



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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EMBASSY OF IRELAND

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SECURE FAX NO: 52

3 JULY 1995

TO: HQ  
FOR: GERRY CORR  
FROM: NOEL KILKENNY

*Assessment  
for my work  
to see  
JH 4/7/95*

*PST, 7 July  
ISS.  
Secretary of the  
Secretariat  
Emb London.  
Counsellors of I  
D/T: ~~Mr~~ MURRAY  
Mr TRAHAN  
Mr DONLAN*

RECENT US APPROACHES TO SINN FÉIN AND THE LOYALISTS

1. In a conversation with Mr Paul Van Son, Irish Desk Officer at the State Department, we discussed recent contacts which the Administration had undertaken with Sinn Féin and the Loyalist parties in Northern Ireland. While the approaches were common to all three organisations, it was recent Sinn Féin speeches and articles, in particular on the ending of the Antrim talks and the possible resumption of violence, which had given rise to heightened US concern about the peace process.

Sinn Féin

2. The approach to Sinn Féin was made on 27 June. Ambassador Kennedy Smith tried to reach Adams by phone but was initially unable to do so and instead sent the speaking points to him by fax. Later in the day, Sinn Féin Chairman Mitchel McLaughlin came to see her and she went through the speaking points with him. Still later on the 27th, Adams contacted her and they had a discussion on the issue. The following are the principal speaking points used in the contacts with Sinn Féin:

- The US recognised the contribution and the great personal courage shown in bringing about the cease-fire. This must now be built upon.
- Sinn Féin must be prepared to take additional confidence-building measures.

- Sinn Féin and the Loyalist parties had many roles to play in enabling the Unionist parties to join with them in all-party talks.
- In his meeting with Lake on March 14 Adams agreed that Sinn Féin would address decommissioning seriously in its meetings with British ministers. The expectation of progress on this issue had been a major element in the decision to grant Adams a fund-raising visa. It was expected that Sinn Féin would engage British ministers in serious and substantive discussions aimed at establishing a process which could be used for decommissioning of paramilitary weapons.
- The US Administration had not received formal briefing from the British on their talks with Sinn Féin but it was their understanding that while Sinn Féin accepted a British paper on decommissioning, they had not had serious discussions about the practical modalities of decommissioning. A lack of serious engagement on the issue at this time raised doubts about the ultimate intentions of the Republican movement with respect to decommissioning.
- Sinn Féin could not continue to rely solely on the cease-fire as sufficient evidence to convince Unionists to join with them in all-party talks.
- Recent references and speeches to a possible return to violence were singularly unhelpful in bringing about the positive political atmosphere conducive to persuading Unionist parties to join all-party talks which would include Sinn Féin and the Loyalist parties.
- The US strongly urged Sinn Féin to continue ministerial level talks with the British Government and to establish confidence-building measures to achieve a positive political atmosphere which emphasised the importance of a lasting peace for the lives of all citizens in Northern Ireland.

### Sinn Féin Response

3. McLaughlin told the Ambassador that Sinn Féin was worried about the current impasse in the peace process. Sinn Féin did not want any extra pressure on it at this time and McLaughlin was particularly concerned that news on this extra American pressure not get out. He said there was no chance of IRA weapons being handed over in the absence of clear political progress. He said that no gesture on decommissioning was now likely from the IRA because of
  - a) the renewal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act;
  - b) the retention of 162 British fortifications;

(A)

- c) the expected release of Private Clegg;  
d) the continued occupation of GAA property;  
e) the deteriorating conditions of the prisoners; and  
f) the British were not taking sufficient account of the cease-fire
- (B)  
(C)

4. The recent speeches by Adams and McGuinness which had generated US concerns were, he said, a plea for help. Prime Minister Major wanted to move the process forward but was a hostage to the Tory right. A possible change in the Tory leadership would not be good for the process. With the exception of Hesselatine, Sinn Féin was not optimistic about the attitudes of the other contenders. Major's parting gift should be the establishment of regular talks between Sinn Féin and Mayhew.

(D)  
(E) 5. The Ambassador said the US Administration was concerned that Sinn Féin was reneging on its pledge to engage in serious discussions on decommissioning with the British Government. McLaughlin said that the talks had come to an end because of the futile and circular nature of the discussions on decommissioning. He said that even Ancram had conceded that the talks were too hypothetical. McLaughlin said that talks for the sake of talks could be more harmful than none at all. The Irish Government idea of an international commission was, he said, a good idea.

6. When Adams reached the Ambassador later he was anxious to know where this US approach was coming from. She told him it had been cleared through the White House. He repeated much of what McLaughlin had said. His article in the Irish Times and the speeches by himself and McGuinness had been misunderstood. They were not a threat but rather an honest appraisal of how things might develop. When the Ambassador raised with him the question of returning to the talks, he said he was "working on it".

7. On Tuesday 28 June Adams and McLaughlin went to the Consulate in Belfast to meet Senator Mitchell. Ambassador Crowe was in Belfast at the same time and Adams and McLaughlin had a separate meeting with him at the Consulate before meeting Senator Mitchell. Van Son had not yet received a report on the Crowe meeting.

#### The Loyalists

8. The Acting Consul General in Belfast, David Pezorski, spoke to Irvine and

McMichael on the 27th. Among the points he made were

- the US recognised the contribution and great personal courage shown in bringing about the cease-fire. This should now be built upon;
- the Loyalists, like Sinn Féin, had many roles to play in enabling the Unionist parties to join with them in all-party talks;
- while the US had had no formal briefing from the British, they understood that the Loyalists had had some serious discussions with the British on establishing practical modalities for decommissioning;
- serious engagement on this issue at this time helped to erase any doubts about the ultimate intentions of the Loyalists with respect to decommissioning;
- Loyalist initiatives at this time could be helpful confidence-building measures and could result in reciprocal measures from the British Government (e.g. on prisoners issues).

9. In response, McMichael and Irvine said they would have discussions with their paramilitary organisations. They pointed out that they had gone further than Sinn Féin in their talks with the British on the modalities of decommissioning. They could agree "within an hour" on the modalities of decommissioning if Sinn Féin did likewise. They were annoyed that so far no benefits had resulted from the Loyalist cease-fire. They felt that Sinn Féin could not deliver on decommissioning. A Loyalist unilateral gesture on decommissioning was improbable given that they had absolutely no trust in the IRA, they had no reason to believe that the IRA would reciprocate and they said they were concerned that a gesture on their part could cause a split in the IRA and result in a resumption of violence. In their dealings with the Americans they continued to feel that they were being treated as an afterthought - on the coat-tails of Sinn Féin.

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TOTAL NUMBER OF PAGES: (4)

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*Tanner*  
*To me in*  
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MR F MURRAY  
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US demarche on decommissioning of weapons

*29/6*

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1. Ambassador Kennedy-Smith asked to see me today to discuss a demarche she had been instructed from Washington to make to Gerry Adams and the Loyalist paramilitaries. The points to be made to Adams are attached.
2. The Ambassador said she had already discussed the issue with Mr. Mitchel McLoughlin, who in turn had consulted Adams. I understand McLoughlin said the references to the risk of violence in the Irish Times article and in the South Africa interview were not a threat but "a plea for help".
3. I briefed the Ambassador in general terms on the discussion with the British in Cannes. I explained that we were devoting considerable effort to finding an avenue for progress which did not involve a "gesture" handover, since we believed that the latter was not possible for the Sinn Fein leadership at the moment without a serious risk of destabilising the peace process.
4. I said the Sinn Fein leadership had gone to the limits of their political credit in securing the ceasefire. Decommissioning, while very important, was still to some extent "the icing on the cake" of the permanent silence of the guns.
5. I underlined in general terms the importance of political progress as a goal in itself, but also as an important enabling condition for Sinn Fein to ratify and consolidate the shift from violence to politics. I said that a strategy simply of meshing the ceasefires with the status quo was likely to cause the ceasefires to unravel in the long term.

6. I mentioned also that the Taoiseach had had a pessimistic assessment from Prime Minister Major of the current possibilities. We believed it was necessary to create progress in both of these areas, and the Taoiseach's view was that it was important to set up a positive interaction between them. We should avoid at all costs a stand-off as to whether decommissioning came before political progress or vice versa.

6. On the question of Sinn Fein talks, I said my understanding was there was some tactical by-play between Sinn Fein and the British Government as to the level of talks - the Sinn Fein concern not to be in a secondary track had been reinforced by Sir Patrick's recent statement that it might be necessary to proceed without them - but that they were not breaking off their line of contact with the British and were open to discussing decommissioning.

7. I said the US should emphasise to the British the need for progress in other areas such as prisoners.

Sean O hUiginn  
Second Secretary  
29 June, 1995

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