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AN RÚNAÍOCHT IDIR-RIALTASACH NA BREATAINE-NA hEIREANN BÉAL FEIRSTE

BRITISH-IRISH INTERGOVERNMENTAL SECRETARIAT BELFAST

RECEIVED 24 AUG 2000

33, 96

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Date: 23 August 2000 **No of pages including this one: 4**

Ms Griffin
Not passed on to the Taoiseach - will be overtaken by events
[illegible]
5.8.00

To: HQ **From: Belfast**

For: Fergal Mythen **From: Niall Holohan**

c.c Ray Bassett

copied directly to B. Callaghan, DJELR

Subject: Arrest of Johnny Adair

1. You will have received by now the statement issued last night by the Secretary of State announcing that the prisoner-release licence in respect of Johnny Adair has been suspended (a further copy of the statement is attached for ease of reference).

2. We indicated our disappointment to the other side this morning at their failure to alert us to the intended arrest of Adair - or at the very least to inform us at the same time as the press release was being issued. They expressed their apologies and claimed that they also had not been given advance notice of the Secretary of State's decision or of the police action. They attributed this lapse in communication to the fact that Mary Madden (who has taken over from Susan Scholefield) is new in the job and was being excessively cautious with what was, admittedly, very sensitive information. Madden has, however, agreed to visit the Secretariat in person to brief us more fully on the issue before the end of the week.

Contact p.m.

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3. The other side has told us that the army will remain deployed in the Shankill area at least until Friday when the funeral of Jackie Coulter is due to take place (it is thought that the Bobby Mahood funeral is less likely to give rise to trouble). In the meantime, seven loyalists are being held in custody on firearms charges arising from the recent disturbances in loyalist areas. These include one person arrested yesterday in West Belfast in connection with the murders of Coulter and Mahood. It is thought that another of those being held is a member of the RIR who may be charged with supplying weapons and other material to paramilitaries. This is believed to arise from the seizure of a firearm and ammunition in the Lisburn Road area of South Belfast on 21st August following which one person was initially arrested and two more held in a follow-up operation.

END

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NORTHERN IRELAND
Information Service

22 August 2000

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND, RT HON PETER MANDELSON MP

The Secretary of State, Peter Mandelson, has suspended the licence of a prisoner who had been released in July under the early release scheme. Mr Johnny Adair has been arrested by police officers and returned to prison.

Speaking at Hillsborough Castle this evening, the Secretary of State said:

'I took the decision to suspend the licence of this prisoner after receiving a full report from the security forces and on the advice of the police this morning. I have always promised that I would not hesitate to act on that advice and I shall do so again if need be.'

'My priority is public safety and I cannot give freedom to an individual intent on abusing it. I am satisfied that this particular individual has breached the terms of his licence.'

'I will not allow anyone to prejudice the interests of the whole community. The people of Belfast do not want to live under the heel of gangsters and thugs who use old style paramilitary methods for their own ends.'

'It is time for all of us to confront the dark side of Northern Ireland society, the mafia culture created by decades of paramilitary conflict. That is the next great challenge for all of us. I am determined that Government and police will play their full part, but it is up to everyone in Northern Ireland to turn their backs forever on individuals who are interested only in their own power and greed.'

'I urge community and political leaders to come forward now and show leadership. Loyalists must put the feuds of the past behind them for the sake of the new generation and the new prosperity we want in Northern Ireland.'

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Notes for editors:

The Secretary of State took the decision to suspend the licence early this morning, at a meeting with GOC and Deputy Chief Constable. He signed the appropriate papers this afternoon.

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