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Confidential Fax Message

Date 4 November 1996
To HQ
For Mr David Cooney, Anglo Irish Division
From Ambassador Richard A. O'Brien
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PST, PSS, S/S Ó hUiginn,
Counsellors A-I, Section,
Messrs Teahon, Donlon &
Dalton, Ambassadors
London & Washington, Joint
Secretary

Dear David

Again apologies for calling you so late last night. However, as I explained, it is likely that, at its regular meeting later today, the Federal Cabinet will consider the application for a visitor's visa from Mr Gerry Adams the President of Sinn Fein. Over the weekend *The Australian* newspaper reported that the Cabinet is likely to refuse the visa application on the grounds that the IRA has resumed its campaign of violence and that Sinn Fein has not condemned that fact. This morning's edition of *The Sydney Morning Herald* reports the remarks of Mr Terry O'Gorman, the President of the Australian Council for Civil Liberties calling on the Federal Government to grant a visa to Mr Adams as well as to Mr David Irving the controversial British historian whose application for a visa has been opposed by the Australian Jewish Community because of his writings on the Holocaust.

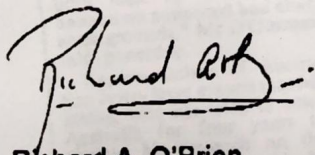
While emphasising that I was not contacting him on the basis of instructions, I telephoned Mr Ian Forsyth, Assistant Secretary at the Western European Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, this morning to enquire about the reliability of the speculation in both articles that the Federal Cabinet would consider the Adams visa application later today. Ian Forsyth confirmed that a visa application has been received from Gerry Adams to visit Australia in order to promote his recently published autobiography. While the matter was primarily an issue for the Minister for Immigration the views of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade had been sought and Foreign Minister Downer will contribute to the Cabinet discussion which is likely to take place this afternoon. The Department was aware that Gerry Adams had visited Britain and a number of Continental European countries in connection with the promotion of his book although they noted that he had not visited the United States since the Canary Wharf Bombing, although he may not have applied for a visa to enter the United States. At the cabinet meeting Foreign Minister

Downer will argue that it is not an opportune time to grant a visa to Mr Adams because of the ending of the IRA's cessation of violence and the refusal of the President of Sinn Fein to condemn IRA violence since the Canary Wharf Bombing. Mr Forsyth was not clear on whether the Cabinet would issue a formal statement or simply authorise the Government spokesman to deal with press enquiries. He undertook to let me have a text of a statement if the Cabinet decided to issue one.

I should add that it is likely that Annette Blackwell, the Editor of the *Irish Echo* who also writes for the *Irish Independent*, will file an article for the Independent on the story and on Irish Australian reaction to the refusal of the visa. Ms Blackwell, who is a reliable and balanced commentator on Northern Ireland issues nonetheless feels strongly on the Adams visa issue and will argue that the Federal Government should grant the visa to the President of Sinn Fein.

I attach a copy of the article in this morning's *Sydney Morning Herald* and will keep you informed of any further developments.

Yours sincerely



Richard A. O'Brien
Ambassador

Sydney Morning Herald
4 Nov 1996