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by fax

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Washington

1 July 1996

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John 2/7

Dear John,

US/NORTHERN IRELAND

1. Tony Lake, just back from Lyon and Florida (two memorial services for the victims of Dhahran) and still fighting the flu, spent half an hour with the House of Commons Select Committee on Northern Ireland this afternoon.
2. Lake said he was very pleased that the Committee was looking at the links between narcotics and crime in the context of Northern Ireland, and that all the main political parties were represented in the group. Narcotics and crime were intrinsically linked to terrorism; and the issues had to be addressed together. Hence the programme of multilateral action which Clinton had pressed his G7 colleagues to adopt in Lyon. The White House was glad to note that action on narco-crime was also a high priority for the incoming Irish Presidency of the EU.
3. Lake said that he had been revolted by the latest IRA bombings, and the mortar attack at Osnabruck. He had also found the two memorial services in Florida very moving. Wherever the terrorism came from, democracies should not give up on the search for peace: that would only give the men of violence ultimate victory. At the same time, it was essential to press ahead with economic development, and to counter any dent to investor confidence which might result from violence. He hoped that the next conference on investment in Northern Ireland and the border counties, to be held in Philadelphia in the autumn, would help.
4. Ken Maginnis (UUP) asked his current question (he tends to have one per visit to Washington). Had Lake decided whether Adams was a politician or a mere propagandist for a terrorist organisation? Lake said wait and see: the answer would depend on whether the IRA restored their cease-fire. We should beware of the self-fulfilling prophecy or believing that this wouldn't

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happen. But a new cease-fire would have to be more than just a form of words, or a short-term tactical device.

5. Peter Robinson (DUP) welcomed the emphasis Lake had placed on the links between drugs, crime and terrorism. It was very important to say and do nothing which might encourage the bombers to believe that violence paid: a series of cease-fires punctuated by bombs whenever the IRA disapproved of the rate of progress was unacceptable (Lake entirely agreed). Bruton was right to demand that the next cease-fire be "genuine, permanent and irreversible". Robinson's own view, however, was that there were no doves within the Provisional movement. If Sinn Fein regained their right to a place at the talks, they would only undermine the process. McGrady (SDLP) politely disagreed: all-party talks were the only show in town, and Sinn Fein had 15.5% of the vote (much of it, he was sorry to say, borrowed from the SDLP). Thomas McAvoy (Labour) chipped in to remind Lake of the bipartisan nature of Parliament's support for the Prime Minister's policy on Northern Ireland.

6. Richard Spring (Conservative) asked about recent US anti-terrorist legislation. Was Lake thinking of adding the IRA to the list of designated terrorist organisations? Lake said he was always looking at that possibility. (Mary Ann Peters told me separately that she was aware of your conversation with Lake in Lyon. There was no more to be said on this for the time being: the NSC now needed to consult with other agencies about what might be done under the new law.)

W. Erham

Peter

Peter Westmacott

JOHN HOLMES

cc: William Erham Esq, Private Office, FCO
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