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CONSULATE GENERAL OF IRELAND
345 PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK, NY 10134-0037

TELEPHONE
(212) 319-2555
FAX
(212) 980-9475

Fax

SIS O'Leary
PST
PSS
Concannon A-1

To: HQ From: Consulate General of Ireland
For: Brenda Scannell From: Donal Hamill
91 519

U. M. 1

15 September, 1995

4 Pages only (including this cover sheet)

Subject: Visit of Gerry Adams to New York, 15 September, 1995

The main elements of Gerry Adams' visit to New York today comprised a luncheon at the corporate headquarters of Mutual of America, under the auspices of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy, and two fund-raisers.

The luncheon, which I attended, was arranged by Bill Flynn (see invitation attached). It was attended by about one hundred invited guests including New York comptroller Alan Hevesi, former Governor Hugh Carey, Bruce Morrison, Eoin McKiernan, Fr. Sean McManus as well as a number of business leaders like Pat Donaghy of Structure Tone (with Bill Flynn and Chuck Feeney one of the key corporate supporters of Gerry Adams), John Sharkey of MCI, John Gallagher of Arrow International, Joe Murphy (Country Bank) as well as some trade union representatives e.g. Ed Cleary, Paschal McGuinness, Joe Jamison.

In a presentation which he described at the end as not very up-beat, Adams' essential message was that the IRA had delivered but that the British Government had introduced a new pre-condition regarding decommissioning before all-party talks could begin. The euphoria and hope which had accompanied the cease-fire of 31 August was being replaced by disappointment and in some quarters by dismay and even anger. His visit to Washington had been "beneficial", "but there was still an impasse". There was, he said, no prospect of the IRA surrendering arms as a precondition or before there was substantial progress in the talks. He said that the British position on the decommissioning was purely tactical

and could have no other logic than to seek to fragment the consensus for peace in Ireland. He also argued that the decommissioning issue was an obstacle for John Hume and the Irish Government - and not just for Sinn Fein/IRA.

Adams quoted John Hume to the effect that the Unionists at present stand to get the best deal they could ever hope to. But the Irish alone could not move the situation forward, said Adams, but the U.S. could, however, move the British Government. He noted that the British Government had misread the ending of the first hunger-strike as weakness and capitulation - with the results known by all. He cautioned against wasting this present opportunity for peace through further British intransigence.

Q & A

Asked for his views about David Trimble's victory, Adams said he wished him well and, by providing a more assertive profile for the UUP, Trimble (as a known hardliner) might in fact be able to help deliver a deal.

Adams turned aside a question from Hugh Carey, as to whether Senator Mitchell would be able to twist his arm on the decommissioning issue, referring to him as a man of integrity and decency but at the same time deriding the "Washington Principles". Nevertheless, he added, "we have to find some way" to deal with the issue. 17

Press Conference

At a low-key press conference afterwards, Adams refused to give details of his White House discussions, saying only that the focus was on clearing obstacles and moving ahead towards all-party talks. He said he was encouraged by the continued commitment of President Clinton and by the evenhanded and balanced approach of his Administration.

In response to a question about the importance to Sinn Fein of the support of the American business community, Adams said that these were friends of peace who supported a peace settlement in Ireland but that they might equally support Sinn Fein, or the SDLP, Fine Gael or other parties.

In response to a question from Reuters, Adams said that the White House discussions were very focussed and very aware. He was encouraged by the consistency of President Clinton's approach and hoped that his forthcoming visit to Ireland may provide the necessary dynamic to move the situation forward. Thirteen months was too long for the British government to stall and, while there were no deadlines or ultimatums, there could be slippage backwards. Quoting the Tanaiste's comment on

the irony of the case-fires being met by a political vacuum, Adams said that stagnation could strangle the peace process.

Bill Flynn concluded the press conference by saying that the Adams' visit would be the first of several, that he hoped leaders of other political parties would avail of the opportunity of presenting their views also.

Comment

Adams got a close and attentive hearing and warm applause at the end, although from comments afterwards it was clear that some of the audience had difficulty in understanding everything he said. Fr. Sean McManus felt that Adams' downbeat and quite uncompromising approach contained within it the danger of being too negative. In his introduction of Adams, Bill Flynn had commented that no progress had been made, whereas McManus said that "a million things had happened" (he had just returned from his first visit home since the ceasefire and he was very up-beat about the transformation which he experienced there.) McManus felt that Adams was tired and in some pain from a back problem and that these were factors affecting his presentation on the day.



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345 PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK, NY 10154-0037

TELEPHONE
(212) 319-2555
FAX
(212) 980-9475

SECURE FAX # 7/95

*ph. cc PST
PSS
sec. oblig in
denial job
id list
Councillor #1
cc'd
84
"k"*

TO: HQ FROM: CGNY
FOR: O. O'HANRAHAN FROM: JAMES HENNESSY
ANGLO IRISH
DATE: 8 SEPTEMBER, 1995
RE: *o.j.k ul9* VISIT OF MARTIN MCGUINNESS TO NEW YORK -
COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. McGuinness addressed an off the record session of the Council at 4.30 pm yesterday. This would have been about the same time the Taoiseach delivered his Dublin Castle speech.

Background to success of ceasefire

McGuinness cited chemistry at a moment in time between John Hume, Gerry Adams, Albert Reynolds (and Charles Haughey to some extent). With influence of Bill Flynn, Niall O'Dowd, Joe Jamison and Dunfey family they had been able to develop a certain momentum.

This relationship has been continued under the current Taoiseach, Mr. John Bruton, T.D. and Tanaiste, Mr. Dick Spring, T.D. The Taoiseach has the advantage of being able to bring all the nationalist side to the negotiating table.

Joint Framework Document

McGuinness claimed that the JFD implies in first sentence that NI has been a dismal failure and the need to end partition. Noted cross border institutions with executive powers.

Procedures to-date

Asked about Madrid process for Middle East Talks, McGuinness was unsure if an outside body could help at this stage. SF have identified all party peace talks as the requirement.

The IRA ceasefire caught the British off guard. In talks over the last year with civil servants, then Michael Ancram and Patrick Mayhew, he has seen no sign of a grand plan or strategy on the other side.

Credibility of British Government

Panorama had exposed statements made by Mayhew to House of Commons as inaccurate.

Summit

British Government produced a red herring. Unionists never mentioned decommissioning until after the British Government began to push it. The British have no serious expectation that "the IRA would hand over weapons in a million years".

Prospects

The Peace Process should be taken out of the crisis mode. We need to be careful about the language we use at this time. All party peace talks are inevitable as there is no alternative. The Ulster Unionists will join in eventually.

"Eventually" depends on pragmatism and leadership of new leader. He could take a decision in 4/6 weeks to go to the table. British Government have given up on DUP joining in but Sinn Fein believe Ian Paisley is also needed for this process.

Clinton Visit

Will inject urgency into British Government. The White House and American people cannot be ignored.

c.c. Embassy, Washington
PMUN