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BRITISH EMBASSY WASHINGTON

TUE 11 MAR 97 15:27

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From: Ambassador

Date: 11 March 1997

cc: PS/SofS, FCO
 PS/Michael Ancram, NIO
 Mr Holmes, No 10
 Mr Lamont, RID, FCO
 Mr McDonald

Mr Cary

GILMAN/KING

1. Gilman (Chairman: House International Relations Committee) asked to speak to the Foreign Secretary in the margins of our dinner last night. His pitch was, as expected, about the need to allow Sinn Fein into the Belfast talks. The Foreign Secretary explained, yet again, the requirement for an IRA cease-fire, satisfactory in its terms, and validated in deeds as well as words. Gilman suggested that HMG might be content with a moratorium, rather than a full IRA cease-fire. The Foreign Secretary rubbished the idea that anyone could seriously consider settling for a temporary moratorium on murder.

2. Peter King (New York-R) overheard the latter part of this exchange, and subsequently sought out the Foreign Secretary to urge him to ignore it. Gilman spoke for no-one; and no-one expected HMG to admit Sinn Fein to the talks in advance of a permanent renunciation of violence. King's worry, yet again, was that Adams would not be able to persuade the IRA to do this without some indication that entry into the talks would follow relatively speedily. The Foreign Secretary said that his impression was that, if there a satisfactory cease-fire announcement, and its credibility were validated by subsequent deeds, Sinn Fein would not have to wait very long.

3. King said that he was confident that Adams wanted an IRA cease-fire. But King was not sure that Adams could deliver it. King hinted that it might be helpful if Sinn Fein could be reassured now that an early announcement, subsequently validated, would mean that they would be permitted to join the talks when they resume on 3 June. The Foreign Secretary did not react.

4. I subsequently told the Foreign Secretary that I thought:

- (a) King was quite right to advise us to ignore Gilman's "moratorium" idea. Gilman tended to be off the wall, and I had never heard this idea from any of the others in the green contingent in the House;

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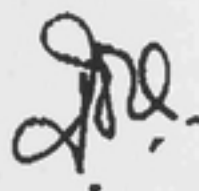
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- (b) on the other hand, King himself did from time to time have contact with Adams, and therefore had to be taken relatively seriously; and
- (c) I thought that Michael Ancram would, during his visit next week, hear more of the idea of guaranteed Sinn Fein entry on 3 June provided an early cease-fire announcement was satisfactory in its terms, and honoured in the interim.



John Kerr

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