

770/95

CONFIDENTIAL

From: Clare Checksfield
IPL
3 November 1995

RECEIVED - 7 NOV 1995 DB/22/95



- cc PS/Michael Ancram - B
- PS/PUS (L&B) - B
- PS/Sir David Fell - B
- Mr Thomas - B
- Mr Bell - B
- Mr Brooke - B
- Mr Leach - B
- Mr Steele - B
- Mr Watkins - B
- Mr Wood (L&B) - B
- Mr Brooker - B
- Mr Maccabe - B
- Mr Maxwell - B
- Mr Stephens - B
- Miss Steele - B
- Mr Beeton o/r
- Mr Dalton, FCO Protocol
- Mr Pellew, NAD

223/11
13/11
Mr Steele
Mr Wood (L&B)
Mr Brooker
Mr Maccabe
Mr Maxwell
Mr Stephens
Miss Steele
Mr Beeton o/r
Mr Dalton, FCO Protocol
Mr Pellew, NAD

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (L&B) - B

CLINTON VISIT: DRAFT LETTER TO NO.10

Mr [unclear] 11
in info...
[unclear]
b...

We have been planning for President Clinton's visit on the working assumption that the Prime Minister will probably not accompany the President on the Northern Ireland leg of his visit. However, it is just possible that he may decide to do so. An early indication of a decision either way from No.10 would help immeasurably for the planning purposes of what is already developing into a formidable operation. In addition, we would like to take the opportunity of setting out some of the political considerations (including a handshake with Gerry Adams) attached to the Prime Minister's presence or absence.

2. President Clinton will travel to Northern Ireland with the political situation either as it is at present (the "stalemate" scenario), or, as an outside possibility, shortly after the launch of the twin-track process. If, as is likely, the stalemate continues, then there will be both greater pressure from within the White House to "do something" to rescue the peace process, and

CONFIDENTIAL

RD/TPU/775

CONFIDENTIAL

re they to meet, for there to be greater attention on the Prime Minister meeting Gerry Adams (or other senior Sinn Fein figures). If we and the Irish Government succeed in launching twin-tracks, President Clinton can simply welcome progress and pledge his support. This scenario also makes for a benign backdrop for the Prime Minister to visit Northern Ireland (he has not been since May and there is high expectation, particularly in the business community, that he will visit again soon).

3. There are arguments for his accompanying the President in either case. In a stalemate scenario, his presence could be used to offset the perception of American dominance, and to reaffirm HMG's commitment to Northern Ireland even if there is no tangible movement on the political front. It is at least arguable that the Prime Minister meeting Adams might serve a useful purpose. If there is progress, the Prime Minister could feel comfortable that he could share in the full attention of the world's media on Northern Ireland. A first handshake with Gerry Adams could be at least partly absorbed by the President's visit and might in fact attract less attention than if it were the only show in town.

4. The case, however, is by no means incontrovertible. If there is a breakthrough in mid-to-late November, the Prime Minister may feel that to go to Northern Ireland in Budget week as well as hosting the President in London was unnecessary. Nor is it usual for the Prime Minister to accompany the President throughout a visit. If there is no breakthrough before the President's visit, it is questionable whether the value of providing a counter-point to the US presence outweighs the risk of perhaps using a valuable card (his handshake with Gerry Adams) to no real purpose. The really valuable card in the peace process is the opportunity for the Prime Minister to invite Adams to No.10 to 'seal the deal' or break the impasse. A prior handshake between the two might be held to reduce the value of that card, and even be seen as an undeserved reward for Sinn Fein.

CONFIDENTIAL

RD/TPU/775

CONFIDENTIAL

As the most recent programme stands (attached for ease of reference), the Secretary of State will meet the President, hear his speech, and if we can bring the Americans to agree, host a reception in the evening. This may well be enough to make clear that the President is a visitor to Northern Ireland rather than a key protagonist.

6. The attached draft letter to Rod Lyne argues that the Prime Minister should only think seriously about accompanying the President to part of his visit to Northern Ireland (perhaps the evening reception?) if the twin-track process has been launched by then. It is a much less attractive proposition if that is not the case, and although there could still be value in sharing in the event itself, and concentrating on the broader benefits of the ceasefires and the follow-up to the Washington Investment conference the Prime Minister's visits to Northern Ireland have usually been associated with political developments. We would not want to politicise the President's visit. It would be helpful if advice could go to No.10 early next week, but it may also be worth waiting for the dust to settle on today's meeting with Sinn Fein.

Signed

Clare Checksfield
Room 1/111
Tel: 210-6503

CONFIDENTIAL

RD/TPU/775

CONFIDENTIAL

FILE NUMBER:

DRAFT LETTER

ADDRESSEE'S REFERENCE:

To	Enclosures	
Rod Lyne Esq CMG No.10 Downing Street (Full Postal Address)		(Full Address, if necessary)

LETTER DRAFTED FOR SIGNATURE BY: PS/SECRETARY OF STATE
(Name of Signatory)

As you know, the White House advance team has just paid its second visit to Northern Ireland - I attach a copy of the latest programme (still subject to last-minute change) for ease of reference. This is now looking politically quite well-balanced; the evening reception is to be stage-managed to allow the President to meet representatives of all the political parties informally, and we hope to have persuaded the American side that this reception should be hosted by the Secretary of State.

The planning has prompted the Secretary of State to mull over the question of whether the Prime Minister might accompany the President on any part of the Northern Ireland leg of his visit. He has no expectations (neither do the US) and understands that it is

CONFIDENTIAL

RD/TPU/775

CONFIDENTIAL

extremely heavy week for the Prime Minister already. He would, however, like to feed in some thoughts on the case for and against attending, even if this is only to confirm that the Prime Minister stays firmly in London.

On the most positive interpretation possible, the Prime Minister could share in a visit carefully stage-managed to highlight the benefits of the ceasefires to the people and industry of Northern Ireland. If there had been progress on the political front, he would have the added comfort of being able to point to the recent launch of twin-tracks and look forward to reports from the international commission and the political track. On this, albeit unlikely, scenario there could be significant presentational advantages to the Prime Minister being able to claim at first hand the President's congratulations on progress so far. The Prime Minister's physical presence may not strictly be necessary for this (and in any event we could use media attention on Northern Ireland for him to be given air-time from London), but there is some expectation in any event that he is due to visit Northern Ireland before too long. This may be one of the best opportunities he is likely to have and would offset Unionist nervousness over American "interference".

A visit would almost unavoidably mean that he meets Gerry Adams (and possibly other senior Sinn Fein figures). This has its advantages: any visit to Northern Ireland is now likely to involve the Prime Minister encountering Sinn Fein at some stage but the President's visit would tend to overshadow the first encounter. If

CONFIDENTIAL

RD/TPU/775

CONFIDENTIAL

in tracks had been successfully launched, then there would be a case for giving Sinn Fein a positive signal of this sort. On the other hand, there is the risk of the President trying to claim credit and Unionists claiming undue US pressure. If the present stalemate continues, then a visit may expose the Prime Minister to recriminations over lack of progress and to the risk of appearing as a by-stander to the US juggernaut. A final decision will have to be made in the light of progress on the twin-track initiative.

It would be helpful to have an indication of whether the Prime Minister has firm views, and in particular, whether he wishes at this stage firmly to rule out the possibility of attending at least part of the President's visit. I am copying this letter to William Ehrman and Melanie Leech.

MARTIN HOWARD

CONFIDENTIAL

RD/TPU/775

Thursday 30 November

9.00 am (ish)	Arrive Aldergrove Met by Secretary of State
Morning Belfast	Mackies (major speech) East Belfast Enterprise Park
Lunchtime	Londonderry (Guildhall) Tip O'Neill chair Reception (business people, community groups etc) Walkabout
Late Afternoon (5.00-6.00 pm ish)	Belfast City Hall (Tree lighting, US War Memorial)
Evening	Reception (Meetings with political parties)
Overnight	Europa Hotel

Friday 1 December

8.30 am	Depart Belfast for Dublin No event in Northern Ireland.
---------	--