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Doiseanda

cc Mr. E. Murray
Mr. T. O'Brien
Amb. Small
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Counsellor A1
Mr. Seammell
JBL
27/9

CONFIDENTIAL

Do see please Ambassador

23 September 1993

*Gallagher's report in part would
pass ages marked. Nyl 28*

VISIT OF MORRISON GROUP TO NORTHERN IRELAND

Dear Assistant Secretary

1. I arranged to see Niall O'Dowd and Bill Flynn (separately) earlier this week to get a sense of their recent visit to Northern Ireland and how they intended to take their mission forward.

Background

2. Niall O'Dowd explained that the background to the visit lay in a discussion which he had approximately a year ago with the Head of Marketing of IBM (Jim Reilly). In response to O'Dowd's question about how a top American Executive might approach the Northern problem, Reilly made the point that a central difficulty seemed to be that all the parties involved, including Sinn Féin, were inside what he called the box and therefore unable to respond or react positively to each other's ideas and initiatives. What was probably required in the circumstances was a catalyst from outside the box, which might help one or more of the parties to move from its rigidity and, as a result, hopefully lead on to a chain movement.

3. The above led O'Dowd to the view that the proposed U.S.

Special Envoy might fill this catalyst role and help break the log-jam. As a result, the Morrison group, consisting of former Congressman Bruce Morrison, Ray Flynn, Niall O'Dowd and two prominent Irish-American businessmen, Bill Flynn and Chuck Feeney - both Members of the Government's Ireland-America Economic Advisory Board - came into being. (Ray Flynn, of course, is no longer a formal member of the group since taking up his post as U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican).

Meetings in Dublin

4. O'Dowd and Flynn were very appreciative of the time given to the group by the Taoiseach and the Tánaiste, and the comprehensive and extremely helpful briefing they received on those occasions.
5. They were also very grateful to the President for having received them on a courtesy call.

Meetings with Sinn Féin

6. Gerry Adams was accompanied at his meetings by Martin McGuinness and one or two other senior members of Sinn Féin. O'Dowd confirmed that the IRA ceasefire, which coincided with the group's visit, had been agreed in advance with Adams.
7. O'Dowd and Flynn said they had no doubt that Adams and McGuinness were serious and committed to finding a political way forward, though this clearly had to be on terms which they could sell to their organisation(s). Both Adams and McGuinness made the point that the conflict, which had now gone on for over twenty-five years, was being passed on to a new generation, many of whom would be the children of existing members of Sinn Féin. It was moreover the areas from which Sinn Féin drew most support which were bearing the brunt of the hardship and harassment arising from the troubles.

N.B.

8. Adams emphasised that the Republican movement attached very great importance to Irish America and, as a result, was able to respond to initiatives from that quarter with a flexibility that would be very difficult in any other context. It was for this reason that they readily agreed to a ceasefire during the group's visit. O'Dowd emphasised that it was clearly implicit in everything the Sinn Féin leaders said that, if a U.S. Special Envoy were appointed, the IRA would agree to a ceasefire in order to facilitate the Envoy's work. This was not, however, said explicitly at any time.
9. As an aside, O'Dowd said interestingly that neither Adams nor McGuinness seemed to trust the Noraid movement in the United States, nor the editorial board of the provisional paper here, The Irish People. The Morrison group had, he added, no contact with Noraid.

Other Meetings

10. The group seemed somewhat disappointed with their meeting with John Hume, perhaps because Hume (understandably) felt unable to go into much detail about his discussions with Adams.
11. The group found the meeting with the Official Unionists - and indeed various other Unionist individuals and groups (including Jackie Redpath) to be useful. On the Envoy issue, the Official Unionists made the point that Sir Ninian Stephen was in many ways fulfilling this role and was welcomed and trusted by them.
12. The group were particularly encouraged that the Official Unionists agreed to see them. It seemed clear to them that, as distinct from the 1984-85 period, the Unionists are now determined to take an active part in discussions, even if the

context might not be particularly welcome to them.

Bruce Morrison

13. I hope to see Bruce Morrison over the next week or so, and will report further at that stage. I should be able to get a sense at that time of how, and at what level, the group intend to convey a report of their talks to the Administration here. In the meantime, at the request of Senator Kennedy, they are travelling to Washington tomorrow, 24 September, to brief the Senator on their visit.

Yours sincerely



Dermot Gallagher
Ambassador

Seán Ó hUiginn Uas
Assistant Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs