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cc PB
press

British Embassy
Washington

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Dear David,

FURTHER US REACTIONS TO THE LURGEN SHOOTINGS

1. I sent you, yesterday, the first US reactions to the murders in Lurgan. The statements by the President and by Ted Kennedy were both helpful, as was the White House spokesman's strong suggestion that US patience with Sinn Fein was running out.

2. Two more reactions today. First, the State Department spokesman, Nick Burns, made some helpful comments in the daily press briefing. He called the IRA "a bunch of sick, isolated, brutal terrorists" and said that "we're not going to have much at all to do with Sinn Fein as long as the IRA carries on these activities".

3. Second, and much less helpfully, the usual HIRC mob (Gilman, King, Manton, Neal), this time bolstered by representatives of the arts and journalism including Frank McCourt of Angela's Ashes fame, issued A Message From Concerned Irish Americans. It raises my hackles in its very first paragraph by equating "Britain's failure to enter into all-party talks during the 17-month IRA ceasefire" with "yesterday's tragic killing" as if there was some moral equivalence between the two. It concludes with pleas to the British Government, to David Trimble, to Ian Paisley, to the Loyalist paramilitaries, and only finally to the IRA, almost as an afterthought. The statement notes that Sinn Fein have demonstrated their 'electoral might', but has no advice at all for them. The whole statement, in short, could have been written at any time over the last few months, and the flavour is of British foot-dragging, Unionist obstructionism and frustrated Sinn Fein peacemaking. It is as though the Lurgan shootings had never happened.

Yours ever,
Anthony
Anthony Cary

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7

cc: Mr Watkins, NIO (B)
Mr Wood, NIO (B)
PS/No 10
PS/S of S NI
PS/Mr Murphy, NIO Minister
Mr Lamont, RID, FCO
Mr Priestley, NAD, FCO
Mr Clarke, Dublin

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