

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

British Embassy
Washington

19 June 1996

John Holmes Esq
No 108100 Massachusetts Ave. N.W.
Washington D.C. 20008 3600

Telephone: (202)

Facsimile: (202)

Dear John,

POSSIBLE DESIGNATION OF PIRA AS A TERRORIST ORGANISATION IN THE US

1. I don't know how rapidly the bureaucratic wheels will turn, but I thought you ought to see the enclosed exchange I've had with RID in the FCO without further ado.

Yours ever,

Peter

Peter Westmacott

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

WED 12 JUN 96 05:22

FC.02

CONFIDENTIAL

British Embassy
Washington

18 June 1996

Donald A Lamont Esq
RID, FCO3100 Massachusetts Ave N.W.
Washington D.C. 20008-3800Telephonic: (202) 898 4264
Facsimile: (202) 898 4455

Dear Donald,

US ANTI-TERRORISM LEGISLATION

1. Thank you for sending me a copy of your minute of 17 June to Jonathan Stephens suggesting that we now lobby the US Secretary of State to secure the designation of PIRA as a terrorist organisation.

2. Clearly, before going down this path, we need a reasonable idea of what we might achieve. Taking the provisions listed in our telno 862 in order:

(a) Fund-raising. I doubt whether designating PIRA as a terrorist organisation would make it any easier to obtain a ban on fund-raising by Friends of Sinn Fein in the US, unless we could produce hard evidence of FOSF funds reaching PIRA or facilitating certain specific criminal offences. The Americans would never designate Sinn Fein itself as a terrorist organisation; but they already have, in effect, reimposed the fund-raising ban on Gerry Adams, which will continue significantly to inhibit FOSF fund-raising in the US (already sharply down on the 1994/5 totals).

(b) Removal of alien terrorists. More IRA members might be deported in future - though this is an area in which we have not been directly involved hitherto. Extradition cases would be unaffected. Our present treaty with the US is a good one. But the lawyers of people like Jimmy Smyth will continue to make all the use they can of the appeal procedures at their disposal.

(c) Exclusion of alien terrorists. Under this provision, it ought to be easier to keep IRA members out of the US, since they would be excludable on grounds of membership alone. But the worst offenders are already barred from acquiring a visa, and need to apply for a waiver from the Attorney General each time they wish to do so. The new provisions wouldn't alter the ability of the Administration to continue to issue waivers in the future, or to exclude those they wish to keep out (like Ruairi O'Bradaigh of RSF); but they might make it more difficult, politically, to grant exceptions.

3. The practical benefits would not, therefore, be great. But for the US Government formally to designate PIRA as a terrorist organisation could have real symbolic value. The benefits in

CONFIDENTIAL

WED 12 JUN 96 07:34

PG.01

CONFIDENTIAL



the UK are obvious enough. But this would also be a way for the Administration to mark its extreme displeasure with the IRA. Importantly (here at least), those who believe that Adams is still in the business of trying to move the organisation away from violence might be persuaded that such an initiative would help his case, by showing how much damage the IRA's current behaviour is doing to the Republican cause in America.

4. Although it is the Secretary of State who formally decides which organisations are designated as terrorist groups, I do not think that you should instruct us to lobby State for such a designation; or that the Foreign Secretary should write to Warren Christopher. We have a much better chance of achieving our objective if the Administration adopts the idea as its own. Since the State Department are not serious players on Northern Ireland, that means getting Lake, and the President, on board. The best approach would be for the Prime Minister to mention the idea, very privately, to the President in Lyon. The President is bound to ask what more he can do to help, following the Manchester bomb; here is a perfectly reasonable response to that question. (The FBI are already working with the Security Service (protect) on a list of terrorist organisations which they believe should now be so designated under the new legislation. It includes PIRA and INLA, as well as UDA, UFF, UVF and RHC.)

5. There is no guarantee that the President will decide that this is the right thing to do. He will, of course, need to balance the advantages of being seen to be tough on terrorism against the risk of antagonising Irish Americans, whose votes he needs in November. But, in the aftermath of Manchester and Adare, and with the UK and Irish Governments at one in their disgust, there is a fair prospect that he will reach the conclusion we would want: as our reporting has brought out, it is those who are most sympathetic to the cause of a united Ireland, and who have backed Adams in the past, who feel most betrayed by the decision of the IRA to break the cease-fire, and to continue to commit terrorist outrages. But Clinton will not wish to be seen to be responding to a British request.

6. If you agree with this advice, the approach to the President will need to remain strictly confidential. I suggest that the papers are handled with particular care.

John L. W.

P.L.W.

Peter Northcott

cc:

PS/...
PS/...
PS/...
PS/...
PS/...
PS/...

(3)

RESTRICTED

cc/ Minister
Mr. Phillips
Mr. Glyn Jones
Mr. McDonald.

From: Donald A Lamont
Republic of Ireland Dept

Date: 17 June 1996

Having read the
telegram (copy attached), I
think we should raise
this with the Americans -
but privately, pm to President
so that it becomes their
initiative, not a formal
FCO - State request. Any
discrepancy?

cc: PS/PUB
PS/Sir David Fell
Mr Thomas
Mr Lygo
Mr Steele
Mr Bell
Mr Leach
Mr Watkins
Mr Hill
Mr MacCabe
Mr Currie
Mr Daniell
Mrs Collins
Mr Budd, Cabinet Office
Mr Westmacott, Washington

Letter omv

18/6

10-05/546/1

(Please see Mr Stephens Attached draft - Comments A.L.A.P. please)

UK ANTI-TERRORISM LEGISLATION: DESIGNATION OF PIRA AS A
TERRORIST GROUP

1. Washington Telno 862 of 25 April reported President Clinton's signature of new US Anti-Terrorism Legislation. The text of the telegram is attached as an annex.

2. The recent attacks by the IRA in Adams and Manchester provide compelling background to an effort to secure the designation of PIRA as a terrorist group by the US Secretary of State. Unless you see difficulty, I propose to submit to the Foreign Secretary recommending that our Embassy in Washington should now be instructed to lobby for such designation. I understand that such action would be supported by the Security Service, but am seeking confirmation separately.

3. I should be grateful for advice from Peter Westmacott on tactics, and in particular whether at this stage it would be useful for the Foreign Secretary to write to Warren Christopher. There is also the option of including a request for designation in briefing for the Prime Minister's meeting with President Clinton in Lyons on 27 June.

SAL

Donald A Lamont

DL/RHB/4908

RESTRICTED