



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

Reference Code: 2021/50/367

Creator(s): Department of Foreign Affairs

Accession Conditions: Open

Copyright: National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.



pp

AMBASAÍD NA HÉIREANN
TELEPHONE: (202) 462-3939
FAX: (202) 232-5993



EMBASSY OF IRELAND
2234 MASSACHUSETTS AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008

FAX NO: 87
DATE: 1 MARCH 1996
TO: HQ
FOR: BRENDAN SCANNELL
FROM: PAT HENNESSY
PLEASE CC: DAN MULHALL, PRESS SECTION.

*Sis o'Kelly --
Ms. D. Hoyer*

RE: ADAMS VISA

Please see attached transcript of White House press briefing this afternoon, 1 March, dealing with the **Adams visa decision**.

END

TOTAL NUMBER OF PAGES: (10)

TRANSMITTING OPERATOR: MARY SWEENEY

MR. MCCURRY: Well, that's \$540 million in prospective OPIC insurance. I don't know what the lending levels are that attach to that insurance level. You may want to check over at OPIC on that or see if it's come up at the State Department. These questions in great detail are being done over at State right at this very moment.

Q It's a simple way to say, however, that they lost, say, close to \$600 million?

MR. MCCURRY: As I said, I would check the State Department transcript, because I'm sure they're getting --

Q Were the allegations that the Cali Cartel provided millions to the election campaign of President Samper a factor in the President's decision?

MR. MCCURRY: Those are law enforcement matters that are within the province of the people of Colombia. Those are not part of the decision-making that affects these determinations. We look at what happens as the country either cooperates or fails to cooperate in the fight on drugs. That's an internal matter for the government of Colombia.

X Q Do you have a decision on a visa for Gerry Adams?

MR. MCCURRY: Let me just -- I want to go back a second. We talked a lot about Colombia. Before I get to that, I want to do a little on Mexico -- point out the President's thinking as it related to Mexico. The fact that he has publicly declared that drug trafficking is a primary threat to Mexico's national security and has dedicated a lot of resources to combat that threat was very significant to the President.

I think most of you know President Zedillo has appointed an attorney general from the opposition party who had been very active in law enforcement matters related to the drug trade. Over the past year the government of Mexico eradicated 40 percent more acreage of crops in 1995 than it had in the previous year. They had seized 40 percent more marijuana. Marijuana and opium production is also considered -- they had done a lot of both legislative and administrative work, as well as law enforcement work to toughen up the war against drugs. And on balance, the President felt that Mexico's cooperation and the results achieved were at least equal to, if not better than, what had been achieved in 1994. And Mexico was granted a full certification in 1994.

changes from 1994. But the pattern is roughly similar to some of the decisions from last year.

Q Mike, in making the decision, did the President consider the pressures decertification would put on the Samper government and is he concerned that it could be pressured by the decision?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, it is correct to say that President Samper is under pressure already, but that arises from matters that are internal matters to the people of Colombia related to investigations that are underway there. We certainly considered the actions of the government of Colombia as they relate to cooperating with the United States government in the fight against drugs, because by statute that's what the President examined. But this decision will likely have some impact on the public debate in Colombia, and the President is aware of that.

X Mr. Adams -- Mr. Hunt's question. Start with -- to remind you, of course, that on Wednesday a very important historic announcement by Prime Minister Major and Prime Minister Bruton really gave us a very important breakthrough in the Northern Ireland peace process itself. That is that June 10th will now be fixed as the date certain for all-party talks, which has long been, as you know, a principal goal of President Clinton and of our foreign policy efforts as they relate to the Northern Ireland peace process.

There's a lot of work that's going to have to be done, but we are encouraging all parties to participate in those discussions. And we believe that the announcement of that date gives Sinn Fein and the IRA something that they have long looked for, which is a date certain for all-party talks. Given that, the cease-fire needs to be restored now, and we have repeatedly encouraged the parties through our contacts to do that, just that.

) To further the peace process, we've decided to grant a visa to Gerry Adams to visit the United States. It will be a multiple entry, three-month visa. The purpose of giving him that visa is to advance the very peace process that we believe now holds out such promise because of the announcement earlier this week by the two Prime Ministers.

Mr. Adams, in coming here to the United States, will certainly hear from Irish Americans particularly at the time of the year when many Irish Americans celebrate their cultural and historic ties to Ireland. He will hear how anxious the American people are to see peace brought to Northern Ireland, and he will,

hopefully, see that we share the sentiments that have now been expressed by tens of thousands of people in the streets of Belfast and Dublin who demonstrated their commitment to the peace process. We believe it's important for that reason that he be allowed to have meetings with people in the Irish American community, talk to them.

Q Is he coming here?

MR. MCCURRY: But I don't expect that -- at this time there are no plans for him to be here.

Q Is he going to be able to raise funds?

MR. MCCURRY: He has told us that he will not fund-raise while he is in the United States and he will so indicate on his visa application.

Q Didn't the IRA announce that it won't go along with the cease-fire? Does it really mean that you can bomb people back to peace talks?

MR. MCCURRY: The statement that the IRA has made in response to the announcement earlier this week by Prime Minister Major and Prime Minister Bruton was nuance, but it did not necessarily rule out a cease-fire.

Q Is this a presidential decision on Gerry Adams?

MR. MCCURRY: He was -- it was ultimately the President's decision. It's one in which there was a good deal of discussion involving the National Security Council, the Attorney General, and the State Department as well.

Q Mike, the cause and effect is a little unclear. When Adams was granted the visas before it was after a cease-fire had been declared and was holding and things were moving forward in such a way that it appeared the administration was trying to encourage --

MR. MCCURRY: No, that's not correct.

Q I'm sorry, the last time he was here.

MR. MCCURRY: The last time he was here. The first time he was granted a visa there was no cease-fire in place.

Q And now the cease-fire has been abandoned, Adams has refused to condemn the bombing in which people were killed,

10

he's blamed John Major for -- at least in part for the bombing, and the IRA has refused, so far as we know, to restore the cease-fire and has not agreed to participate in the talks. What exactly is accomplished by granting him a visa to the extent that it is a reward under those circumstances?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, to not dispute every single element of your question, which if I had lengthy time I would, I will say that the President would not have taken the step of approving a visa for Mr. Adams if he did not believe, based on our contacts with Mr. Adams, that this would further the peace process. He's getting this visa because the President believes that will advance the peace process.

Q Well, I know, but --

Q Did he get any kind of commitment?

Q -- if I were Gerry Adams, I'd tell the President that, too. Do you have any -- is it possible for you -- I realize it's delicate in some respects, but is there any way you can lay out, other than Jerry Adams says it will be a good thing, some reason why this makes sense?

MR. MCCURRY: You can understand there's going to be extensive negotiations between the parties. And we hope there will be participation by all the parties in the all-party talks on June 10th. That's going to be a formal negotiation of one set or another. And our goal, as always, is to encourage the parties as they negotiate and as they have their discussions, to make progress towards peace.

Now, I could say a lot about Mr. Adams and about the situation that he's in, but it's not likely any of it would further the cause of peace in Northern Ireland. And that's why I'm going to be oblique in saying simply that the President believes that the issuance of a visa limited to the purposes that Mr. Adams intends to come to the United States for, he believes will advance the peace process.

Q Mike, to what extent were the --

Q Mike, was London consulted?

MR. MCCURRY: Both the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom are aware of the President's intentions.

Q Are they supportive, or not?

11

MR. MCCURRY: I'll let them speak for their own governments.

Q You say they're aware. To what extent were the British consulted about this? They weren't, obviously, too happy the first time he received a visa.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, I'm not going to attempt to speak for the government of the United Kingdom, but we have had extensive contacts with them and with the Republic of Ireland as we do everything we can to help them further the prospects for peace in the process that they, themselves, launched at Downing Street.

Q Mike, was there ever any conclusion by the administration on what exactly was the extent of Adams' knowledge of the bombing in London?

MR. MCCURRY: We have commented on that publicly, but I'm not aware of any information that changes what we said.

Q Was there a concern that denying the visa would have undermined Adams' credibility?

MR. MCCURRY: I think there were many factors, as you can well imagine, that went into our thinking. And we do everything we can to understand the dynamic that's at play in Northern Ireland as they wrestle with the very difficult issues that they're going to have to surmount if there is to be peace. And we are cognizant of those factors as we make decisions that are related to what we think is best for us to do using our offices to try to further the peace process.

Q Will Mr. Adams be in the White House again?

MR. MCCURRY: No, we're not -- there will be no meetings at the White House or at other government departments until the cease-fire is restored.

Q Where's he going, do we know?

Q Is he limited to going to New York and Boston?

MR. MCCURRY: He is -- I can't read this. It says, "Enough already." (Laughter.) I'm sorry, what was the question?

Q Where is he going?

Q I said is he restricted?

MR. MCCURRY: My understanding is that he's got intentions to visit -- I've heard at least one stop is Scranton. He'll make some other stops that are associated with visits he will make to the Irish American communities in celebration of St. Patrick's Day.

Q New York, Boston?

MR. MCCURRY: As I say again, I don't expect him here. We will be having a St. Patrick's event appropriate for the occasion and appropriate for the circumstances we're in now that the cease-fire has been broken -- on March 15th.

Q Does that mean the Taoiseach is coming and somebody from --

MR. MCCURRY: We'll have further information on those who will be here at a later day.

Q Do you expect him to make more than one visit to the United States? You said three-month multiple visit. Or is it one?

MR. MCCURRY: He is only -- I'm only aware of plans in connection with St. Patrick's Day, in a matter of weeks. But he will -- it is a multiple-entry visa.

Q And he's prohibited from fundraising by not putting it on the visa specifically?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, he's indicated to us that he doesn't intend to fund-raise, and he's indicated that on his visa application form. Were he to do so, his visa would be revoked.

Q What about Sinn Fein's raising funds? Will there be any restrictions on that?

MR. MCCURRY: That would depend on individual circumstances of people traveling under visas that have a waiver associated with them, and I'm not aware of any Sinn Fein fundraising that's taking place.

Q There's an office here in Washington.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, I'm not aware of any Sinn Fein fundraising that's taking place now.

Q Why doesn't the President want to see him?

13

MR. MCCURRY: The President is having an appropriate on St. Patrick's Day, and I think it's safe to say that --

Q They always have an appropriate -- they always have a celebration.

MR. MCCURRY: -- the steps we're taking are the ones that we feel are appropriate.

Q Mike, would IRA violence between now and mid-March change the President's decision? Or do you have some --

MR. MCCURRY: Well, that would be tragic. It would be unwarranted. And in light of the work that the British government and the Irish government are doing now to move towards the all-party talks in June, we hope it would be unimaginable.

Q Mike, do you have assurances, adequate assurances from the Cuban government and from Brothers to the Rescue that there will be no provocation, no incidents, that the flotilla tomorrow will go smoothly?

MR. MCCURRY: We are looking forward to smooth sailing despite the rough seas tomorrow, based on the public statements of Brothers to the Rescue and the government of Cuba, which you're familiar with. At the same time the Coast Guard will be present. They briefed you all on the steps that they will take to make sure that the President's decisions announced yesterday are effective.

Q Could we get back to Ireland for one moment?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes.

Q When does the visa become active?

MR. MCCURRY: He has been, my understanding is that Mr. Adams has been notified of our intention to grant him the visa. So at whatever point he goes either to our Counsel General or the embassy, it would be available.

Q Mike, this morning the Mexican authorities arrested two or three drug -- chiefs of the drug cartels in Tijuana. Did this action take some effect on the decision of President Clinton to give the certification to Mexico?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, of course, we are encouraged by law enforcement steps that lead to the apprehension of those who

14

are suspected of drug trafficking, but that specific event was not considered because it did not fall within the period of evaluation that the Secretary of State examined. But it is consistent with our view that the government of Mexico will continue to cooperate with the government of the United States and continue to take its own strenuous measures domestically to combat drugs.

Q On Cuba, will the administration send a representative to the flotilla ceremony?

MR. MCCURRY: That's not yet determined.

Q Is the President's radio address on this subject tomorrow?

MR. MCCURRY: The planning was to have the President's radio address on this subject, yes.

Q Back to Adams. You said he won't be meeting with anyone at the White House. Had he requested any meetings with anyone at the White House?

MR. MCCURRY: Not that I'm aware of. I think he's -- we've had contact with him. I think he was aware of the circumstances under which he would be issued a visa.

Q Will he be meeting with White House officials outside the White House?

MR. MCCURRY: I wouldn't rule that out, but there are no plans for any official meetings.

Q Mike, you said earlier that there won't be any meetings until the cease-fire is restored. Is that the one thing that you've removed from him now that --

MR. MCCURRY: Say again.

Q You said there won't be any White House meetings with Adams until there's a cease-fire.

MR. MCCURRY: I said there won't be any meetings at the White House or at other departments with Mr. Adams until the cease-fire is reestablished and in force, and so announced by the IRA.

Q That's the one type of punishment, if you could call it that, that you've --

15

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not calling it punishment.

Q But there could be informal meetings at a restaurant or something like that?

MR. MCCURRY: I wouldn't rule out that he might have some contact with people while he's here, but it won't be of an official nature, a formal meeting such as the ones that Mr. Adams has held here at the White House in the past.

Q Mike, the President's Advisory Board on Intelligence I think is due to present recommendations on reorganizing the intelligence community. Has that been received?

MR. MCCURRY: It has been. The President -- I think probably, that meeting just concluded a short while ago, right? He met today with members of the Commission -- this is the report on the roles and capabilities of the U.S. intelligence community. He received the report and met with the six members of the panel and with Chairman Harold Brown.

The Commission reaffirmed that intelligence capabilities are a critical element of our national strengths, suggested a number of steps to improve the organization and performance of our institutions of intelligence-gathering and analysis. The President believes that intelligence-gathering will continue to play a very critical role in defending U.S. national security interests abroad as we look into the 21st century. We're always going to need to understand the enormous change taking place in this world.

We need to understand the intentions of those governments that are hostile to the United States, and we need to understand in a better sense how all the forces that are shaping the post-Cold War world come together and how they affect strategic U.S. interests and U.S. national interests.

So the President expressed appreciation for the Commission's efforts. He said that we will study very carefully some of the recommendations that they've made. He's in full agreement with their conclusion that the essential importance of intelligence to our national security is to continue to provide a need for information that can be used in sound policy-making and we will be developing a much more detailed response to the Commission's reports at a later date.

The Commissions' report, I understand, is available from -- where do you go to get it? It was posted in the day book