MEETINGS WITH IRISH OFFICIALS AND SINFÉIN; EVENING OF 2 MAY

At the conclusion of the Downing Street talks, the Prime Minister asked Jonathan Powell, Bill Jeffrey and myself to continue discussions on a number of outstanding issues with Irish officials and with Sinn Féin. We paid two visits to the Irish Embassy for this purpose. Paddy Teahan, Dermot Gallagher, Tim Dalton and Ted Barrington were variously involved on the Irish side: Gerry Adams, Martin McGuinness, Bairbre de Brún, Aidan McAteer, Richard Macaulay and Leo Green on the Sinn Féin side.

Summary

5. On OTRs, the British side undertook to operate the Irish procedure of clarifying the position of named individuals and reviewing cases where appropriate, but with no
...guarantees of the outcome. Sinn Féin want an undertaking that the general principle of not pursuing OTRs will be recognised by July.

9. Sinn Féin warn that they still do not have a package they are prepared to put to the IRA; even if they go to the IRA, they are not sure they will get an answer by Thursday and warn that the language may not be exactly what the Governments want.
III. OTRs

15. Reflecting earlier discussions in Downing Street, Jonathan Powell said we were prepared to operate a similar system to the Irish one. If we were given a list of names, we would clarify with the police and the prosecuting authorities the position of those individuals and, where appropriate, review whether it remained in the public interest to pursue a prosecution. We thought we could deal with, say, 12 names in a month. But we could give no guarantee on the outcome of any review, because this was an independent decision for the prosecuting authorities under the Attorney General.
16. Aidan McAteer said that what was needed in addition was some commitment that, in July when all the remaining prisoners were due to be released anyway, there would be some statement of general principle that it was no longer generally in the public interest to pursue outstanding prosecutions. Leo Green also raised the continued existence of the Sentence Review Commissioners, their powers of recall, the various continuing restrictions on the rights and activities of ex-prisoners etc.

17. Gerry Adams said that Sinn Féin would give the Government as many names as they could – he did not know how many. It was presumably in our interest to deal with as many of these as possible on a case by case basis but, come July, there needed to be some broadly understood principle for dealing with outstanding cases.

18. Jonathan Powell reminded him that this was all in the context of agreement on the overall sequence. As for the post-July problem, we would look at it.
(Signed JAS)

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