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PSM: PSMS: PSSG:
Messrs. Murray, Teahon,
Mansergh & Dalton:
Ambassadors London &
Washington; Joint Secretary;
Counsellors A-I

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Secure Fax: 154SF

11 February 1998

No of pages including this one:

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**To: HQ
For: Secretary Gallagher**

**From: Belfast
From: Joint Secretary**

Ms. McLoughlin

Subj: Contact with UDP

*panel on to the
Tairis each
12/2/98*

1. British officials met the UDP yesterday, at the latter's request, and Paul Murphy is due to see them tomorrow.
2. Jonathan Stephens, who took part in yesterday's meeting, described it as a further informal and exploratory contact. The UDP (McMichael and Adams) emphasised their desire to rejoin the talks as quickly as possible, and ideally before next week. They held that this would be valuable for the process as a whole as it would build up confidence in the Unionist community. They wanted to know what timescale the Governments had for their re-entry and what they, or the UFF, could do to facilitate matters.
3. The British side recalled the terms of the determination reached by the two Governments, noting in particular the "words and deeds" reference. They criticised the ambiguities of the UFF statement but were careful not to present improved language as a precondition for re-entry.
4. The UDP claimed that the text of the UFF statement appended to the determination was not the "correct version". The final sentence of that statement read as follows: "The Republican movement must now rein in its dogs of war or the policy no first strike policy will not remain in force". In the corrected version, which they provided yesterday (attached), this final section reads as follows: "The Republican movement must now rein in its dogs of war. Our "no first strike" policy remains in force".

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5. The significance of the change is that the conditionality which the UFF statement attached to the "no first strike" policy is removed. This addresses, therefore, a serious ambiguity in the statement to which the British had previously pointed. The "no first strike" policy was, of course, itself an ambiguous element in the CLMC's 1994 ceasefire statement.
6. The UDP hinted to the British officials that they would try to persuade the UFF to make clear publicly that the 1994 ceasefire had now been unequivocally restored. In exchange, they hoped that readmission would be possible before Dublin. The British indicated that, even on a benign hypothesis about progress on the ground, they saw little likelihood of the Governments agreeing to readmit them until a period of roughly four weeks had elapsed since their expulsion. Were such a decision to be taken, they could be allowed back into their offices a week earlier (ie, in the week after Dublin). The UDP reacted unenthusiastically to this.
7. The British expectation is that McMichael and Adams will seek a meeting with the Secretary of State after they have met Murphy tomorrow. A possible scenario, predicated on the UFF ceasefire continuing to hold in word and deed, is that the Secretary of State might see them at the end of next week (ie, after Dublin), that she would then consult with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, that a joint invitation could then issue and that readmission could take place in the week beginning 2 March (with access to Castle Buildings being granted in the preceding week).
8. It was made clear to the UDP, however, that readmission could not happen if there were any UFF retaliation for yesterday's Dougan murder, or any further attacks on Loyalists. On Paul Murphy's instructions, Stephens rang McMichael later yesterday to drive this point home.

UFF STATEMENT AS PROVIDED BY MR MCMICHAEL, 9 FEBRUARY

"On August 25th 1995 we adopted a policy of 'no first strike'. Since the Canary Wharf bomb, the UFF has endured severe provocation from the republican movement without response. The current phase of republican aggression initiated by the INLA made a measured military response unavoidable. That response has concluded.

We note that all media and political attention has focused on the UFF while ignoring the accusation by the RUC Chief Constable that the IRA has engaged in military activity under a cover-name. That selectivity is a matter of concern.

The UFF wishes to make it clear that it remains committed to the search for a peaceful resolution of the conflict and supports the efforts of the UDP to secure a democratically acceptable political agreement.

The UFF recognises the importance of ending the current crisis and is prepared to fulfil its responsibilities. The Republican movement must now rein in its dogs of war.

Our 'no first strike' policy remains in force.