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ROINN AN TAOISIGH

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CONFIDENTIAL

Taoiseach,

Northern Ireland Peace Envoy

The British Ambassador called this afternoon, by arrangement, at the request, he said, of No. 10 Downing Street. The subject matter of his call was concern on the British side at our stance on the Peace Envoy proposal. He referred, in this regard, to the item on page 1 of today's "Irish Times".

The British were puzzled about our views. They had understood that the Department of Foreign Affairs had been "cautious" about the idea. The Ambassador then referred to the interview which the Tánaiste gave to the "New York Times" on the 3rd inst. (referred to in today's "Irish Times") in which he said "I personally welcome what the President has said" about the Special Envoy proposal. The British side were also aware of the Tánaiste's letter to Mayor Flynn of 26 February which refers to the Government welcoming "this constructive proposal".

The Ambassador said that, according to his information, the White House were fed up with the Peace Envoy proposal and wanted to play it low-key. He expressed the hope, on the part of the British Prime Minister, that you would urge the U.S. administration to say nothing in this connection which would prejudice getting the Northern Ireland talks going again. It would be in our joint interests that the talks process would recommence as soon as possible and he was aware of what you had said in the Dáil and elsewhere in this regard recently.

Support for the Peace Envoy proposal, on our part, during the St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Washington, would have an unfortunate effect on Unionist opinion. In addition, it would put President Clinton in a difficult position.

The Ambassador acknowledged that the British had been endeavouring to devise a formula with the new U.S. administration to deal with this matter. They were concerned at what might be said at and after the your meeting with President Clinton and were most anxious that we should not do anything that would have an adverse effect on the possibility of resuming the talks. Accordingly, they were advocating a cautious approach on this topic.

The Ambassador also acknowledged that the British side were very worried about Irish-American pressure on the new administration at this time, pressure which, if acceded to, could upset the whole talks process. As regards the prospect of the talks resuming in the near future, the Ambassador agreed that it was now becoming less and less likely that they would start again before the Northern Ireland local elections.

I undertook to convey the Ambassador's message.

ROINN AN TAOISIGH

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I said that, for our part, we had been watching developments in regard to the proposal. The item would come up in the course of your meeting with President Clinton, as you had said in the Dáil but I could not pre-empt what might emerge on that occasion. For our part, we had no hidden agenda in this connection.

The Ambassador, in leaving, reiterated the concerns which he had expressed and the hope that nothing would ensue which would jeopardise the resumption of dialogue in Northern Ireland, to which both the Irish and British Governments were committed.

The Ambassador asked that if there was any clarification of our position on the Peace Envoy proposal, he would be glad to hear of it.



Frank Murray
10 March, 1993.

c.c. Assistant Secretary S. O hUiginn, Dept. of Foreign Affairs.
 Assistant Secretary W. Kirwan.

OIFIG AN TÁNAISTE AGUS AN AIRE GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
OFFICE OF THE TÁNAISTE AND MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2
DUBLIN 2

As issued

26 February, 1993

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cc PSr
A/S O'Leary
M.F.F.
D. O'Farrell, D.T.
Mr T. Dalton, D.I.
Joint Sec

Ant. Londe
Councillor A.

The Honourable Raymond L. Flynn
Mayor of Boston

Dear Mr. Mayor,

Thank you for your generous letter of 15 January on my appointment as Tánaiste. I appreciate your thoughtfulness very much.

You rightly state in your letter that the most challenging task facing us remains Northern Ireland. The continuing search for an end to the conflict is the Government's central objective and we intend to do everything in our power to seek new ways forward and to achieve the earliest possible resumption of the process of political dialogue.

May I say that we have been heartened and encouraged by the support of Irish-American leaders for our efforts and I am especially grateful for your own personal role. I believe that the United States can be of great help in our efforts to achieve a lasting and just settlement.

The Government very much appreciates the concern and interest shown by President Clinton in relation to Northern Ireland. I know that the Taoiseach looks forward to discussing with the President next month ways in which this concern can best be expressed including, in particular, the proposal for a Special Envoy. The Government welcomes this constructive proposal while acknowledging, of course, that careful consultation and discussion will be required on ways of enabling the best possible effect to be given to it.

Again, Mr. Mayor, please accept my warm appreciation for all your efforts to assist the process of dialogue and reconciliation in Ireland. I look forward to meeting you before too long.

Yours sincerely,

Dick Spring T.D.
Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs