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GERRY ADAMS MP
SINN FÉIN
PRESIDENT

8 May 1998

Bertie Ahern
An Taoiseach
Dail Éireann
Baile Átha Cliath

A Chara *Bertie*,

As you know, Sinn Féin, like other parties, has been preoccupied with the public debate and the debate with our own activists and constituency in the 30 days since the Good Friday document. At the same time, we have tried, as I explained to you at our last meeting, to pro-actively engage with the British government in an effort to promote the agenda for change which is contained in the Good Friday document.

However, I have serious and growing concerns at the manner in which elements of the Good Friday document have been handled both publicly and privately, particularly by British civil servants. The letter and the spirit of the provisions in Article 4 of the Validation section of the document are not being adhered to in relation to information and consultation about a number of matters.

Sinn Féin has voiced serious reservations about the agenda-setting influences of the permanent government of pro-unionist and anti-nationalist civil servants in the north throughout the peace process. This is why the equality imperative must ensure equality for nationalists and unionists as opposed to protestants and catholics in the civil service, the judiciary and a new policing service. Particularly in posts responsible for policy making and decisions.

We anticipated that the pro-unionist and anti-nationalist civil service would instinctively and deliberately work to hollow out the limited political advances achieved in the negotiations. This is clearly what is now happening.

We believe that political oversight and intervention is necessary, is now essential to ensure that the civil service in the north are not allowed to dominate or skew the shape and outworking of the positions in the Good Friday document.

For instance, this problem can be seen in:

- the 'leak' about the appointment of Chris Patten as the chair of the Commission on Policing,
- public pronouncements on prisoner releases including "individual application" and "release on licence",
- public pronouncements that the RUC is not to be replaced, predetermining the recommendations of a supposedly independent commission.

In addition there have been no meaningful consultation on the part of the British Government with Sinn Féin on important matters which will shape the conflict resolution process including:

- The Human Rights Commissions and the joint North/South committee envisaged,
- The Independent Commission on Policing,
- The review of the criminal justice system,
- The mechanisms and review process for prisoner releases.

It is important that the Irish Government consult with Sinn Féin and the SDLP so as to make proposals and give opinions which effect the mechanisms necessary to a conflict resolution process. We must not allow the British or the civil service in the north to bounce us on any of this.

Other evidence of the old agenda is clearly visible in documents relating to the Assembly and the North/South Ministerial Council. Namely Strand One: Logistics and Strand Two Logistics.

Sinn Féin will, of course, be raising all of these matters with the British Government and we will be responding to the Strand 1 and Strand 2 logistics papers (I will forward a copy of our response).

Finally, the political interventions from the British government, aimed at the unionist community have not been balanced by the same type of political intervention by the Irish government. This needs to be rectified. We would suggest that you, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and other Irish government ministers should visit the north and address the broad nationalist constituency in the run-up to the referendums.

I trust you will give these matters the necessary attention as we seek to build on the agreement and prevent any dilution.

Is mise

Gerry
GERRY ADAMS MP

Sorry this is so formal but I've tired of with the H&S files and I think the above needs acted on. I know your people are moving on it today but I thought I should bring it to your attention. Any word on parole for last conference I.U.W. → ?