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SUBJECT: VISIT BY DAVID TRIMBLE

## SUMMARY

1. Administration rolls out red carpet. Trimble & Co delighted.

## DETAIL

2. David Trimble, accompanied by John Taylor and Jeffrey Donaldson, visited Washington, 5 - 7 October. They met Clinton, Gore, Berger (White House); Smith (Senate); Pickering (State); the Ad Hoc Committee on Irish Affairs; gave a press conference; had dinner with Cary (attended by Congressmen King, Walsh, Neal and McCarthy) and lunch with the Northern Ireland Bureau here.

3. As planned, Clinton dropped by the call on Berger (for 20 minutes). Unexpectedly, he was accompanied by Gore. The President praised Trimble for remaining in the talks and for the skill he had shown in bringing his supporters along. He encouraged Trimble to make the compromises which would secure a settlement. The US was keen to help in any way it could: (he mentioned the First Lady's imminent visit; Commerce Secretary Daley's; the appointment of Lyons as a coordinator of the US economic effort in NI; and the release of the latest tranche of IFI funds). At Clinton's request, Trimble sketched out some of his ideas on power-sharing and a Council of the British Isles. He emphasised how closely he was working with the PM, but said the ROI did not yet seem to be engaged in the real negotiation.

4. Berger broke the news about the absense of the IRA from the new list of 'designated' organisations. As reported in my telno 2236, Trimble not only accepted the decision, but saw positive advantage in it. He was concerned about last month's decision to suspend deportation proceedings, and sought an assurance that there would be no similar "laxness" on extraditions. Berger gave that assurance: the NSC would let those proceedings take their normal course. He

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also stressed that the IRA would not be given a "third bite of the apple". If the ceasefire broke down the White House would break its contacts with Sinn Fein.

5. At the dinner with Congressmen Trimble stressed that if there was to be a settlement it would have to be worked out between Unionists and the SDLP: Sinn Fein would not in the end be able to accept an agreement which would not lead to a united Ireland. Taylor emphasised the importance of attracting the DUP back into the process: without them the UUP needed the agreement of one of the small parties associated with Loyalist terrorists in order to achieve sufficient consensus on the Unionist side. Trimble added, however, that the more likely an agreement looked, the less likely was it that Paisley would join the talks: he would want to position himself as the main Opposition, untainted by compromise. The Congressmen asked how they could help. Taylor suggested putting pressure on Adams to deliver some decommissioning during the negotiation. King pondered. Not now; but as the process developed new things might become possible: he could imagine making that request later.

6. But there was no real meeting of minds. Walsh earnestly praised Adams's simple search for peace and justice, for example. Trimble hoped Adams would get his wish: justice would put him behind bars.

## COMMENT

7. The White House had been looking for an opportunity to demonstrate their even-handed approach. The presence of both President and Vice President (a first) put Trimble and party on cloud nine. The bill may come later, when Sinn Fein get the same treatment.

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