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FROM: D A L COOKE
SIL DIVISION
2 FEBRUARY 1993

cc PS/Ministers (L&B) - B&M
PS/PUS (L&B) - B
PS/Mr Fell - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Ledlie - B
Mr Loughran - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Watkins *YU* - B
Mr Steele *L.7* - B
Mr Williams - B
Mr Wood (L&B) - B
Mr Maccabe - B
Mr D J R Hill - B
Mr Dodds - B
Mr Brooker - B
HMA Dublin - B
Mr Archer, RID, FCO
Mr Pellew, NAD
Mr Powell, Washington Embassy
HMCG Boston

R
1. 3/2
2. pt. 3/1 for Thursday's mtg.
together with X, Y, Z on
pp. 4 & 5 of pp.
2.2

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (L&B) - B

A US PEACE ENVOY FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

The question of the US peace envoy for Northern Ireland is on the agenda for the Secretary of State's VCR meeting at 4.00pm on 4 February. It is addressed in the attached paper. This has been prepared by Mr Brooker and Mr Margetts, and reflects advice from the FCO and the Washington Embassy.

2. This covering submission summarises the main points.

3. On the substance we should:

- continue to oppose a peace envoy or a US Ambassador in Dublin with a Northern Ireland role

CONFIDENTIAL

RN/SIL/20701

CONFIDENTIAL

- if necessary, make clear that we would deal in the usual co-operative way with anyone sent on a fact-finding mission, while bringing out that we could not control the degree of co-operation by others which such a person might encounter in Northern Ireland, and that much would depend on the identity and the remit of the person carrying out such a mission.

4. As to tactics, we should look out for positive ways in which Mr Clinton could deliver on the spirit of his election promises and demonstrate interest in Northern Ireland without damaging the political development process. To this end we should:

- play the issue long. There are many minds in Washington receptive to the idea that nothing the Americans do should cut across our attempts to get Round 3 of the Talks going, or jeopardise the political development process
- concentrate on how valuable US support for the Talks process itself has been and would continue to be
- invite the Ambassador to continue to keep in close touch with Tony Lake and Peter Tarnoff (the new Under Secretary of State in the State Department, likely to be the official dealing with this issue). The Ambassador will emphasise the need for the Americans to consult us before doing anything
- brief the Prime Minister to raise the subject briefly with President Clinton when he visits later this month. The Prime Minister could offer to keep the Clinton administration fully informed of the progress made in the Talks. This could be followed up in the Secretary of State's own visit

CONFIDENTIAL

RN/SIL/20701

CONFIDENTIAL

- continue to keep in close touch with Speaker Foley. Foley has been extremely helpful on Northern Ireland, and forthright in his public condemnation of IRA violence. He has already spoken to President Clinton to put him right on Northern Ireland. He opposes the idea of the peace envoy. He may want to visit Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland shortly. He could then report back to President Clinton. His involvement in this way would make the best of the notion of the fact-finding mission, and should minimise the risk of interference by Flynn, Morrison or others. Foley's people think that this could lead to some positive initiative such as an increase in the US contribution to the International Fund for Ireland

- continue while we can to use the present US Ambassador in London, Ray Seitz, as an ally

- keep the Irish Government on side as far as possible. Mr Spring has so far been equivocal. But the Irish Government has previously accepted that the peace envoy idea could jeopardise the Talks.

5. If the Secretary of State agrees, we will confirm this approach to the Washington Embassy, and brief accordingly for the Prime Minister's forthcoming encounter.

(SIGNED)

D A L COOKE
TALKS PLANNING UNIT
2 FEBRUARY 1993
OAB EXT 6587

CONFIDENTIAL

RN/SIL/20701

CONFIDENTIAL

ANNEX A

A PEACE ENVOY FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

A meeting has been arranged at 4 pm on 4 February (VCR) to discuss the Secretary of State's forthcoming visit to the United States and Mr Clinton's Northern Ireland agenda. This paper provides a basis for discussion of the idea of a peace envoy. It recommends that the Government should continue to resist the idea and recommends a strategy for our reaction to any further pressure for the idea.

The current position

2. As the Secretary of State will be aware, we have very little direct information from the Clinton camp about what his intentions are. All we have to go on are his brief statements during the election campaign -

"I want you to know that I am committed to Irish issues such as the special envoy and that I intend to deliver them.

I support a peace envoy. We have been a little reluctant to relay our interests in a positive way because of two reasons: our long-standing relationship with Great Britain and also the perception that this situation in Northern Ireland is a very thorny problem".

3. In the last couple of weeks, however, the Washington Embassy and Consul-General in Boston have had discussions with Congressman Morrison (the recipient of the celebrated Clinton letter), and with close advisers to Senator Kennedy and Mayor Flynn, which have begun to throw some light on the manoeuvrings now taking place. Mayor Flynn, together with other members of "Irish-Americans for Clinton/Gore", met a member of the

CONFIDENTIAL

- 1 -

SC/SIL/20701

CONFIDENTIAL

Presidential transition team on 14 January but do not appear to have secured any undertakings. A copy of their statement issued after the meeting is at Annex B. According to Flynn's adviser on Irish affairs Flynn and Morrison are now beginning to realise the difficulties of delivering a peace envoy and the ball has been put back in their court, by the Clinton transition team, to come up with constructive ideas. The possibilities being canvassed - as we know from press reports - include a "strong" Dublin Ambassador with a specific brief to involve himself in Northern Ireland, and a political appointment to the Consulate-General in Belfast with primarily an economic development brief, but also a mandate to engage in political fact-finding. It is apparent from the Washington and Boston reports that the Flynn/Morrison camp is unsure about what might be achievable, that the Clinton team seems to be remaining basically neutral, and that there might well be an opportunity for the British Government to exploit the present uncertainties to influence the eventual outcome.

An Envoy - the options

4. Three options have been mentioned so far -

A peace envoy

Although this has never been defined, we assume that what Mr Clinton might have had in mind was somebody who would play an active role in bringing together the British and Irish Governments and political parties in Northern Ireland - possibly including Sinn Fein - to try to induce movement towards a political settlement. The appointment has been described as a "catalyst". It has been common ground between the two Governments (at least until Mr Spring's more cautious approach on 22 January) that any envoy appointed specifically to get involved in the political process in Northern Ireland runs the risk of jeopardising

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

SC/SIL/20701

CONFIDENTIAL

the re-start of political talks. Since the proposal has arisen from the Irish/American lobby it will also be difficult for the administration to present it as a neutral proposition. Moreover, whatever the state of political development in Northern Ireland the Unionists are always likely to be sceptical of any external involvement. Peter Robinson has already spoken out against an envoy and we all recall the occasion, in May 1991, when the Unionist leaders sought, and obtained, a meeting with the Prime Minister in order to secure assurances that the appointment of an Independent Chairman for Strand II of the talks did not amount to "international arbitration".

In most circumstances an external envoy would be inimical to our interests. It would detract from our analysis that Northern Ireland's political problems are essentially a matter for the two Governments and the Northern Ireland parties and, in the longer term, it could make it harder to resist calls for greater international intervention - such as an international peace-keeping force. Again, the Unionists would almost certainly see it as the thin end of the wedge.

We take it, therefore, that, save in exceptional circumstances, the involvement of a third party is something which the British Government would continue to resist. Nevertheless, we could not rule it out in all circumstances. There might conceivably be circumstances where, if political dialogue had stalled and the security situation were going through a particularly difficult period, an external, third party might offer a viable chance for a new initiative. The choice of candidate would, of course, be crucial but we could not rule out the possibility that the Americans could produce someone who would be acceptable both within Northern Ireland and

CONFIDENTIAL

- 3 -

SC/SIL/20701

CONFIDENTIAL

throughout the island of Ireland. On the face of it, someone like ex-President Carter could be difficult to reject. Ministers will therefore want to bear in mind - including in the phrasing of their public statements - that we could probably not rule out the idea of an envoy in all circumstances, although it is something we would not generally encourage.

An Economic Envoy

The appointment of a special envoy, primarily with an economic development remit but also with a mandate to engage in political fact-finding, is superficially more attractive than a "political" peace envoy. It would come somewhat further down the scale of political sensitivity than the latter proposition. In practice, however, any person appointed by the US Government with a special Northern Ireland brief, particularly a brief containing an element requiring political involvement, could run into the same difficulties as a "political" envoy. The Unionists would perceive it as a political envoy by the back door and, again, there would be fears that it was the first step in a process of wider involvement by the US. Nor should we necessarily assume that the Irish Government would automatically sign up to it. They might feel that it would diminish their bilateral relationship with the British Government and, by providing a special impetus for inward investment in Northern Ireland, could cut across their own domestic economic interests.

A Dublin Ambassador with a Northern Ireland remit

X PUS has already exposed, in his minute of 18 January,
Y compelling reasons why we should be cautious about this
idea. Mr Williams (his minute of 20 January) and the

CONFIDENTIAL

- 4 -

SC/SIL/20701

CONFIDENTIAL

2 Secretary of State (Mr Fittall's minute of 21 January) subsequently endorsed his reservations. As with the economic envoy it shows that the Flynn/Morrison camp are thinking hard to try to identify a viable alternative to an overtly political envoy but it completely ignores the Northern Ireland sensitivities. Unlike the economic envoy it might have attractions for the Irish Government; if they played their cards right they might see it as strengthening their hand over the British Government. But the US Ambassador in Dublin would have no accreditation in NI, and the US Ambassador in London would hardly be happy about the undermining of his authority.

5. None of these options would be attractive to the British Government. They could all interfere with our attempts to get political development firmly back on track and would amount to unjustified external intervention. We should also not allow ourselves to be drawn into the automatic assumption that because the Irish-American lobby is making a lot of noise about an envoy President Clinton is, himself, necessarily committed to it. We have an opportunity to influence him. For the reasons set out above we have a strong case for resisting any form of envoy; we should continue to make that our overriding objective.

Recommended Strategy

6. The Secretary of State is recommended to agree the following strategy or action plan.

- We should try to play the issue long. Even Morrison accepts that nothing the Americans do should cut across our attempts to get the Talks going again. As long as we are engaged in a talks process - which Clinton supports - we should be well placed on the subject.

CONFIDENTIAL

- 5 -

SC/SIL/20701

CONFIDENTIAL

- We should ask the Ambassador to keep in close touch with Tony Lake (National Security Advisor) and Peter Tarnoff (the new Under Secretary of State in the State Department, likely to be the official dealing with this issue). HMA will emphasise the need for Americans to consult us before doing anything.

- We should concert closely with Speaker Foley. Foley has been extremely helpful on Northern Ireland, and forthright in his public condemnation of IRA violence. He has already spoken to President Clinton to put him right on Northern Ireland. He opposes the idea of a "peace envoy". We are in touch with his office about the idea of a trip by Foley to Ireland - North and South - which could act as a fact-finding mission. He could then report back to President Clinton. Foley's involvement should minimise the risk of interference by Flynn, Morrison and others. Foley's people think this could lead to some positive initiative such as an increase in the US contribution to the International Fund for Ireland.

- We should concert with the Irish Government as far as we can, although Mr Spring has so far been cautious.

Briefing for the Prime Minister

7. Although the Morrison/Flynn lobby is keeping the pressure on the Clinton administration we should not assume that the President has, in fact, reached any firm conclusions on a peace envoy. For the reasons set out in the submission we should continue to make it our first objective to resist any such appointment. The Ambassador is continuing to work hard on his contacts with key personnel in the States to play the notion down. In particular, the Embassy will be trying to influence the drafting of the St. Patrick's day statement which we might

CONFIDENTIAL

- 6 -

SC/SIL/20701

CONFIDENTIAL

reasonably expect to be the first formal comment on Northern Ireland by the new administration. The Prime Minister's meeting with Mr Clinton later this month will also provide an opportunity to influence the President's thinking. Subject to the outcome of the discussion with the Secretary of State we might aim to advise the Prime Minister that -

- any form of special appointment to intervene in the Northern Ireland situation carries with it substantial risks, especially for the political talks at the present time. Our first objective should be to steer Mr Clinton away from any such appointment whether it is put in terms of a peace envoy, an economic envoy, or a Dublin Ambassador with a Northern Ireland remit;
- we have been deeply grateful for the support of the previous administration for the political talks and are glad that Mr Clinton recognises the potential which they offer. In London, Ray Seitz has provided invaluable help and advice;
- the best thing that the new administration could do for Northern Ireland would be to keep on giving support to the talks and emphasising the unacceptability of political violence. Any public expression of US support for attempts to get the political dialogue restarted would be very welcome. We will keep you in close touch with progress;
- [only if raised] we would, of course, co-operate with any fact-finding mission. But we cannot speak for the Northern Ireland parties. Inevitably, media talk of a peace envoy has aroused acute suspicions. If the British Government were asked to give its views on any mission with an interventionist role, we would have to make clear that we did not regard this as helpful.

CONFIDENTIAL

- 7 -

SC/SIL/20701

CONFIDENTIAL

FF

- [only if raised] much would depend on the remit of
amu fact-finding mission and on who was to carry it
out. Someone like Speaker Foley might be best placed
to secure the co-operation of others in addition to
that of HMG.

SIL Division

CONFIDENTIAL

- 8 -

SC/SIL/20701

CONFIDENTIAL

ANNEX B

STATEMENT ISSUED BY MAYOR FLYNN ON 14 JANUARY

Irish-Americans for Clinton/Gore was created in 1992 in an effort to mobilise the support of all Americans concerned about ending the senseless violence in Northern Ireland and bringing peace and justice. Governor Bill Clinton was the candidate Irish-Americans believed would not only provide the leadership and commitment for the people of the United States, but would provide the moral leadership across the world, particularly in Northern Ireland.

Since Governor Clinton's victory in November, we have solicited the input and expertise of leading statesmen, human rights advocates, academicians, and Irish-American spokespersons about the best way to engage the British and Irish sides in a constructive manner, respectful of the existing talks which have recently been concluded.

Our intention is to help renew those important negotiations, and to support a resolution which must ultimately be determined by the people of those islands. To that end, the United States Government must exert its prestige, influence and good will in a manner which helps to bring about a purposeful series of negotiations which includes every point of view.

Working with the Clinton administration, Irish-American leaders in Congress, the British and Irish Governments, and the significant body of citizens active in Irish-American organisations, we hope to distil and then transform this energy and commitment into a humane, proactive, and efficient forum for peace and justice in Northern Ireland.

CONFIDENTIAL

- 9 -

SC/SIL/20701

CONFIDENTIAL

Today we discussed with the transition team the contents of a letter Mr Clinton wrote to Irish-Americans for Clinton/Gore on October 23 1992, which included the following topics:

- opposition to violence and terrorism, whether by paramilitary organisations or Government forces;
- fair employment in Northern Ireland and the MacBride principles;
- the notion of a special U.S. envoy as a catalyst to securing a lasting peace;
- human rights issues;
- the role of U.S. courts in political asylum cases.

Encouraged by the commitment of the Clinton administration to undertake genuine, substantial, and steady progress in the quest for peace in Northern Ireland, we will rely on the entire community for input into a series of recommendations to support President Clinton's agenda. Our goal as Irish-Americans is to replace senseless violence and injustice with jobs and economic development in Northern Ireland.

CONFIDENTIAL

- 10 -

SC/SIL/20701