



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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EMBASSY OF IRELAND

2234 MASSACHUSETTS AVE., N.W.

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008

PST; PSS: Messrs. Teahon,  
 Donlon & Dalton;  
 Ambassadors London &  
 Washington: Joint Secretary;  
 Counsellors A-I

**SECURE FAX NO:** SF 38**27 FEBRUARY 1997**

**TO HQ  
 FOR SECRETARY O HUIGINN**

**FROM WASHINGTON  
 FROM P HENNESSY**

**ST PATRICK'S DAY: OTHER VISITORS**

1. You may be interested to note plans for attendance by Northern Ireland party representatives (and NIO) at events over the St Patrick's Day period. We understand that the US side have issued invitations to the White House reception on the evening of 17 March (5-7 pm) to each of the parties participating in the Talks. The number of invitations, which issued to specific individuals, varied between the parties, with the smaller parties getting two. The logic of this is that an invitation will not issue to Sinn Fein, which of course maintains the practice adopted by the White House for last year's similar event.
2. To date John Hume, David Trimble (accompanied by Ken Maginnis, Jeffrey Donaldson, and possibly John Taylor), John Alderdice have definitely accepted, as have two representatives from the Women's Coalition. There is speculation that Paisley may attend, but no approaches have been made to the White House or State Department. In the case of the SDLP, invitations issued to Mallon, McGrady and Hendron.

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3. We understand from the Speaker's Office that the British Embassy have been in touch regarding attendance at the Capitol Hill lunch by Michael Ancram. (The British Embassy have discounted to State suggestions that Mayhew might travel).
4. As you may know, John Hume will undertake some engagements in Boston (including a series of lectures at Boston College) from 8-12 March. He will be at the American Ireland Fund dinner in Washington on 13 March, and may travel to New York for the Irish-American of the Year award ceremony on 14 March. He will be at the various Washington events over 17/18 March.

ENDS

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Counsellors A-I Section  
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Ambassadors London & ~~Washington~~  
Joint Secretary  
*Up*

**SECURE FAX NO:** SF 39

**27 FEBRUARY 1997**

**TO HQ  
FOR J MCINTYRE**

**FROM WASHINGTON  
FROM P HENNESSY**

*cc: C O'Flóinn ✓ (exp. 2)*

**CODEL**

1. Following the return to Washington of the Gilman CODEL, I have heard some reports of their meetings in London, including with Michael Heseltine and a junior FCO minister (Bonsor). The US side by all accounts used the meetings to convey strong criticism of British positions on a number of issues relating to the peace process, including by Ben Gilman on Róisín McAliskey. Heseltine's response was thought to be unimpressive, and, in relation to the peace process, was summarized in the assertion that everyone in Northern Ireland has the vote. (It might also be noted that the House International Relations Committee staff have made informal enquiries of the German Embassy here about the McAliskey case).
  
2. Of perhaps more interest were exchanges in relation to the character of the seventeen-month IRA cease fire. In response to questioning by Jim Walsh (Chairman of the Friends of Ireland and a notable "moderate"), both Heseltine and

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Bonsor insisted that the cease fire was entirely tactical, and was not intended to last.

3. Gilman's aide, John Mackey, took up this issue with RUC Chief Constable Flanagan when they met in Belfast (Mackey left the group after the London leg, and returned to Northern Ireland). Mackey said that Flanagan clearly disassociated himself from the analysis offered by London ministers, and rejected the notion that the cease fire was purely tactical. While noting that some training etc had continued during the cease fire, and clear that the individuals concerned had not abjured violence in any moral sense, Flanagan felt that the IRA leadership had at the time been engaged in searching for a political way forward. Mackey has briefed Walsh since his return on what he views as a significant divergence within the British system.
4. Finally, it might be noted that the statement (copy attached) issued on 17 February, following the visit to Belfast and Dublin, and while the group was still in London, was in the name of the entire Congressional delegation. Before the trip, it had been thought unlikely that a statement could be agreed (not least given the time constraints, and the widely differing levels of familiarity with the issue among delegation members). The statement urges that prompt restoration of the cease fire, and calls for all-party talks in accordance with the terms of the Mitchell Report. We understand that the statement was thought helpful by those in the Administration concerned at the publicity surrounding the group's earlier meeting with the Sinn Fein leader.

- 5. While in London the group also met with Senator Mitchell. I am told that the delegation gave the Talks chairman a standing ovation as an indication of bipartisan support for his efforts. Mitchell, speaking in confidence, said that the gap between the parties was relatively small, and could be resolved if there was a real political will to reach agreement. He pointed to a serious lack of leadership among the local parties. He also spoke of the desirability of seeing a strong British government in place following the election.

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Press Statement Northern Ireland Peace Process

February 17, 1997

The visiting bi-partisan U.S. Congressional delegation, led by Chairman Benjamin A. Gilman, after carefully evaluating the current status of the peace process following meetings with the parties, as well as representatives of both governments, issued the following statement on Northern Ireland:

"We join President Clinton, and the Irish people (both north and south) in reaffirming our overwhelming desire for permanent peace and reconciliation on the island. These worthy and important goals can only be achieved through peaceful dialog and negotiations involving all parties, along with the eventual consent of people to any proposed political solutions.

"Any prompt restoration of the IRA cease-fire as called for by President Clinton, and many others, plus the cessation of the use of violence by anyone, will serve the cause of peace best, without further diminishing the worthiness or merit of any party's cause. All party inclusive talks and political dialog, in accordance with the terms set out in the Mitchell report, are the only true means for finding the common goal we all share for a just and lasting settlement.

"This is an historic opportunity for peace. We urge all concerned to seize the opportunity now and move the peace process forward without the endless dilatory tactics we have so often observed in the past. The British government in particular under whatever party is in power, must continue to lead the process forward and give the search for peace its highest priority by building trust between the two communities, especially after the destructive marches of last year.

"Let us hope all sides can step back from a return to the past. We hope the world will never witness again the tragedy of Northern Ireland engaged in an endless cycle of violence, which will deny future generations of all the youth on the island of Ireland the peaceful future and prosperity they desire and deserve."

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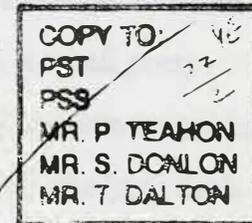
EMBASSY OF IRELAND

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008

SECURE FAX NO: SF37

26 FEBRUARY 1997



TO HQ  
FOR SECRETARY O HUGINN

FROM WASHINGTON  
FROM P HENNESSY

VISIT OF SEAN O'CALLAGHAN

1. With Sean O'Callaghan having completed the Washington leg of his US tour, the overall sense is that the trip delivered a good deal less than it promised. This was true most obviously in relation to his agenda, where advertised appointments at venues ranging from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to the White House failed to materialize. More broadly, he failed to gain significant political or media attention for his message (Adrian O'Neill has reported on the predictable Washington Times coverage, while the Washington Post has so far ignored the story).
2. You will have a flavour from Irish media reports of the King/O'Callaghan debate, which we did not attend. Within the Ad Hoc, Manton and others were doubtful of the wisdom of giving O'Callaghan a platform. King's view was that the National Review (see below) intended in any event to host a Capitol Hill event for O'Callaghan, and that it was preferable to take up the offer to debate than to allow O'Callaghan a free ride (the two have, of course, already "debated" in the pages of the National Review).

3. The general view among those who attended the debate was that it covered familiar terrain, and that there was no obvious "winner". The attendance, about 60, was smaller than expected. Those present included staffers, a small press contingent, and a representative of the British Embassy, as well as some individual activists from the Irish-American political fringe. Steve Kashkett, the Irish desk officer at the State Department, was also in the audience.
4. King's approach was to attack O'Callaghan's credibility: his involvement, which he readily admits, in the Corcoran murder; the lapse of time since he was active in the IRA; and claims of unstable and psychotic behaviour while in prison.
5. There was grudging admiration subsequently from King's staff at O'Callaghan's disciplined response to those verbal assaults, and to his ability to stay "on message". Part of that message was that he had been an informer for the Irish Government, and that efforts to discredit him by alleging association with the British Government were palpably false. [As mentioned above, O'Callaghan has admitted here, as elsewhere, his role in the death of Corcoran. While it has yet to be raised publicly, we have had an enquiry from a Hill source as to why O'Callaghan has not been charged in our jurisdiction. We appreciate that this is a matter for D/Justice, but it is well to note that the issue may attract some further attention].

#### Contact with Administration

6. We know that the National Security Council were approached, but declined to meet with O'Callaghan. I understand from Kashkett that he did have a short meeting with O'Callaghan after the debate, away from the State Department.

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Kashkett, who seemed eager to justify his meeting, said that he found O'Callaghan an interesting figure (even allowing for the fact that he may be out of touch with current IRA thinking). O'Callaghan suggested that there were some in the Sinn Fein leadership genuinely interested in peace, but that others were entirely cynical throughout (while being careful to avoid taking a position on his claims, I noted that O'Callaghan had not always highlighted this distinction). O'Callaghan pointed to a number of areas where he was critical of the British Government, for example in relation to the treatment of Bernadette McAliskey. He thought the failure to set a date certain for talks had been a mistake, but also apparently stressed the need for unspecified (but seemingly extensive) criteria before Sinn Fein could be admitted to talks following a cease fire.

7. Finally, I understand that at dinner last evening, the National Review publisher, Ed Cipano, expressed to King his annoyance that he should hear for the first time during the debate of O'Callaghan's involvement in the Corcoran murder: he had been led to believe that O'Callaghan's crimes were of much older vintage. Cipano pointed the finger at his editor John O'Sullivan, who has consistently been to the fore on O'Callaghan's behalf, and seemed to feel that O'Sullivan had briefed him less fully than he might on their controversial guest. (This may or may not be true, but in any event suggests some unease at the magazine's profile on this case).

ENDS

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EMBASSY OF IRELAND

24 February, 1997

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 S/S Ó hUiginn  
 Counsellors A-I Section  
 Messrs. Teahon, Donlon & Dalton  
 Ambassadors London & Washington  
 Joint Secretary  
Ó-x

To: Anglo-Irish Division

From: Washington

For: James McIntyre

From: Adrian O'Neill

C/C: *Press Section; Mr Brangan (NY); Mr Wrafter (London); CGs*

**Re: Sean O'Callaghan at the NPC in Washington**

1. Sean O'Callaghan gave the first press conference of his US visit to the US at the National Press Club in Washington this morning. The following information and impressions were gained from press contacts who were present.
2. The event was reasonably well attended with about 20 media personnel and other interested individuals, including Sinn Féin and a staffer from Congressman Manton's office. All of the Irish press corp in Washington attended. Apart from the *London Times*, the British press was not much in evidence. There were no big players from the US media. The event was covered for TV by RTE and two wire services (Reuters and AP).
3. O'Callaghan was accompanied by Ruth Dudley Edwards and James Adams (Washington correspondent of the *Sunday Times*). According to our contacts, O'Callaghan's presentation was impressive and he did not get ruffled under probing questioning. Mark Little (RTE) felt that his opening statement showed all the signs of being well rehearsed. Another contact said that, contrary to his expectations, O'Callaghan struck him as being credible.
4. Apparently O'Callaghan opened his remarks by saying that he had only received news last night of the death of his father in Tralee and that he was

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very distressed by this news. He went on to note that the Taoiseach's recent statements indicated that the Irish Government had considerably hardened its attitude towards SF. He approved of this position and urged that the Clinton Administration should fully support the Irish Government in its stand. His core message was that the US Administration and the two Governments should adopt a very tough approach to SF and the Republican movement.

5. O'Callaghan told the audience that he had in the past been present in the room with Gerry Adams when killings, bombings and racketeering activities had been planned. He maintained that Adams was a member of the IRA Army Council during most of the 1980s. O'Callaghan also indicated that he would have a "private meeting" with Administration officials. (Joe Carroll attempted - apparently without success - to try to obtain more details on this claim from Ms Dudley Edwards and Mr Adams.). He also said that he had originally agreed to testify in the *Pearson* deportation case on the presumption that Pearson had not formally renounced terrorism. The matter was now academic as the INS did not plan to call him.
6. O'Callaghan was asked about the McIntyre and Corcoran killings. He said the former was carried out by criminal elements in Boston rather than by the IRA. He confirmed his earlier confession in regard to the Corcoran murder and said that the Irish authorities could arrest and prosecute him for this crime at any time.
7. Apparently the Sinn Féin personnel present did not intervene in the proceedings. Mark Little felt they were keeping their powder dry for the debate tomorrow afternoon on Capitol Hill involving Congressman King. Finally, apparently the staffer from Congressman Manton's office took exception to a remark by O'Callaghan that Irish-Americans who supported the IRA "belonged to a lower level of morality" than those who were actually involved in the violence.

END

PAGES (2)

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24 February, 1997

JMC

Mr James McIntyre,  
Anglo-Irish Division,  
DFA.

PST, PSS  
S/S Ó hUiginn  
Counsellors A-I Section  
Messrs. Teahon, Donlon & Dalton  
Ambassadors London & Washington  
Joint Secretary

B

Dear James,

Michael Moloney and I recently attended a seminar on the NI peace process given by **Jonathan Stevenson** at Catholic University in Washington DC. As you will know, Mr Stevenson is a US journalist who has been living in Belfast since 1993. He is the author of several articles on NI (including in the NY Times, the New Republic and Foreign Policy). In addition, his recent book on NI - "**We Wrecked the Place**" - has generally been well received in the US. Most recently, he attracted some media interest as a result of being part of the INS prosecution team in New York - in the capacity as an expert adviser - which is endeavouring to deport Brian Pearson from the US.

About 20 people attended the seminar, of whom the majority seemed to be College under-graduates. The outsiders included ourselves, three individuals from the Washington branch of the Irish-American Unity Conference and Fr. Brian Lennon SJ (formerly of Portadown and currently spending a sabbatical year in the US).

Stevenson spoke for about 45 minutes and there was a general exchange of views for about 30 minutes thereafter. He spoke without notes in a rather laconic and laid-back fashion. His approach was to talk about how he came to write the book - which is based on a series of interviews with paramilitaries on both sides of the divide - and to concurrently sketch in the political context. Stevenson's presentation displayed no particular new insights and was fairly unremarkable. Among the more interesting points were the following:

- While Sinn Féin and Republicans were quite co-operative with him in preparing the book, they displayed no great enthusiasm for the project; they seemed to view it as "one more American doing a book on NI". The Loyalists, on the other hand, were much more enthusiastic. They felt the book represented an opportunity - far less available to loyalism than to republicanism - to get their story out.
- Stevenson said that the republicans whom he interviewed demonstrated a greater sense of political cohesion than their loyalist counterparts. The former uniformly blamed the British Government for the break-down of the IRA cease-fire. Their analysis was that the British deliberately spun out the process in order, through inactivity, to wear down the morale and capacity of the movement. Stevenson himself believed that this was probably giving the British "too much credit" and that their mishandling of the cease-fire owed as much to incompetence and misjudgement as to any deliberate strategic immobilism.
- Stevenson offered the view that the *Joint Framework Document* may have been the cause as to why the cease-fire ultimately collapsed. According to Stevenson, the content of the JFD, which came quickly on the heels of the cease-fires, went too far in a nationalist direction - to the extent that he questioned the quality of the British input into its drafting and negotiation. Its wholesale rejection by unionism frightened the British Government. London's reaction was to start over-compensating in the direction of unionism, including the adoption of a very firm stand on decommissioning. The resultant deadlock on decommissioning led to the IRA resuming their campaign.
- In the discussion which followed we made the point that the JFD was the process of a lengthy period of negotiations between both Governments. Its content had been very carefully considered and measured in both London and Dublin. We also suggested that the strength of the unionist reaction was greatly influenced by the premature leaking of the document in the *London Times*. Unionists tended to view the JFD, when published, in the light of the hostile spin advanced by the Times rather than on its intrinsic merits.
- In regard to future prospects for the peace process, Stevenson believed that - post the Westminster Elections - the current gap between republicans and the

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British Government was bridgeable and, therefore, a restoration of the IRA cease-fire was achievable. However, this would be contingent on the degree of priority which the incoming Government would accord to NI in its first months in office.

- In response to a question, Stevenson agreed that Drumcree had a deeply traumatising and radicalising effect on middle-class nationalists. He knew friends in Belfast who had been SDLP supporters and - as a result of the handling of the parades last summer - were now inclined to Sinn Féin. Acknowledging that the unprecedented electoral success of Sinn Féin in the Forum elections was at least partly due to tactical voting by SDLP supporters (believing they were strengthening Gerry Adams hand in order to get the cease-fire back), Stevenson said that it would be very interesting to see how the nationalist vote - post Drumcree and the resumption of an IRA campaign in NI - would break down in the forthcoming General Election.
- Nobody raised (at least publicly) the issue of Stevenson's participation in the Pearson deportation case in New York.

I had a few brief words with Stevenson after the event. He told me that he continued to be based in Belfast most of the time. However, as his parents lived in the Washington area, he occasionally visited DC. He agreed to give us a call when next in town.

Yours sincerely,



Adrian O'Neill  
Press Officer

C/C Ms Manahan Leslie (Press); CG (NY) Mr Brangan (NY)