

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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Taoiseach
(2) This reaction of Mo to Mowlam needs to be treated with reserve but may be encouraging. 6.5.99

Confidential

Conversation with Jane Winter, BIRW re Finucane Meeting with Secretary of State

5 May 1999

RECEIVED - 6 MAY 1999

The Finucane family met this morning with the Secretary of State regarding their request for a public inquiry. Jane Winter, who accompanied them, offered the following highlights:

1. The family had gone to the meeting expecting to be told that a decision had been made to await the outcome of the Stevens investigation and possible prosecutions. They were pleasantly surprised to find the Secretary of State denying this and claiming to remain open to a decision on an inquiry. They strongly stated their view that they were prepared to forego prosecutions until after an inquiry, that their preference was an inquiry to find the truth of the matter even if it imperilled the prospect of prosecutions.

2. Mowlam expressed surprised at this and said that she had assumed that prosecutions were paramount. She confirmed that Chief Constable Flanagan had initiated the Stevens investigation without reference to her but said that she did not want to fall out with Ronnie over it. The family said that an inquiry could run in parallel with an investigation. The Secretary of State said that she would take legal advice on this and that if this was possible, she would be prepared to take a decision. She indicated that such a decision, one way or the other, would be made during the summer.

3. Jane Winter said that it was difficult to judge the sincerity of Mo's surprise at the family's views given her "general jolly approach" but that at the very least the Secretary of State was prepared to treat the family's commitment to the paramount value of truth as a revelation and thus a "gap". The view of the family was that the meeting was categorically not a rebuff.

4. Mowlam said that she needed to take the Prime Minister with her on this. In this context, Ms Winter said that the Taoiseach's support for the inquiry in discussions with the Tony

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Blair would be crucial. I assured her of the government's continuing commitment to the issue.

5. I asked about any imminent revelations in the press and she said she was not aware of any. They might release the 1995 letter from Stevens which contradicts his assertion that he had not investigated the murder previously but they would do so in a few weeks as progress was made on the Secretary of State's legal advice.

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Anglo-Irish Division
5 May 1999

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