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CONFIDENTIAL

16 April 1993

MEETING BETWEEN SEAMUS MALLON AND NANCY SODERBERG,  
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, 9 APRIL 1993

Dear Assistant Secretary

1. The Deputy Leader of the SDLP, Seamus Mallon, recently visited Pittsburgh, New York, Philadelphia and Washington. In Pittsburgh, he attended the annual American Ireland Fund dinner in that city and, in particular, sought to strengthen the support of Irish-American business people there (especially the Rooney family) for projects in the Newry area - much along the lines of the Derry-Boston Ventures.
2. In New York, Mr Mallon gave press and radio interviews (that in the Irish Voice, dealing with the Special Envoy issue, is enclosed); his visit to Philadelphia was to see family relations. Finally, the short visit to Washington took in a lunch with key Hill staffers - Congress was in recess - hosted by the Ambassador, and a call on Nancy Soderberg at the National Security Council (NSC).
3. Ms Soderberg is the third ranking person in the NSC and was one of President Clinton's key foreign policy advisers during the Presidential campaign. In that capacity, she was central to the formulation of the Clinton policy statement on Ireland. Prior to working full-time with the Clinton campaign, Ms Soderberg handled foreign policy (including Irish) issues in Senator Kennedy's Office, during which period she worked closely with the Embassy.

Security situation

4. Mallon's initial briefing focussed on the security situation in Northern Ireland. He stressed that the British Government could at best only contain the present level of violence (both IRA and Loyalist). Moreover, normal community policing was non-existent in over half of Northern Ireland and channels of information to the police, which were never good, had almost completely dried up.
5. Mallon went on to give a personal perspective to the above by saying that, whereas in the past he could almost certainly identify the persons or groups who carried out particular atrocities, he could now only make a rough guess given the progressive sophistication of the paramilitaries.

Demographic factor

6. Mallon next referred to the outcome of the recent population census in the North, making the point that the trends identified there - particularly the statistic that 52 percent of children under the age of eleven were Catholic - had made Unionists more insecure and frightened. This was compounded by the continuing brain drain of young, educated Protestants who, in addition to attending University outside Northern Ireland, were not prepared to invest their future there after graduation. It was unfortunate that Unionist politicians didn't seem to have the wit to negotiate now from a position of strength rather than have longer term demographic trends progressively weaken their position. When asked to speculate by Ms Soderberg on a possible timeframe for a united Ireland, Mallon hedged his bets but speculated that this could come about in 20-40 years.

Special Envoy

7. Asked by Ms Soderberg for his views on the Special Envoy issue, Mallon said he was strongly in favour of the proposal and that Northern Nationalists had taken great heart from its endorsement by the Clinton campaign. It was now disappointing that there appeared to be some hesitation in developing U.S. policy further. In this regard, he said that in the Northern Ireland political context there never was a perfect time for action - excuses, such as the forthcoming local elections, could always be found. He added that the relative insignificance of the North's local elections could be seen in the fact that most candidates would be elected to their municipal authorities with as little as a few hundred first preference votes.
  
8. Overall, Mallon said his view was that the very announcement of an Envoy appointment would have a catalytic impact on Northern Ireland politics, sending with it an enormously positive signal. In short, the sooner an Envoy came to Northern Ireland the better.
  
9. Significantly, Soderberg said she felt the Envoy proposal would go ahead - President Clinton "thinks it is a good idea". They were not fazed by the British Government being unhappy and, indeed, they had a feeling there was now an acceptance in British ranks that the proposal would go ahead. The present challenge to the U.S. Administration - and this was an aspect discussed over the St. Patrick's Day period - was to develop the proposal with the utmost care and sensitivity.

International Fund

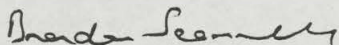
10. Ms Soderberg said - as had been conveyed during the Taoiseach's visit - that the Administration would be including \$20 million in its budget for the IFI for the first time this

year. She then enquired about the performance of the Fund. Mallon responded that, after a slow start, the Fund was now doing particularly good work. It was important that the U.S. should continue to support the IFI. He went on to point out the irony of Unionists - who had originally boycotted the Fund because of its links to the Agreement - now complaining that they were not receiving their fair share of its expenditure.

Visa for Gerry Adams

11. Ms Soderberg asked Mr Mallon for his views on whether Gerry Adams should be granted a U.S. visa; she said the issue was on her mind because of the recent World Trade Centre bombing in New York by Muslim extremists and the possible visa parallels with some of those allegedly involved in the bombing.
  
12. Mallon said he felt it would be very unwise for the U.S. authorities to grant a visa to Adams. It would send all the wrong signals to the British and, in the process, damage the Administration's credibility on Northern issues.

Yours sincerely



Brendan Scannell  
Counsellor

Seán Ó hUiginn Uas  
Assistant Secretary  
Department of Foreign Affairs