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Ref. AO93/3664

MR LYNE

Joint Declaration: Conversation with Martin Mansergh

I spoke to Martin Mansergh this evening and gave him our amendments as indicated on the attached text. These include the amendments agreed by Ministers this morning, plus two emerging from Michael Ancram's non-talk with James Molyneaux (which I have marked M on the attached text). Mansergh gave me the further Irish amendments (which I have marked E on the attached text).

2. Our conversation was very friendly throughout, and Mansergh purported not to see any difficulty about most of our amendments, though saying that he was speaking ad referendum to the Taoiseach. He said that he would need to look closely at the amended first sentence to para 4, but, when we had run through all in the case of each of the others that he could not at first sight see why they should raise any substantial difficulty. I explained the Foreign Secretary's amendment to the first sentence of para 4, not in terms of achieving balance as an alternative and more acceptable way of bringing reference to "a sovereign united Ireland" in preference to the position lower in the paragraph: this seemed to commend itself to Mansergh. I also made clear that the Prime Minister had not finally committed himself to putting a constitutional guarantee in paragraph 2: this would depend on a satisfactory alternative opening to paragraph 4.

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## 3. As regards the Irish amendments:-

- i. the amendment to para 5 arises from discussion with the Unionist clergyman (presumably Magee) who had suggested a list of fundamental rights familiar to the Protestant community, which might appeal to those in the North. Unfortunately Mansergh had left the list in Dublin! At any rate, this amendment was simply a desire to help.
- ii. the amendments to para 10 were designed, according to Mansergh, not to brand the IRA too starkly as the only people giving up violence. Mansergh suggested dropping "in due course" in the third sentence but, when I said that this would not be acceptable, he did not press the idea.
- iii. Mansergh dictated a new final paragraph, which incorporates the idea of talks and which I have added to the version below.

I am arranging for the Northern Ireland Office to give you advice on the Irish amendments.

4. I passed on to Mansergh the remark made by Mr Molyneux to Mr Ancram that the Convention might be more acceptable if it were re-titled a "Forum". Mansergh, after expressing his astonishment, wondered whether we would then talk about "convening" or "re-convening" a forum. I said that the former would be safer. Mansergh thought that the Irish might have no difficulty about the word "Forum".

5. As regards the end-game Mansergh said that the Irish were still uncertain about what timing they wanted to propose for next week. He asked whether we would consider keeping two dates - say Tuesday and Thursday - open on a contingent basis. He suggested that the issue would depend on whether the Irish soundings indicated that a slightly longer period of preparation would

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increase the chances of a cessation of violence. I said that we had a terrible Parliamentary week next week but the Prime Minister still had an open mind both about timing in the week and between morning and afternoon. This should be discussed between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach tomorrow, as should the timing of the Irish Government's announcement of a Convention (or Forum): his remarks suggested that we should open the bidding by asking for quite a long delay. Mansergh said that the Irish were thinking of leaving three or four days before the Taoiseach reported to the Dail, which he might leave until Tuesday 21 December.

6. Finally, Mansergh said that the Irish had had a talk with Hume, which had gone very well, and they thought that there was a good prospect that Hume would be supportive. All in all, Mansergh sounded pretty chirpy.

7. I am copying this minute and the attachment to John Sawers (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Jonathan Stephens (Northern Ireland Office).

F.R.B.

ROBIN BUTLER

9 December 1993