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**Reference Code:** 2021/49/131

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AMBASA'D NA HEIREANN, LONDAIN



IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON

CONFIDENTIAL

24 February, 1995.

Mr. Seán O hUiginn,  
Second Secretary,  
Anglo-Irish Division,  
Department of Foreign Affairs,  
St. Stephen's Green,  
DUBLIN 2.

Dear Second Secretary,

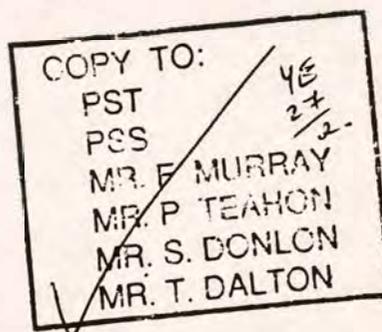
Conversation with the American Ambassador

The American Ambassador, William Crowe, joined me for lunch today and the main points of interest are summarised hereunder. Unlike his predecessor, whose grasp of Northern Ireland issues was impressive, Crowe's knowledge is much more rudimentary. This was, of course, a limiting factor in our discussion.

Reaction to the JFD

As expected, much of our conversation concentrated on the Joint Framework Document and the reaction thereto, not only in these islands but around the world. I thanked him warmly for the very helpful, positive statement by President Clinton and noted that supportive statements had also been made by several other American politicians. He was aware of the Tánaiste's visit to Washington next week and confirmed that a similar visit planned by Sir Patrick Mayhew had been postponed.

Crowe asked for an assessment on our part of the prospects of engaging the Unionists in talks, following their hostile reaction to the JFD. My reply was that the reaction of the Unionists was highly predictable. There was a consistency of behaviour over the past century and more, whenever a political initiative they did not like was unveiled. With regard to the JFD, a serious attempt had been made to discredit it before it was even published. Paisley had described it as a proclamation of war before he had even seen it. The important thing was that there was overwhelming support for the efforts



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of the two Governments among the main political parties in the House of Commons and, most interestingly, within the Tory Party. Unlike 1985, when several Tory MPs, led by Ian Gow, rebelled against the Anglo-Irish Agreement, there was no evidence of support in the Commons for Unionist intransigence. A great many people of Unionist background in Northern Ireland, including the business community, wanted talks to take place with a view to achieving a political settlement. In brief, they wanted the shaky ceasefires to be converted into permanent peace, after a generation of mayhem. I suggested to Ambassador Crowe that the existence of UUP and DUP papers on the way forward made it easier for them to swallow their pride - I was on the verge of saying "to eat crow!" - and join in the talks. The fact that they had published their documents before the launch of the JFD made it easier still for them to save face. I added that Paisley's willingness to engage would always be doubtful. If he did join, it would probably be for the purpose of wrecking the talks. My American colleague was of the view that Paisley was unlikely to remain on the sideline. He was aware that the new political parties representing the loyalist paramilitaries were being much more realistic and careful in their reaction to the JFD.

#### Sinn Féin Fund-raising in America

The question of Sinn Féin's desire to engage in fund-raising in the United States naturally arose in the course of conversation. Crowe was of the view that it was a question of "when" rather than "whether" permission would be granted. It was unlikely that the green light would be given at this juncture because of:

- a desire to avoid hurting or embarrassing John Major at a time when he had shown much courage and tenacity;
- the jittery state of the Unionists in the wake of the publication of the JFD;
- the fact that Sinn Féin have not yet registered any progress or movement on the arms issue.

Asked whether a favourable decision would be made in Washington if the British/Sinn Féin talks were elevated to Ministerial level on the British side, Crowe answered with an emphatic yes. He thought it was foolish of Adams not to make the required gesture - and a gesture is all that the British required - to enable the talks to be upgraded. He felt that the impact of such action on the part of Sinn Féin would be very positive indeed, especially in the United States. He also said he hoped Gerry Adams would not publicly criticise

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the American administration for its failure to acquiesce. Any such action on his part would be counterproductive and harden attitudes in Washington. He was aware of Adams' plans to visit the U.S. in mid-March.

Without mentioning Senator Kennedy by name, Ambassador Crowe made the interesting observation that since last November's elections the influence of the politicians from "North-Eastern United States" had waned in Washington. The President was not "hearing" nearly as much now as he was then. Crowe was alluding indirectly, of course, to the petition initiated by Senator Kennedy calling for permission for Sinn Féin to fund-raise in the United States.

#### Washington Visit of Unionist Delegation

I asked the Ambassador how the visit of the Unionist delegation led by Rev. Martin Smyth, M.P. had got on. He said their negative attitude to the Joint Framework Document had not gone down well in Washington. He felt it was foolish of them, indeed counter-productive, to adopt such tactics. It was very difficult for Americans to understand the Unionists refusal to talk, given that the JFD was intended to aid discussion.

#### Unionist/Tory Relations

We discussed briefly the strained relations between the Tories and the Unionists arising from the Joint Framework Document. Crowe was of the view that Molyneux was too shrewd to go so far as to cause a general election. He acknowledged that Molyneux's own leadership was under pressure and that there were some hot-heads within his Party who were unhappy with him.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



Joseph Small  
Ambassador