



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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*Mr. T. Dalton / Mr. Hillier  
DH*

*no Murray to see*  
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**SECURE FAX**

2 February 1996

*Adams seen  
to see please  
DH 5/2/96*

**DISCUSSION WITH GERRY ADAMS**

COPY TO:  
PST  
PSS  
 MR. F. MURRAY  
MR. P. TEAHAN  
MR. S. DONLON  
MR. T. DALTON

Dear Secretary

1. As already reported, I met privately with the Sinn Féin Leader, Gerry Adams, this morning.

White House reception

2. Adams was very pleased with his reception in the White House, and in particular the fact that (a) the President dropped by during the meeting with Tony Lake and (b) the decision by Lake and Soderberg to accompany him to the press conference afterwards; this was clearly designed to underline publicly that there was no question of the White House pressurising Adams to take up a particular position on any issue.
3. Adams was also very happy with the press release (copy enclosed) issued by the White House, especially its emphasis on the President underscoring "the need for rapid progress to all-party talks". The fact that it was a White House - as against a joint - statement gave the message even greater weight. He added that, while there had been a general reference to an elective process in the first draft of the statement, Lake and Soderberg agreed to drop this without any difficulty whatsoever.

Elective process

4. The approach taken by Lake at the meeting to a possible elective process was very

much along the lines of his discussion with me on Wednesday (see my report of 31 January). In response, Adams said he took a very robust line, emphasising that if he and Hume - to whom he had spoken the previous evening - opposed an election, they would have the unanimous support of the whole nationalist community. In such circumstances, an election simply would not happen.

5. Adams also made the point that, if Washington had followed the advice from London, there would have been no cease-fire and no on-going peace process. He strongly questioned the motivation of the British, and argued that their present approach was in large part based on a strategy of keeping John Major in power as long as possible. As part of this, discussions about an election could be prolonged for months and, in the process, would seriously undermine all that had been achieved to date.
6. The clear Adams message to Lake was that the priority must be to meet the end-February target set by the two governments for all-party talks, and not to be diverted into a delaying debate on elections. Secondly, he said he made the point forcefully that it was not the responsibility of Sinn Féin to enter into discussions with any of the parties on an elective process. Rather, the onus and responsibility clearly lay with the British to come forward with specific proposals, and not to delay the process any further. Finally, he suggested that the time might be right for the White House to again move beyond its facilitator role to having a clear strategy, which it would forcefully recommend to the parties, on how most effectively to move quickly towards all-party talks.

#### Tánaiste's visit

7. Adams also welcomed the timing of the Tánaiste's visit, in particular as he felt Mr

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Spring should be able to give a strategic overview to the White House on how to move the process forward including, in this context, the up to date position of all sides.

Yours sincerely



Dermot Gallagher  
Ambassador

cc: Mr B Scannell

Seán Ó hUiginn Uas  
Secretary  
Anglo-Irish Division  
Department of Foreign Affairs

## THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

February 1, 1996

For Immediate Release

## STATEMENT BY THE PRESS SECRETARY

Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams met with National Security Advisor Anthony Lake at the White House for two hours over lunch. The President joined part of the meeting.

The President and Mr. Lake expressed their continued support for the Northern Ireland peace process and for the efforts of those on both sides who continue to work for a just and lasting settlement.

Mr. Lake expressed his gratitude and appreciation to Senator George Mitchell and his colleagues for recommendations on the ways to advance the peace process. He found the Report's suggestions on the decommissioning issue helpful and believes the other ideas should be urgently discussed in the political track of the twin track process.

The President underscored the need for rapid progress to all-party talks. He encouraged all parties to remain committed to the search for peace and determined in its pursuit. Finally, the President discussed his visit to the United Kingdom and Ireland last November and the overwhelming support of the people to move beyond the violence and hatred of the past.

The United States remains committed to continuing its efforts to work with the British and Irish governments to achieve that goal.

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