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Mr. Hillier

S.H. 10.1.95

*I advise
This report is of
particular interest*

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(RMA)

AST
PSS
MR. MURRAY
MR. TEAHON
MR. DENLON

CONFIDENTIAL

10/2/95

Meeting with Mr. Gerry Adams and Fr. Alec Reid
Dublin, 7 February, 1995

SEEN BY
Taoiseach
9/1/95

1. I met Mr. Gerry Adams and Fr. Alec Reid at their request in the Forum Secretariat this afternoon.
2. The purpose of the meeting seemed to be to convey concern at (i) what Sinn Fein saw as lack of movement by the British, and (ii) about the content and circumstances of the Joint Framework Document. I assured Mr. Adams that his views would be conveyed to the Taoiseach and Tanaiste and took notes for this purpose. He welcomed this.
3. He enquired about likely progress on the Framework Document. I indicated that the last official meeting had been constructive, but we were still awaiting a conclusive indication of British thinking at Ministerial level. I thought we would have a better indication as to prospects and timing after the Tanaiste met Sir Patrick Mayhew early next week. It was likely to be sooner rather than later.
4. Mr. Adams expressed concern that the content and timing of the Framework Document could be difficult from the point of view of his supporters. He recalled, in very extensive detail, the background to the peace process. Republican supporters would see the pattern as one of diminishing circles from the time of the Hume-Adams report. The ceasefire had been sold on the basis of "three pieces of the jigsaw": the Irish-American dimension, the relationship with John Hume and the commitment of the Fianna Fail/Labour Government. There had been change in the Government, although the Tanaiste was a common factor to both. The US was not delivering, on an issue as basic and important as fundraising. The Hume factor was the only one which had not

changed. Most of the progress on the peace process had come from leadership initiatives within the nationalist community. These had been collective and credible. It was very important that these qualities should be preserved.

5. Mr. Adams said that for as long as the British were a "occupying element" there would also be sizeable Republican opposition. Leaving aside the permanent "1950s element" in Republicanism, which bore little relationship to the scope and importance of the present Republican movement, the broad base of their support would always want to know that the goal of ending British rule would be achieved or that the goal of ending British rule was being pursued. He added that Republicans were also radical on social and economic issues such as unemployment, etc. Mr. Adams said that the problems of the Republican movement had not come from the lack of commitment or entinuity available to pursue the armed struggle, but from the under-development of Sinn Fein politically, including in this State.

[This view was also given by the Garda Commissioner when he met him recently]

6. He had been pursuing the political path since 1986. (He referred to a number of An Phoblacht articles around that time). The progress towards politics had been achieved without schism (apart from RSF). There was a strong sense of comradeship within the Republican movement, but that would not survive "a hard bump". An old Republican hand had said to him "It's like watching a play. You were all right so far". Mr. Adams stressed there was now a growing sense of disquiet within the Republican community in the wider sense. The Bloody Sunday Commemoration had drawn twenty-seven buses from Belfast. (There had been four last year). He quoted a number of examples of lack of understanding: Ancram's statement today that they were not ready for talks with Sinn Fein, the Clegg affair, etc. The Sinn Fein leadership were seen as doing their best and getting no response. He instanced an old man in the street who had

shouted to him as he had walked his dog at the weekend, "It won't last too long now, Gerard", as typical of the thinking which was emerging. The unionist refusal to move, and the British position to move even on minor matters of importance to Sinn Fein, contributed to this. Nell McCafferty had written of "Sinn Fein talking to itself". That was typical of the way many Republicans viewed their talks with the British.

7. Mr. Adams said that he felt they were heading for a crisis in their talks with the British Government, which could not be put off for much longer. He was fully aware of the tactical dangers of this, and had indeed reminded his delegation last night that in talking to the British Government they should realise they were "talking to the Americans". Nevertheless a point came where they could no longer play down the difficulties, or play up the importance of their contacts with the British. He wondered how the Joint Framework Document could be factored in to such a crisis situation.
8. Mr. Adams then listed a number of areas of particular concern for Sinn Fein. One of these concerned the Strand One document. I explained we were not privy to that draft, but that it had been suggested publicly it would be on the lines sketched out in Strand One of the 1992 Talks. I gave a broad outline of these. Mr. Adams said that Hume had told him that he had never agreed to any such procedure. Neither Hume nor himself would accept any approach which set up an Assembly and left the North-South structures to further consideration by that Assembly.
9. Mr. Adams referred to his recent interview in the Irish Times. His followers were afraid of a situation where they would get sucked in and "sin é". There had to be a willingness to move beyond the status quo. Martin

McGuinness had been consistent and pragmatic on this. His view was that Republicans needed to be able to "measure the degree of movement". There was however a clear danger, despite the present unity of Republican leadership, that if the present strategy did not work, violence would reassert itself. There would be a need for a Sinn Fein review conference this year on the lines of the Letterkenny conference to review the position, and consolidate the policy of the leadership.

10. Mr. Adams repeated his frustration at the talks with the British. He felt their approach was entirely tactical, to show Sinn Fein as a mirror image of the Loyalists. If the Loyalists had had guns at the time of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, they would have used them. The guns had been supplied by British intelligence since then, and had been used. He felt the British were using the talks to try to split any nationalist consensus. I suggested, as Secretary Teahon had done with Martin McGuinness last week, that they were exaggerating the significance of Ministerial involvement in the talks. There were ways in which officials might a better conduit into the British system. It was clear however that Sinn Fein were strongly focussed on the symbolic aspect of Ministerial involvement.

11. Reverting to his Irish Times interview, Mr. Adams said it would be important for his followers to be able to view the Joint Framework Document or structures envisaged in it as transitional. I recalled the British Government had absolutely refused to be "persuaders for unity". We had however felt it valuable that they were "persuaders for agreement". In the same way they refused to commit themselves to anything beyond the "level playing field" between the two aspirations. However I pointed out that combined with parity of esteem this was a very valuable platform for nationalists to pursue their aspirations

peacefully. The document would obviously not conform to Republican wishes in all respects. However they, too, could seek to better it in negotiations.

12. Mr. Adams also expressed his worries about the fundraising issue in the United States. His visa was due for renewal on or about March 3rd. He hoped the renewed visa would waive restrictions on fundraising. He had been in touch with Senators Kennedy and Dodd and with Bruce Morrison on the issue. I recalled the supportive position which the Government had taken on this. At the end of our meeting, Mr. Adams mentioned a request from John Hume for a meeting with the Taoiseach and Tanaiste in the margins of the Forum on Friday. I said that John Hume had already put in the request. There was a scheduling problem in that the Taoiseach was in Cork on Friday. We were looking at alternatives and also at the Tanaiste's schedule. We would come back to him on this issue.
13. On the general question of Ministerial involvement in the British talks, I recalled the helpful position adopted by the Government at their last meeting. We would be following up with British officials in the Liaison Group and urging that the talks should be moved to Ministerial level.
14. Mr. Adams said he would welcome a "philosophical" discussion on the broad policy approaches as seen by the Government. I agreed in principle at some mutually convenient time.
15. I also briefed him on progress in securing access for Mr. Pat McGeown to Full Sutton prison. He was very appreciative of the work of Mr. Teahon and Embassy officials on this.


Sean O hUiginn
7 February, 1995