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Yacineach
This is an important report on
US thinking
JFC 13/10

Confidential

US involvement in the Peace Process

Mr. Philip McDonagh, Counsellor at the Embassy in London, rang me from Blackpool, where he is attending the Conservative Party Conference. He said that he had learned from a well informed source that Tony Lake is to visit London on Monday. The purpose of his visit will be announced as being for negotiations on Bosnia. However, while he will talk about Bosnia, the real reason for his visit will be to follow-up on the visit of Nancy Soderberg. While in London, Lake will be seeking meetings with Hume, Trimble and others.

Mr. McDonagh said that this discovery had led him to try to find out more about the US position from Blair Hall of the US Embassy in London, who is also in Blackpool. Hall said that Trimble's White House meeting has been confirmed for 29 October and that the Embassy has an understanding that the President will see Trimble, if at all possible. Hall said that the Embassy expects the President to use the meeting to seek to persuade Trimble to agree to particular "aspects of the scenario".

Hall's understanding was that an initiative would be launched at a re-arranged summit. The initiative would be based on what he described as 'the revised paper'. The key elements would be a decommissioning body, a series of bilateral talks and a target date for all-party talks. Hall referred to two understandings which the Americans had:

- (i) that, for the time being, the UUP would not participate in the bilateral talks, but that this 'distancing' by the UUP would not signal an opposition to the process and would not provoke a breach in relations with Trimble;
- (ii) that if a target date of 31 December was set, Adams accepted that it would not be met and that the starting date would be delayed for a month or two.

According to Hall, the US hopes that the Decommissioning Body will be set up in early November, well in advance of Clinton's visit to Belfast. The intention would then be to use the President's visit to move things forward.

Hall said that the US hopes to use the President's visit to Belfast to pull together the various strands. He would take the opportunity to talk to the seven parties invited to Washington (SDLP, SF, Alliance, UUP, DUP, PUP and UDP). This would be done at a reception, rather than at formal bilaterals, although the occasion would be stage managed to ensure that conversations with each of the parties would take place out of earshot of the others. In this way, Hall explained, Clinton hopes to achieve a measure of understanding between the parties.

Hall said that the US Intention was that all parties would agree to accept that report of the Body on its merits. US expectation was that the Body might come up with a proposal for some kind of sequencing; ie A would happen when X happened, B would happen when Y happened, etc. Exactly what these sequences would be the US side did not know. They

had only discussed them over drinks. Hall said that the US expected the British and Irish Governments to be the motor on this point. He referred to the North Korean example.

According to Hall, Major wants to make rapid progress to fit in with his election calender. The British want the US to put pressure on Trimble, but the US side felt that Trimble needs more time if he is to avoid the risk of moving too far ahead of his support.

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PST, PSS, Second Secretary,
Counsellors A-I,
Messrs Teahon, Murray, Donlon, Dalton,
Ambassadors, Washington and London,
Joint Secretary, Belfast.