themselves on hooks, they would be part of the problem".

10. The Secretary of State said he had urged Congressman Neal to ask the President to use his influence on Sinn Fein to get them to make their position clear. The Tanaiste repeated his hope that the unfolding situation could contribute to allaying British doubts.

11. Turning to the Joint Framework Document, the Tanaiste said he would like "full steam ahead". The Secretary of State concurred fully. However he expressed doubt as to whether the two sides could get around the problems of Articles 2 and 3. The Government had indicated that the latest formulation on Article 2 was the limit. The British view was that to take the entire island as the "national territory" was not saleable to unionists. Could the Irish side go further? Another possibility was to put merely a general reference in the document, leaving the details to negotiations' with the unionists. However that would mean the Governments had "grasped the thistle but not pulled it out". It would be important, if or when the document was completed, to present it as a shared understanding of the Governments and not something which was being imposed on the parties. Robinson was already using the document as a test

of whether there was an IRA deal. It should be shown to the parties as an aid and encouragement.

12. The Tanaiste said that to show it to the parties was the same as to publish. He agreed on timetable, and felt both Governments should reach agreement on all outstanding issues. They should publish the text and invite comments. There should however be some conditioning before the document was put into the public domain.

13. The Secretary of State repeated that the constitutional issues were of great sensitivity. Unionists felt passionately about the territorial claim. He said the leak in the Sunday Independent on the Government of Ireland Act was very unhelpful. While the Government of Ireland Act was not crucial, there was a growing feeling that tampering with it was damaging, even if only on the symbolic level. The Tanaiste rejoined that discussions on Articles 2 and 3 were also essentially on the symbolic level. They would have to be compromise on all sides.

14. The Tanaiste raised the question of cross-border roads, saying that the Irish side had never questioned or sought to go behind the security arguments. He did not approve of the demonstrations at the crossings, and the Irish Government were doing what they could to make that clear. However in a ceasefire situation the threat was removed, and that situation was holding. In the new situation it was imperative to take account of the difficulties for local communities. Some roads should be opened. The Irish Government would not make the request if they felt there was a security threat. If such a threat did materialise, an open road could be closed in an hour. Given they were in an unwinnable situation, the Governments should take the initiative, and say that in the face of the new situation they were now reviewing the closures.

15. The Secretary of State thought that was "a timely injunction". The security forces should maintain a consistent position that what is needed is in proportion to the threat. He did not wish to intrude a political input into that. The Chief Constable's view was highly sophisticated. He himself deplored the "childish tit-for-tat" on some crossings. He thought something could be done about Cloonatty. However it would be difficult and damaging to emerge from the present meeting saying certain bridges, etc., would be open.

16. The Tanaiste indicated it would need to go beyond Cloonatty. It would greatly help if the British moved on, say, two or three crossings very soon. That would defuse the situation and give people a sense that something was happening. There was time to work on that before the next Conference. He agreed that he would not be specific on particular crossings in his press presentation as of now.

17. The Secretary of State enquired whether the visit to President Clinton was likely to produce aid. The Tanaiste said he thought it would be available, but only when everything was tied down. The Secretary of State felt that such aid should not be channelled exclusively through the IFI. The Tanaiste indicated that this was something the two sides could look at together. The President would also be anxious to encourage private investment. The Secretary of State recalled that Protestants were somewhat resentful of what they saw as American intrusion. The Tanaiste said the President was displaying the utmost sensitivity to both sides.

18. At the end of the meeting the Secretary of State, apologising for his temerity, asked if "the Taoiseach could be asked to cool it? He was frightening the horses". The

Tanaiste reacted strongly, saying the British side should bear in mind what the Taoiseach had achieved. He reflected the universal hope in Ireland that we could see an end of the frustration and shame which the violence had brought to the whole island. They should remember he had also "corralled some horses" in a way no-one else could have. The British side should keep perspective on the historic importance of what was being achieved.

19. The dinner ended with some general conversation. The Secretary of State indicated that he personally would welcome an end on the broadcasting ban, but deplored the soft ride which Adams was getting from the media. The Tanaiste stressed the sophisticated and careful approach being taken to the current situation by unionist spokesmen such as Taylor and Ross.
20. The meeting concluded with a brief discussion of the press presentation. On the question of "permanence", the Secretary of State agreed to speak of his "hope" of permanence, rather than saying, as he had proposed, that he was "not persuaded".



Sean O hUiginn
6 September, 1994

cc: PST
PSS
Mr. F. Murray
Dr. M. Mansergh
Mr. T. Dalton
Joint Secretary
Ambassador Small
Ambassador Gallagher