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FROM: PS/SECRETARY OF STATE  
20 NOVEMBER 1997

cc (list attached)

Mrs Jackie Sear  
IPL

**SECRETARY OF STATE'S VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES:  
12-19 NOVEMBER 1997**

Thank you very much indeed for all your help in organising the Secretary of State's week-long visit to the United States, which ended yesterday. I am also conscious that many people throughout the Office and Northern Ireland Departments contributed to the briefing and that colleagues in all the locations visited made a tremendous effort locally to ensure that it was a programme which maximised both the time and opportunities available.

2. Judged against the objectives set out in your submission of 10 November, the visit was an unqualified personal success for the Secretary of State and was undoubtedly effective in terms of explaining current Government policy in relation to Northern Ireland.

3. We travelled to five cities, three in one day, had eleven formal meetings with a number of key players, including the Attorney General, Janet Reno, Senators Kennedy and Dodd, Tom Pickering (Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs) and Sandy Berger in the NSC. There were two major speech opportunities, followed by Q&A sessions, to around 150 opinion formers each, one in New York and the other in Los Angeles, a press breakfast in Washington for 18 main line journalists there and an Irish American Partnership breakfast in Boston for about 100 key people. The Secretary of State also had meetings with a number of editorial



boards and had 17 separate interviews for radio or television, including CNN and BBC Northern Ireland.

4. We took the message to difficult student groups with strong republican connections at Hofstra University in New York with Congressman King and at Berkely in San Francisco, where the Secretary of State spoke and then took questions for about an hour at each campus. There were numerous other engagements including a dinner for 1,400 in Boston by the American Ireland Fund and much smaller events in Irish pubs, again in Boston and in San Francisco.

5. The thrust of the Secretary of State's message was to underline:-

- the progress made in the Talks (Sinn Fein in, moving on to a more positive substantive agenda, need for trust and confidence to be built) and also the difficulties ahead;

- the benefits of economic growth alongside the Talks;

8. It was clear that people generally found it more difficult to oppose this policy being made. US involvement in both of the above areas - Senator Mitchell, President Clinton's visit two years ago, Mrs Clinton's return visit earlier this month and American investment in Seagate, Du Pont etc;

- the Government's commitment to the Rights agenda, fairness, equality, as well as the welfare to work initiative and increased support for education.

9. Log. extremely smoothly, thanks to the careful preparation of each of the Consuls involves and their staff.

6. The questions usually ranged widely but the most frequently asked included some assessment of the defections from the IRA and Sinn Fein and the implications of that for the Talks process, the need for



de-escalatory measures sooner rather than later, prisoners, particularly transfers from GB, parades, Roisin McAliskey and extradition. The latter subject featured mostly in the West Coast in relation to Artt, Brennan and Kirby and why they could not be released on bail. Mr Steele met the legal representatives of Mr Artt in San Francisco. The cases of Smith and Doherty were also raised, particularly why their time served abroad did not count towards their final release date, but also the need for generosity as part of the peace process.

7. Attitudes were different in the East Coast and even in Boston there now appeared to be at least some recognition of competing rights in Northern Ireland and of the need to have a balanced solution. The Secretary of State spent an afternoon with Congressman Peter King in his Nassau district of New York and at local newspaper offices and there was a more positive engagement with him on this visit. In the west, particularly at Berkely, the old attitude of Britain as the oppressor in Ireland was still much in evidence.

8. It was clear that people generally found it more difficult to oppose this particular British Government, and accepted that real efforts were being made to address equality, Rights issues and social and economic problems. Undoubtedly the Secretary of State's personal commitment to addressing these issues, together with her openness and directness, ensured that the reception we received everywhere was positive and welcoming.

9. Logistically, the visit went extremely smoothly, thanks to the careful preparation of each of the Consuls involved and their staff. Mr Steele was kept busy answering questions about de-escalation and other security matters and Mr Warner played a key role in press contacts and speech preparation. Anthony Cary from Washington accompanied us throughout and he and Peter Reid from New York were most helpful. The

protection officers ensured that the often very tight programme was maintained. Thanks also to the Information Service for the daily digest and press cuttings which we found very useful indeed.

10. A fuller note will follow with detail of the more significant meetings and any follow-up action. A copy of the final programme is attached for information.

*Ken Lindsay*

**W K LINDSAY**

**PS/SECRETARY OF STATE**

14.00 Meeting with Mr Sandy Berger, US National Security Advisor, The White House

15.00 Live interview with Sonia Russell for CNN World News, Washington

16.00 Depart to Boston

**Thursday 11 November**

17.25 Arrive Terminal B, Logan International Airport, Boston

18.00 Going to the Hotel. Met by Lesley King, American Ireland Fund

18.30 Meeting with Irish Ambassador, Mr Sean O hUiginn

19.00 Speech, dinner and reception

20.00 Address to the Press Dinner, at Boston Herald table hosted by George and Margaret

21.00 Depart for 22.00 with Massachusetts Representative, Steven Tolson and constituents at the Trackway