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Roinn an Taoisigh
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TO: DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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APPOINTMENT OF A PEACE ENVOY BY THE US ADMINISTRATION

Origins of proposal

1. The idea of a "peace envoy" for Northern Ireland first arose in 1983. Between 1983 and 1985, two alternative versions of the proposal were put forward in the US Congress.
2. The Friends of Ireland favoured the appointment of a "Special Envoy" who would "actively assist the Governments of Ireland and Great Britain and the communities in Northern Ireland" to find a solution to the Northern Ireland conflict. The Ad Hoc Committee on Northern Ireland, reflecting the pro-Sinn Fein/IRA sympathies of some Committee members, called for the appointment of a special envoy who could "actively assist all interested parties" to bring an end to the conflict.
3. In 1984, the Democratic election platform supported the idea of a Special Envoy. The Democratic candidate, Walter Mondale, stated in June, 1984: "As President of the United States, I will support and appoint a Special Envoy that will help move in to that situation to see if we cannot resolve it in any way is fair".

Government and US administration reaction to proposal

4. In October, 1983, the Irish Government stated that the Friends of Ireland resolution "foresees an action which would necessarily have to have the support of both Governments concerned. This resolution of Senators Moynihan and Kennedy is seen as a helpful, responsible, and imaginative initiative".
5. In February, 1985, the State Department indicated publicly that "the naming at this time of a special envoy to Northern Ireland would serve no useful purpose. Neither the Irish nor the British Government believe that such a diplomatic approach at this time would help in any way to promote reconciliation between the two communities and an end to violence".

Present initiative

6. Mayor Flynn of Boston met the Taoiseach, Mr. Reynolds, in Dublin on 16 March, 1992, and mentioned the peace envoy proposal. In response, the Taoiseach emphasised that current Government efforts to make progress centred on the talks process. However, he indicated that a peace envoy could be useful at some future stage in the search for a settlement. Congress Joseph Kennedy in late April suggested the Taoiseach's remarks at the meeting with Mayor Flynn indicated he "would like to see the peace envoy idea built on".
7. On St. Patrick's Day in Boston, Mayor Flynn and Congressman Joseph Kennedy suggested that former US President Jimmy Carter and Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston be appointed as dual envoys. Flynn has spoken of a peace envoy "bringing all the sides together".

Attitude of President-elect Clinton

8. Governor Clinton indicated, in general terms, his support for the peace envoy proposal at an Irish Forum in April, 1992. In a letter to former Congressman Bruce Morrison in late October, he stated "I believe that the appointment of a special envoy to Northern Ireland could be a catalyst in the efforts to secure a lasting peace".

Position of the Irish Government

9. In an interview in September in Irish America magazine, the Taoiseach, Mr. Reynolds, was asked about the appointment of a peace envoy. He responded:

"Well, certainly if everything else was deadlocked, one would look for any possible new approaches to it. But it is not necessary at the moment. We have sat down as sensible, commonsense people to try and work out our own destiny and our own future and at the moment it would be an unnecessary intervention. Of course, we appreciate any help we can get from Washington in trying to help us along the road we are trying to travel".

Position of the British Government

10. The British Prime Minister will be visiting Washington before Christmas and hopes to meet President-Elect Clinton either then or early in 1993. It appears that the British Government would wish to discourage the appointment of a peace envoy on the grounds that the delicate talks process is still alive despite the intermission and that there is continuing contact between the British and Irish Governments and the Northern Ireland parties with a view to finding a basis for the resumption of the talks.

December, 1992.