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10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA 1994

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CIVIL SERVICE

From the Private Secretary

From Jonathan,

WHITE HOUSE/NORTHERN IRELAND

I discussed Northern Ireland for half an hour with Tony Lake on the evening of 8 July, using the brief in your letter of 7 July. Our talk was immediately followed by the meeting between the Prime Minister and the President. I enclose a record of the latter conversation. I also enclose the aide memoire in the form in which I sent it to Lake after these meetings.

My pitch to Lake was essentially as described in the aide memoire, although I also briefed him on the Joint Framework Document. (On the latter, I acknowledge that it would be difficult politically for the Taoiseach to make fundamental changes to Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution. However, this was essential if we were to reach agreement. I hoped that the Americans could encourage Reynolds to take the plunge. Lake saw the point, and indicated that Articles 2 and 3 were not consistent with the Joint Declaration.)

Lake did not press me on the Adams' visa, or explicitly disagree with the argument that Adams should not be readmitted to the US until there was a permanent end to violence. He seemed more interested in our advice on the four variants for reducing violence which Adams had floated with the White House. Lake said that the Americans of course did not wish to become an intermediary. But he seemed to suggest that the first variant in particular - ie standing down offensive action, while reserving the right for the Provisionals to defend themselves - would come close to what we wanted, and that we should offer positive encouragement for it. I took the line that either this variant or a commitment to a long (or indefinite) cease fire could be a very positive step, and possibly a step leading towards a permanent cessation. However, we would need to study the fine print, and, above all, to see what actually happened on the ground before we made a firm judgement. I stressed that we would not make additional concessions to bring the Provisionals on board. Our offer was spelled out in the Joint Declaration, and it would be fatal to tilt in the direction of the Provisionals or appear to reward 20 years of violence.

Comment

Lake clearly had the bit between his teeth. I imagine that he may be under pressure from whichever Irish-American politician received the message from Adams. He came close to arguing that the Provisionals would be justified in exercising the right to self-defence. I countered that it was our task to defend, to the best of our ability, both sides of the community. In any case, they tended to use violence in retaliation rather than self-defence.

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Clinton was mainly in listening mode with the Prime Minister. However, his remark about "cutting across the grain" suggested that he thought the Provisionals were on the track towards ending violence.

I am sending copies of this letter and enclosure (by fax) to Sir Robin Renwick in Washington and to John Sawers (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Melanie Leech (Cabinet Office).

Yours truly,
Roderic Lyne
RODERIC LYNE

Jonathan Stephens, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office.

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WASHINGTON 1
Northern Ireland

The Prime Minister referred to my discussion beforehand with Tony Lake about Northern Ireland (recorded separately). He believed that the Provisionals were divided. Some clearly favoured an end to violence, some equivocated, and some were wedded to hardline policies. We could not be confident of the direction the Provisionals were taking or the impressions which their leadership chose to feed out, for example to the Irish Government. There was certainly a risk of further large scale outrage. President Clinton remarked that this would "cut across the grain". The Prime Minister replied that, all too often, leading Provisionals had suggested that one more concession or one more push would do the trick. We had moved a long way in the Joint Declaration. The Taoiseach had taken further steps, for example in lifting the broadcasting ban. But the problem was still with us.

The Prime Minister briefly described negotiations with the Irish Government for a Joint Framework Document. The problem of the Irish Constitution was a large impediment still to be overcome. The Taoiseach was wrestling with it. The Prime Minister hoped that we would be able to complete the work in July or September. If we failed, this would not be for lack of effort.

JSW:CM

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