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IMMEDIATE

13 JANUARY 1997

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PSS
MR. P. TEAHON
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FOR SEC Ó hUIGINN FROM AMBASSADOR

cc: PST

1. The enclosed statement has just been issued by the White House on the talks process.

2. As you know, I had discussed the draft on Saturday with Nancy Soderberg, and had made some suggestions at that time. We had a further discussion this morning, and the White House accepted the suggested changes we put forward.

3. There is no great hope here of any serious development before the general election and, in particular, they are very sceptical about the approach being adopted by John Hume at present. I will, however, be reviewing all aspects of the situation with the White House later in the week - I am in Buffalo and New York over the next two days - and will report further at that time.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release January 13, 1997

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Multiparty Talks on the Future of Northern Ireland

I welcome the resumption of the multiparty talks on the future of Northern Ireland in Belfast today. As the new year begins, I urge the British and Irish Governments and the leaders of Northern Ireland's political parties to press forward with their efforts to achieve a lasting settlement that will ensure peace, justice, prosperity, and opportunity for the people they represent. I am proud of the contribution that Senator George Mitchell and his two co-chairmen are making to these important negotiations.

I am deeply outraged by the end of the IRA cease-fire, which threatens to plunge Northern Ireland into a senseless spiral of violence. As we start a new year, I call again on the IRA to restore its cease-fire immediately. I have always believed that the Belfast talks will have a better chance of success if all the elected parties, including Sinn Fein, are at the table, but that can only happen if the IRA declares and implements a cease-fire in both words and deeds. I remain convinced that if such an action is taken, substantive and inclusive talks would soon follow.

As I saw during my visit to Northern Ireland just over a year ago, the overwhelming majority of the people yearn for a just and lasting settlement and an end to the conflict that has divided them for so long. I am committed to supporting the courageous people of both traditions who are working toward that goal. And I urge the loyalists to maintain their cease-fire and refrain from descending into a cycle of escalating violence.

Sadly, sectarian clashes during the summer revealed again the depth of suspicion and animosity between the two communities of Northern Ireland. When we look back in another year's time, I pray that we will call to mind images of hope and promise, reconciliation and peace in Northern Ireland. My Administration remains committed to supporting the British and Irish governments, the political leaders, and the people of Northern Ireland as they work to reach a just and lasting settlement.

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