

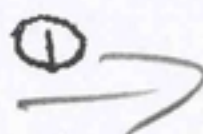
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to Lindsay,  
NIOTap - JEM  
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From: A Cary  
 Date: 12 June 1997  
 CC: PS/ 8 of 8 NI  
 PS/No 10  
 Mr Ehrman, FCO  
 Mr Lamont, RID FCO  
 Mr Watkins, NIO (B)  
 Mr Clarke, Dublin

FAXED

- To  
 Ken Lindsay  
 (NIO)  
 13/6/97

File  
 pm 19/6

Mr Brooker,  
 NIO(L)

MEETING WITH JIM STEINBERG: US REACTION TO AIDE MEMOIRE ON MEETINGS  
 WITH SEIN FEIN

1. I called on Jim Steinberg this evening. Mary Ann Peters sat in.

2. Steinberg said that the US were 'very positive' about the proposed initiative to get the talks moving. He had only two tactical questions:

a) On the mention of 6 weeks. Was it tactically wise to say this so starkly? From the Unionist point of view it might be seen as a provocation. From Sein Fein's point of view it might also be difficult, since they are asking for immediate access to the talks once a cease-fire is declared. Was there not a case for assuring them of six weeks in private, while settling on a public formulation which would enable them to argue that things were moving immediately? There was helpful stuff in the aide memoire about things which would happen as soon as a cease-fire was declared (ie. Ministerial meetings, other meetings in Castle buildings, and access to an office). Explicit reference to "six weeks" would take the spotlight off these concessions. It would inevitably be the main focus of press attention, perhaps unhelpfully. (I see now from John Holmes' Next Steps letter, just in, that Mary Ann Peters made a similar point to him. But they are still worrying at it - and I see some force in their argument).

b) Decommissioning. Steinberg was worried that the whole initiative could shipwreck on the issue of decommissioning if this had not been resolved with the Irish in advance. I said that we were doing our best but that it was difficult to tie the Irish down while they were absorbed in coalition-building. We believed that we were now close to agreement with Dublin. We were now bringing Trimble, too, into the picture on decommissioning, and hoped he could sign up to the latest approach. (I explained to Jim Steinberg, incidentally, the change to the aide memoire being suggested by the Irish, referring to "the compromise approach to



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decommissioning suggested by Mitchell" rather than "parallel decommissioning as recommended.....").

3. What, asked Steinberg, did we now want the US to do? I suggested three things:

- First they could weigh in behind the British initiative, putting maximum pressure on Seán Fein. Seán Fein needed to be persuaded that we were serious about bringing them in or proceeding without them. We were bending as far as we possibly could to accommodate them, and perhaps further than was politically wise, vis-a-vis the Unionists. If this did not bring a cease-fire the US would know that no cease-fire had been on offer since February last year, and that Seán Fein's packaging as a "party of peace" was a sham. Jim Steinberg said that the US would certainly exert all the pressure they could. He had already spoken personally to Seán Fein to pass on the message which the President had promised the Prime Minister that the US would deliver. He assured me that he had done so in stark terms. Seán Fein, he said, had taken it on the chin, not seeking to defend themselves or to excuse the latest IRA violence.

- Second I suggested that the US might dangle a carrot of their own. They could assure Seán Fein that if a cease-fire was declared its leaders would be able to visit the US, even before the multi-party talks resumed with Seán Fein at the table.

- Third I said we would appreciate help and advice on managing opinion on the Hill. The Administration's own public reaction to the PM's statement would help shape Congressional thinking. The Secretary of State was also thinking of telephoning key Congressmen. Whom should she call, and when? Steinberg strongly advised that any such calls should be made before the Prime Minister spoke (though it could be very shortly before, to reduce the risk of leaks). A short call ahead of the statement would gain ten times more credit than a long one after the event. He suggested calls to Kennedy, Dodd, Gilman, and King. If the Secretary of State could not herself make these calls she might give the Ambassador authority to make them on her behalf.

Anthony Com