



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

**Reference Code:** 2021/98/2

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SECURE FAX NO: 133

17 JUNE 1996

TO HQ  
 FOR SECRETARY O HUIGINN

FROM WASHINGTON  
 FROM P HENNESSY

COPY TO:	JE
PST	18
PSS	6
MR. P. TEAHON	
MR. S. DONLON	
MR. T. DALTON	

CONVERSATION WITH PETER KING

1. Peter King called me following his conversation earlier today with Gerry Adams.
2. Adams remained "relatively optimistic" that a ceasefire could be secured. While he recognized that the bombing in Manchester created very serious difficulties, and was unsettling to the peace process, he appeared confident that the drive to restore the ceasefire could be maintained. He had said that he was unable to discount the possibility of another incident, but equally had no reason to expect a repetition: however, he acknowledged to King that any such incident could cause serious difficulties with both Dublin and Washington. As in their previous conversation, he added that it was up to him (i.e. to Adams) to persuade the IRA to restore the ceasefire. He had already been working hard on this over the past week, and gave King to understand that he had not as yet encountered serious opposition within the Army Council.
3. King denounced the Manchester attack as not merely immoral, but tactically stupid. It could serve no conceivable purpose for the Republican movement. He said that he had heard from other sources (i.e. not from Adams) that the attack had not been sanctioned by the IRA leadership. He hoped that this was incorrect, because a break-down in control by the centre would only serve to deter the White House from maintaining its current high level of involvement.

END

**MEMO**

*Sinn Féin*  
*Paddy*  
*John ifa* - *Niall's an optimist!*  
*Roy*

To: Taoiseach  
From: Roy Dooney  
Date: Wednesday, June 12, 1996  
Subject: Phone conversation with Niall O'Dowd

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1. Niall O'Dowd rang me today to report on conversations he had with Sinn Fein people who were in the USA last week. The group was led by Mitchel McLaughlin and Niall says he had a couple of long conversations with McLaughlin and the Head of Sinn Fein's Foreign Affairs Bureau (!) Ted Hall who is close to Adams.

Niall says the view is an optimistic one - of a cease-fire in ten days to two weeks time. He says Sinn Fein will be going for the "whole thing" this time, by which he means a cease-fire that will be accepted by all the IRA, not just the members of the Army Council. Last time he says the "top down" strategy was only a limited success that was challenged by some of the grass roots as "unconstitutional" (by IRA rules).

Hall is optimistic that the new cease-fire will work. Persuasion seems to involve a lot of late night phone calls to key individuals to ensure that "the crazies are outside the pale". Apparently Adams is very keen for a cease-fire as soon as possible and wants it done.

2. Niall said you were doing very well and he agrees that Doherty's performance on Questions and Answers was a big mistake. He thinks that getting George Mitchell installed as Chairman was a major achievement which will go a long way to helping an IRA cease-fire. He also says there is considerable White House pressure behind the scenes on all parties to make the talks work.

3. David Trimble is visiting the USA next week. Trimble's people have sought a meeting with Niall and Niall's view is that the trip is designed to restore the damage done by Trimble's visit last Autumn where he insulted several key people, including the New York Times editorial board. Niall thinks the visit is part of a strategy to re-invent Trimble in the USA, masterminded by Geoffrey Donaldson who, Niall says, is by far the brightest and best of those around Trimble. He thinks Donaldson is looking at the long game.

*[Handwritten mark]*

*Good*  
*[Signature]*

*Raidy*  
*For information.*

**MEMO**

*Remembered, its  
even more  
optimistic!*

*Taoiseach,*

*Niall is very keen you be aware  
of this - its seems very rose-tinted*

*Ry*

*Simon*

To: Taoiseach

From: Roy Dooney

Date: Monday, June 17, 1996

Subject: Phone call from Niall O'Dowd

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Taoiseach

Niall O'Dowd rang me at home yesterday evening. The following are the points he made:

He had spent the previous 24 hours since the Manchester bomb checking by phone with a number of people in Sinn Fein (including Adams) on behalf of "senior people in the USA" to find out what was going on. He approached the Sinn Fein people on the basis that he had to be told the truth about what is going on - he is pretty certain they told him the truth.

He said Irish-America is "really pissed off". He has had a lot of calls from Senators and Congressmen asking him what is going on. Several of them met President Robinson during her visit and had told her that they thought there would be a cease-fire. After Manchester they feel they have been made look stupid.

He said there is still no timescale (of exactly when there might be a cease-fire) but that there are key meetings to take place this week.

He was told that there was still an 80% chance of a cease-fire - that the bomb does not influence the internal debate and was nothing to do with hardliners. He was told that there is not a split, it was not a rogue group, and it does not predicate a defeat for Adams. The bomb was probably placed by a unit that had been in the UK for four or five months and could have been planned for a long time.

The timing of Manchester was appalling but the IRA does not have a political framework. The IRA "does not do politics" - they do not have the same mental or tactical approach of political people. As far as they are concerned the cease-fire broke down and then anything could happen.

He was also told that there was no link between the timing of the Adare admission statement and the Manchester bomb. The Sinn Fein people regard the Manchester bomb as much less serious than the Adare murder.

Adams has talked to Tony Lake and John Hume since Manchester - and Niall he has convinced them it is not the end of the road. There is still cohesion for a permanent cease-fire. Manchester does not affect the ir

There is an admission in the Sinn Fein/IRA movement that they cannot win militarily and paradoxically, Manchester could strengthen Adams in the internal debate. Adams is still saying he can do it and that there is an 80% chance of cease-fire. The inner cohesion is still there for a permanent end.