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Ambassadors London & ~~Washington~~
Joint Secretary
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Pages: 2

Date: 21 January, 1997

To: Press Section

From: Washington

For: Ms Ciara Delancy

From: Adrian O'Neill

C/C: Mr McIntyre (A-I Division); Mr Brangan (NY); Mr Wrafter (London)

Re: Recent articles on US visa for Gerry Adams

1. You will have seen the reports in the 19 January edition of the *Sunday Times* (by Washington correspondent, James Adams) and the *Independent on Sunday* (Washington correspondent, Rupert Cornwell) on the question of a further US visa for Mr Gerry Adams.
2. As seems to be typical of *Sunday Times* reporting, Adams gave no indication of his sources for the story. He reported as fact that the US Administration had "denied" a visa to Gerry Adams; that Mr Adams was advised by the NSC last month that, if he applied for a visa, it would be refused; and that the Administration believed that neither Adams nor the IRA were "to be trusted".
3. Cornwell's report in the *Independent on Sunday* was a good deal more nuanced and professional. He sourced the story to "diplomats here" and balanced the report with the Sinn Féin gloss on the issue.
4. In the course of a casual conversation with Cornwell today, I raised the report with him and the fact that it coincided with the report in the *Sunday Times*. Cornwell confirmed - what was implied in the story - that the source did not come from within the US Administration. He added that he had been prompted to do the story by his editors in London who told him that the *Sunday Times*

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were preparing to do a major article on the visa issue. He reluctantly filed the story which, he felt, was not particularly newsworthy; he said he could have filed the same story weeks ago. (Cornwell believes that what the US is thinking and doing in relation to Gerry Adams is not particularly significant; the real story is what is happening among the parties in NI. He tends, therefore, to stay away from the issue here in Washington.)

5. Mark Little (RTE) mentioned to me today that a Channel 4 journalist in Washington told him last night that the British Embassy here was briefing extensively on this issue. Their line was that the White House had given Gerry Adams a strong signal not to apply for a visa and that, if he did so, it would be denied.
6. I had sent the NSC press officer, Eric Rubin, a copy of the ST article yesterday for his information. He called me this evening to say that it had also been brought to the Administration's attention by the US Embassy in London and by the US Consulate in Belfast. According to Rubin, the White House "was not happy about this stuff". The thrust of the article was not true and they were prepared to say so publicly. The factual position was that no visa request had been made by Mr Adams. If one was received, it would be considered.
7. Finally, Rubin mentioned that the NSC press office was considering a request from the "Irish press corp" in Washington (Joe Carroll, Mark Little and Susan Garatty) to interview the National Security Advisor designate, Sandy Berger. He gave me to understand that - subject to the pressure of other commitments - there was a predisposition on the part of the NSC press office to respond positively to this request.

END