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5 September 1997

*File  
Jan 16/9.*

*Top JEM  
cc: PB on  
AC.*

Ms Anita Bharucha  
IPL  
NIO(L)

*020/546/1*

*Dear Anita,*

GERRY ADAMS

1. Gerry Adams, accompanied by Martin McGuinness and Caoimghin O Caolain, visited Washington from 2 - 4 September. I enclose a copy of their programme.
2. The main meeting was with Berger (National Security Adviser). According to Butler (Director), this first meeting had been a chance for the two men to "get the measure of each other". The talk went well; Berger impressing three messages on Adams:
  - (i) this was Sinn Fein/IRA's last chance; any return to violence would be unacceptable; if this ceasefire broke down, Sinn Fein would not be admitted again to this White House;
  - (ii) America was not taking sides; they were "in everyone's corner"; they were not supporting Sinn Fein's goals for the negotiations;
  - (iii) Sinn Fein had to compromise.
3. Adams had one other Cabinet-level meeting, Secretary Daley. His office told me that the meeting was "private"; but did reveal it was "short, cordial and dealt almost exclusively with commercial matters". Daley's own prospective visit to Northern Ireland was not discussed.
4. On the Hill, the main meetings were with Kennedy/Dodd and

.../D'Amato



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D'Amato (the second driven almost entirely by the electoral politics of New York - D'Amato faces a difficult reelection campaign next year and is making a strong pitch for the Irish ethnic vote). Gilman & Co arranged a series of meetings. King gathered about 15 Congressmen in his office; Gilman organised a reception. The Speaker attended the reception; but, as his office had told us in advance, refused a separate meeting. Gingrich and Adams spoke only briefly and Gingrich refused to allow photographs.

5. More sceptical than Adams's reception on the Hill was Adams's encounters with the media. In addition to the set-piece press conference (my minute of 3 September), he had an unscheduled dinner with journalists, also on 3 September. Matthew Stanton (a supporter of Friends of Sinn Fein) was the host at a dinner attended by Stephen Rosenfeld, Kate O'Bierne, Mark Shields, Lars-Eric Neilson and Christine Black; Congressmen King and Neal also took part. On 5 September, Rosenfeld published his account of the discussion in the Washington Post. Like Joe Carroll at the National Press Club event, the journalists at the supper seemed to their cue from the Secretary of State's op-ed piece for the Post: "Everyone is holding his breath to see whether, if talks disappoint the IRA, it will shoot more policemen".

#### COMMENT

6. The visit to the U.S. of the party's two MPs and only TD was a key part of Sinn Fein's pre-talks strategy: to maximise public and international support before the hard-bargaining begins. At every opportunity Adams repeated his hope that Trimble (and Paisley) would be at the talks; that he sought to "make enemies into friends". But press coverage was both less and less-adulatory than last time around. True, the New York Times printed a front page photo of Adams in the company of Kennedy and Dodd. But after the first day only Rosenfeld and the ethnic press seemed to be paying attention. And Adams was dogged by Dr Mowlam's questions set out in the Post before his arrival. The coincidence with mourning for the Princess of Wales both dampened press interest (all newspapers have been dominated all week by aspects of the Princess' death) and skewed what interest there was (Adams became increasingly irritated with Boston Globe journalists asking him about IRA plots to assassinate the Princess).

*Your ever*  
*S. G. McDonald*

S G McDonald

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