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From the Private Secretary

29 November 1993

- cc PS/SofS(B)
- PS/Michael Ancram (L+B)
- PS/PUS (L)
- PS/Mr Fell
- Mr Thomas
- Mr Beverell
- Mr Cooke
- Mr Maccabee
- Mr Rickard
- Mr Beeton

Jim Jonathan,

TELEPHONE CALL FROM MARTIN MANSERGH

Mansergh telephoned me shortly after 1pm today.

He complained about the statement in the Daily Telegraph that the Taoiseach was "pressing Mr Major to go beyond the declaration that Britain will not stand in the way of progress towards a united Ireland. He wants a commitment that Britain will work towards that goal...".

Mansergh implied that the Telegraph must have written this on the basis of British official briefing and pointed out that it was inaccurate and damaging. I said that I had not seen the piece and had no knowledge of how it was sourced.

Mansergh referred to the letter which the Taoiseach is sending today. I said that for the time being we were focussing on this afternoon's statement. The Prime Minister would obviously look carefully at the letter, and would doubtless wish to reply quickly. But the turmoil of the past few days had demonstrated the sensitivity of the political environment which Sir Robin Butler had described to the Taoiseach on 26 November. Mansergh said that our two Governments had come very close to agreement on the Irish proposal before recent events. I replied that there was a crucial difference between us, which was the judgement on precisely what was viable. A document which was acceptable to only one side would not achieve the desired effect. The IRA seemed to be bent on making our task much more difficult. They had had a destructive effect through their leak about exchanges with us.

Mansergh asserted that the document printed in the Observer had been leaked from the Government's side, not by the IRA. He derided the notion that

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the IRA would have leaked anything to Willie McCrea. He said that Nigel Dodds had claimed that the document had come from a Stormont source.

Hard as I argued against this latest conspiracy theory, Mansergh as always seemed unshakeable in his view.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Sawers (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Melanie Leech (Cabinet Office).

*Yours truly,
Roderic*

RODERIC LYNE

Jonathan Stephens Esq
Northern Ireland Office

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